

27. Know Who You Are. Do Not Ask Another Who He Is

That which remains smaller than, and within, what is infinitesimally small: that which remains bigger than, and envelops, what is infinitely large: that which is present everywhere and manifests itself under all circumstances, is *Atma*. *Atma* is Brahman and Brahman is *Atma*. That which, if we know, we will know everything; and that which, if we do not know, we will not know anything. The one that teaches such things, distinguishing between *Para Vidya* or higher knowledge and *Apara Vidya* or worldly knowledge, is the real *guru*.

All our culture and the manner of our living is contained in our *Vedas*. The *Vedas* have

not emanated from any human being. They are, in fact, words and sounds that have been uttered by God. The ancient *rishis*, who heard the *Vedas* through their sense of hearing, passed them on to their disciples by word of mouth. What has been heard in this manner as divine sound is referred to as *Sruthi*. No one can change the words that are contained in them. Perhaps the *Ithihasas* and *Puranas* can be commented upon and annotated; but it is not possible for anyone either in this country or abroad, to suggest any changes in the contents of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* can also be referred to as “*Sabda Brahman*”. These sacred *Vedas* spell out the nature of *dharma*. What is contained in the *Vedas* is *pramana* or authority. The religion of the *Vedas* is what we follow. We should be really proud of the religion that has come to us from the contents of *Veda dharma*.

Unfortunately today, there are people who have lost faith in the religion of the *Vedas*, who rather look down upon temples and who talk lightly about sacred places of pilgrimage. It is incredible that such people are prospering in this country. The *Vedas* easily pass beyond the comprehension of ordinary folks, even the *pundits*, who memorise them by heart, do not sense their full significance. The praise as well as abuse of what is contained in the *Vedas* is quite common. When a drop of rain falls on the ground and as a result of breeze this drop gets evaporated and disappears, so also the praise and abuse, when hurled at us is blown off by the breeze of intelligence.

Some political leaders came here a few days ago to meet me. They asked me some questions. Among them were many meaningless questions. During conversation, someone asked me who I was. I gave a reply which was quite appropriate to this question. I said that, when I am in the midst of men, I am a man. When I am in the midst of women, I am a woman, and when I am in the midst of children, I am a child. When I am alone, I am *Brahman*. Not only I, even you, when you are in the midst of elderly men, you behave as an elderly man. If you are in the midst of women, you exhibit feminine nature. When you are amongst children, even if you are a supreme court judge, you behave like a child. This is particularly so when one is playing with his grandchildren. When you are alone, you will feel distinctive and divine.

It is customary for one to find out the prices of the things in a market even if one does not have the capacity to buy any of them. Whether you really desire to understand me or not, like the foolish people who do not concern themselves with the real nature of things but only look at the form and name, you come forward to ask such a question. The one who does not know who he himself is, often asks questions of others as to who they are. One who makes an attempt to know who he is will not ask such questions. If we want to look at this phenomenon in the worldly way and give it a charitable interpretation, we have to say that this person who has asked the foregoing question surely knows that I am

Sathya Sai Baba and that is why he has come to see me. In spite of this, if he asks this question, we have to conclude that he is not steady and does not know what he is asking. The whole world is moving in this direction.

When we spend so much time and effort to understand the contents of our *Sastras*, *Ithihasas* and *Puranas*, we should be able to use all that knowledge to understand the divinity in us. When we can put them into practice, our effort will become purposeful. Otherwise our time and life will be a waste. To read books and to convey to others by way of teaching what we have learnt and at the same time not putting any of the things that we have learnt into practice, is a wasteful occupation. Maybe you have read many books and known many things, but there is no evidence in your behaviour of your learning.

Divyatma Swarupas, students!

It is not necessary for you to read so many books. What you really want is the grace of God. This age of yours is such that there is room for a great deal of confusion. In order to avoid such confusion, you should handle your mind very steadily and slowly and bring it under your control. You should never be in a haste and use force to control the mind. If there is a cow in our house, which is wanting to go out and eat the harvest in the field, what do we do to bring such a cow back? We try to find out the kind of food that it is after and feed it

with better kind of food in the house. Gradually, it will thereafter give up the tendency to go out of the house.

In the same manner, our mind wants to wander out and look at many things. It wants to indulge in different thoughts. In order to control the mind, which is running after fulfilling worldly and sensuous desires, we substitute the nobler idea of God in the place of such desires. We make the mind think of God and gradually turn it away from worldly desires. But today, man is pressing hard to wean his mind away from these worldly desires; but he is not succeeding. He is being defeated and humiliated. Truly, these desires and attachments which the mind is developing are characteristic of the present day. Even our intellect is unable to exercise sufficient control over the mind.

In these circumstances, either we should try and cultivate the habit of loneliness or we should join some sacred company, think of good things and wean our mind away. One of these things has to be done if you want to control the mind. In this modern age, the idea of joining a *Sathsanga* is being looked down upon as if it is something mean and crooked. On the other hand, we do not see anything wrong in spending a considerable amount of time dressing our own hair or doing similar things. We are spending a lot of time in painting our faces, in dressing ourselves and choosing our trousers. While spending so many hours on trivial things to make your external appearance more attractive, if you are

asked to spend five minutes each day on meditation or in the thought of God, you give a reply that you have no time for that kind of a thing.

There is another matter which requires some attention. Today every young man has a small comb in his pocket and he also has a small mirror. Every young girl carries a huge basket and in the basket she has a whole market. Why do we carry all this paraphernalia? It is because we want to set right our hair when it gets a little dishevelled. If our face needs a little touching up, we look after it immediately. We pay undue attention to our body, but we do not restrain our mind from following the crooked ways. It is our internal instruments which have to be set right so as to enable us to pursue the sacred path. In order to remove the entanglements that distort the right vision, you should cultivate devotion, love and wisdom.

Divyatma Swarupas!

We must understand how the unsophisticated gopis and gopalas, who had not read the *Vedas*, were attracted to the Lord and how they loved the Lord. While remaining immersed in the thought of God, they regarded Mahavishnu as the *chaitanya* or the life-force prevalent everywhere. This realisation was possible only for the gopikas, because of their intense devotion. Learning derived from various *Sastras* and all the *Vedas* is of no avail if it does not help you to reach the feet of the Lord.