

तत् त्वम् असि

Yoga can be a question to be solved, or a mystery to be resolved.
The process for one is Jñāna Dhyānam and for the other Bhakti Dhyānam.
From the perspective of the Yoga Sūtra, common to both
is the relationship with and yoking of, Citta, as if to Cit.

Patañjali in his seminal text on meditation
discusses two primary paths for Dhyānam:
Jñāna Yoga, the power of Ātma Vicāra
and Bhakti Yoga, the power of Japam.
Both lead towards the same goal.
It is merely the means that are different,
rather than the goal.

To help guide our Dhyānam Sādhana in either path,
the Indian tradition offers contemplative gems,
that are known collectively as Mahā Vakya.
They can express and re-mind us in a poetic way,
of the source of the eternal awareness within
the ephemeral flux of everyday experience.

The essence of either of the Dvi Mārga of meditation;
Jñāna Dhyānam, the path of Ātma Vicāra,
or Bhakti Dhyānam, the path of Japam,
can be explored through an appropriate application
of a Mahā Vakya as a directional Bhāvana.

There is one such Mahā Vakya, renowned and beautiful
in its profound simplicity as a heuristic means for insight,
whether travelling the paths of Jñāna Dhyānam or of Bhakti Dhyānam.

Namely:

तत् त्वम् असि

tat tvam asi ||

from the Chāndogya Upaniṣat VI.8.7

Jñāna Dhyānam,
discussed in Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verses 12-17,
focuses on the stillness of Tat or That (Cit),
by utilising the practice of Ātma Vicāra,
to resist the movement of Tvam or Thou (Citta).

Bhakti Dhyānam,
discussed in Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verses 23-31,
focuses on the movement of Tvam or Thou (Citta),
by utilising the practice of Japam,
to invite the stillness of That (Cit).

In both, Yoga epitomises the skill of the yoking of Citta,
as if to Cit, whichever Mārga the practitioner travels.

Asi or thou 'art' is the re-minder of what is real and
that even though we feel and think as a being, we 'are'
in reality, a profound conjunction of silhouette and source,
known as Asmitā or the sense of 'I' am-ness.

Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 23 defines the nature of this conjunction
and Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24 reminds us that the root of
this obscuration is a subtle play of illusion known as Avidyā.