

Readings for Open Forum on Jnana Yoga Jan 13 2019

Sri Ramakrishna: “Find God. That is the only purpose in life.”

January is a month for study of Jnana Yoga (Advaita Vedanta). As a jnana yogi, you practice discrimination, reason, detachment, and *satyagraha* (insistence on Truth). The goal is freedom from limitation (*mukti*). Our teachers say that all miseries in life are caused by seeing inaccurately. An earnest and persistent jnani may break through this lifelong experience of misapprehension (*maya*) and see only the Divine Presence everywhere, in everything and everyone.

Vedanta, Upanishads: 4 Mahavakyas

Over 1000s of years, mystics affirmed this. In the Upanishads, there are 4 aphorisms, called Mahavakyas — great statements of Truth. Each points to the underlying Reality of Existence, called Brahman:

1. Prajnanam Brahma – Consciousness is Brahman
2. Aham Brahmasmi – I am Brahman
3. Tat Tvam Asi – That Thou Art
4. Ayam Atma Brahma – This Self is Brahman

Swami Vivekananda

- Each soul is potentially divine.
- The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.
- Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy -- by one, or more, or all of these -- and be free.
- This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

Two basic principles of the path of Philosophy (jnana yoga):

- **viveka** (discrimination between the unreal and the real), and
- **vairagya** (release of worldly desires and attachments).

With sustained attention and devotion to your goal over years of practice, discrimination and release will certainly lead you forward in spiritual life. And, at last, to realization, and life as a *jivanmukta* — one who is liberated while still embodied.

Sustained attention over years = *Shravana, manana and nididhyasana.*

Swmi Yatiswarananda

“Many people want to practise non-dualistic meditation, very often after reading a few books on Advaita. So many people talk about the Absolute. But what do they attain on the practical side? Most of them give up after a short while. They find they are getting nowhere.

In the case of a few others, it may take them several months or even years of futile effort to understand that non-dualism is beyond their grasp.

People forget that non-dualism is a state of actual experience. It is not what appeals to you intellectually that is important, but what actually you can do. We should not attempt anything simply by reading books.

A dualist with a real spiritual experience is infinitely better than a monist without experience. So long as we meditate, so long as there is meditation and the object of meditation even in the subtlest form, it is dualism.