

46. Approach the preceptor for help in grasping the Atma

Then one might ask, how can one not versed in the scriptures master the process of this analysis and consumption? One can learn it from a *guru*, or an elder spiritual aspirant (*sadhaka*), right?

But one fact has to be emphasised again. The *Atma* principle is beyond the reach of even the most profound pundit who has learned the scriptures (*sastras*); it can be understood only by direct experience. That is why it was said of old that even that pundit has to approach a *guru*, a person who has already had the vision. Without guidance from such a teacher, *Atma* cannot be grasped. Even Narada had Sanatkumara as *guru*, Janaka had Suka, and other saints had other *gurus*. Maitreyi (the consort of Yajnavalkya), the unlearned Leela, and Chudala are examples to show that, without prolonged study of the scriptures, also women in the past learned the knowledge of the *Atma* (*Atma-vidya*) from the *guru* and attained success.

47. The grace of the Lord makes everything else superfluous

Of course, when one has the grace of the Lord, the *guru* often becomes superfluous, for the Lord makes everything known. Whatever else a person may not have, however deficient they may be in the usually accepted qualifications, if they are blessed with the grace of the Lord, they can certainly have a vision of the *Atma*.