

deluding oneself that the little power one has acquired is one's own, this indeed is selfishness, conceit, pride, *Ahamkaara*.

If a person is a genuine vehicle of power, he can be recognised by the characteristics of truth, kindness, love, patience, forbearance and gratefulness. Wherever these reside, *Ahamkaara* (egoism) cannot subsist, it has no place. Seek, therefore, to develop these.

Ahamkaara Causes Asanthi

Man creates and develops in himself an abounding variety of selfish habits and attitudes, and he causes great discontent for himself. The impulse for all this comes from the power-complex, the greed for accumulating authority, domination and power, the greed for things which can never be eternal and full. In fact, it is impossible for man to attain them, up to the level of satiation. Omnipotence belongs only to *Sarveswara*, the Lord of All. A person might feel elated that he has become the master of all arts, or owner of all wealth, or possessor of all knowledge or repository of all the Sastras, but from whom did he acquire all these? They must indeed be greater. He might even claim that he earned all this through his own efforts, his labour and his toil. But surely someone gave it to him, in some form or other. This he cannot gainsay. The source from which all authority and all power originate is *Sarveswara*. Ignoring that omnipotence,

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The effulgence of the Atma is obscured by *Ahamkaara*. Therefore when *Ahamkaara* is destroyed, all troubles end, all discontents vanish and Bliss is attained. As the sun is obscured by mist, feeling of *Ahamkaara* hides Eternal Bliss. Even if the eyes are open, a piece of cloth or cardboard can prevent vision from functioning effectively and usefully. So too, the screen of selfishness prevents man from seeing God, who is, in fact, nearer to him than anything else. Many an aspirant and recluse, many a *saadhaka* and *sanyaasi* has allowed all excellences won by long years of struggle and sacrifice to slip away through this attachment to the self. For power without the bliss of God-realisation is a wall without a basement. Mere panditry is of no use at all. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras are doctrines for living out in daily practice. So, without this practice, whatever the wealth of words, whatever the standard of scholarship, it is all a colossal waste. To bring the teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras into one's actual life, one has to scotch the feeling, "I know," and open one's eyes to the

real Essence and introspect on it. Then, one can attain Bliss, without fail.

The *Panchanga* (almanac) might indicate that ten units of rain will fall, but even if the calendar is folded ten times and squeezed, not even a drop of rain can be extracted. The purpose of the calendar is not to give rain but only to give information about rain and its quantity. Its pages do not contain the ten units of rain. Rain is in the clouds above. So too, the Sastras can give only information about doctrines, axioms, rules, regulations and duties. The sublime characteristics of the Vedas and the Upanishads and Sastras are that they give instruction in the methods of attaining peace and liberation. But they are not saturated with these essences of Bliss, so that one can collect them by squeezing the texts. One has to discover the path, the direction and the goal as described in them. One has to tread the path, follow the direction, and reach the goal. If however, the I-consciousness produces the pride, “I know all,” a fall is inevitable; the delusion causes death. The secret of salvation lies in the realisation of this danger. Rebirth is inevitable if this danger is not averted.

Aware of all this, if you get immersed in spiritual practice, the world and its worries will not affect you. It is only when you are far from this truth, that you suffer, feel pain and experience travail. At a distance from the bazaar, one hears only a huge indistinct uproar. But as we approach it and walk into it, one can clearly distinguish the separate

bargainings. So too, until the reality of Paramatma is known, you are overpowered and stunned by the uproar of the world. But once you enter deep into the realm of spiritual endeavour, everything becomes clear and the knowledge of the reality awakens within you. Until then you will be caught up in the meaningless noise of argumentation, disputation and exhibitionist flamboyance.