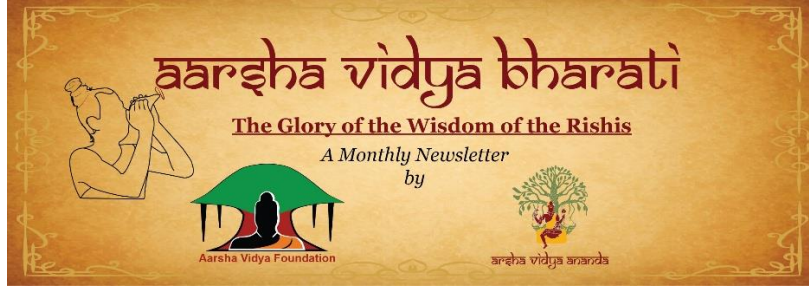

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Oct 2023

Ashvina - Kartika 2080

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [Oct 2023 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

World Yoga Festival, London – Report on Talks by Swami Brahmavidananda 7 Stages of Knowing God

By Nirmala Iyer, London

About 1500 people attended a 4-day festival in Henley, London on 3-6th August 2023. The audio was uploaded to Youtube for the benefit of Swamiji's global students. Participants were seated in tents based on the *Pañcamahābhūta-s*. There were about 100 of us in the Fire Tent (representing *jñānam*) where Swamiji's talk was held.



Some Take-Aways

God is a matter for understanding. Relationship with *Īśvara* is personal and integrated into your life irrespective of religion. If we look at God as an object (like in religion) we limit God to finitude. But when we look at *Īśvara* as the order and oneness with the notion of claiming *sat-cit-ānanda*, it is infinite/limitless. He spoke on the 7 stages of knowing *Īśvara*:

1. **God as a protector** - Relationship with God is based on fear and devotion. Chapter 7.16 of the Gita classifies one type, i.e. आर्तः *ārthah*, the distressed.
2. **God as Loving:** With maturity, we worship God due to his loving nature and that makes our life smoother. Projection on God comes on me as loving-based.
3. **Understanding God with a प्रसाद बुद्धि *Prasāda buddhi* attitude and following a value structure based on the 3 definitions of Yoga from the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita:**
 - योग चित्त व्रित्ति निरोधः *yoga citta vṛitti nirodhah*
 - समत्वम् योग उच्यते *samatvam yoga ucyate*
 - योग कर्मसु कौशलम् *yoga karmasu kauśalam*

4. **Understanding God as the universal order** - अभिन्न निमित्त उपादान कारणम्: abhinna nimitta upādāna kāranam Giving importance to the intelligence more than the material. If we learn to deal with our pain, we learn to deal with the situation too. The more you understand God, the more you see the universal order and more in harmony you are with the creation. Empathy towards yourself and others increases. One aspect of this is becoming more intuitive. Being tolerant, giving, accepting everyone for who they are, non-judgmental, open to others idea of *Īśvara*, insights into people or situations, having *satsangha* based company, and connection with a universal mind.
5. **God as the giver of Siddhi-s:** If one does a particular *sādhanā* then one can gain extraordinary powers. This can be an obstacle for further learning for *mumukṣu*-s.
5. **Understanding the truth of God: (सर्वात्म भाव sarvātma bhāva)** - Chapter 10.20 of the Gita states अहम् आत्मा सर्वभूताशयस्थितः *aham ātmā sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ* where you see yourself residing in the heart of all beings by validating the teachings and understand *Īśvara* in his *svarūpā* both as *vyakta* and *avyakta* .

The one who wants to know the truth does not seek siddhis and intuition as the focus is on *mokṣa*.

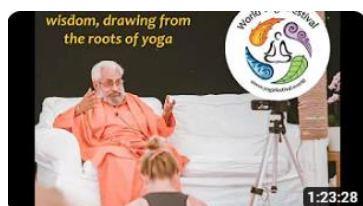
Some more takeaways from other participants



On the 2nd day, the rain came down incessantly at the festival. Everyone's shoes got muddy, and the toilet floors were really filthy with mud & grass. A janitor lady was patiently cleaning up the mess. Swamiji walked up to her, thanked her, and empathized with how difficult it would be to clean up all the extra mess. She thanked him profusely. I was fortunate enough to witness this incident & recognize Sarvatmabhava In Action! - Karthik Narayanan, London

Our understanding of God is shaped by fears, insecurities, and protection. Worship is a way to seek blessings for personal safety. Swamiji emphasizes expressing love through rituals like pooja. We turn to God in trouble, seeking blessings.

Listening to teachers and life lessons guide us to be responsible for understanding God. We realize our ability to respond to situations or not to respond, making choices with self-awareness. We prioritize our actions.



Principles and values define another path to know Bhagavan. We become proactive, prioritizing truth and purpose. Purity of mind unveils God's essence. Knowledge transforms relationships with God, encouraging self-discovery and self-awareness. - Ashwini Shannikodi, London

[Link to Playlist of the Talks](#)

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