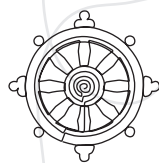


WHO AM I?

CHAPTER 7



WHO AM I ?

When you say

"I am Listening"

"I am Seeing"

"I am Eating"

Who is that "I" ?

Many people buy books but discontinue reading the book midway for various reasons.

Since you have put in efforts and read till here; and due to your sincere and genuine desire to know the Universal Truth; it is time to tell you the 'knowledge of Brahman' - generally known as 'Brahma-Vidya.'

Brahma-Vidya is the Science of sciences, by which the Immortal Soul-Brahman is known. Brahman cannot be realised by logic or by reasoning, because it is beyond the reach of mind and intellect. One has to enquire and realise the 'Infinite Consciousness' through direct intuitive perception.

This science was preserved as very deep secret by Sages, imparting only to the students who were worthy; or else this knowledge could be misunderstood and misused. Even the slokas, when they were explained to the students, it was imparted in a manner that there will be 'Vaachyardham' i.e. verbal meaning as well as 'Lakshyardham' i.e. implied meaning. The implied is the inner 'real' meaning, which is understood by the students.

The Kathopanishad may be regarded as a most appropriate introduction to spiritual life in general. The story with which the Upanishad begins, provides the proper foundation for commencing a study of the science of the higher realm of a human being.

Kathopanishad is the story of small boy Nachiketa asking 'Lord Yama- king of death' on what is the secret of life after death?

Nachiketa is a young boy, son of Sage Vajasravasa. The sage while performing the exoteric ritual of sacrifice and charity, gives away cows which were barren and ready to die, which were of no value to recipients. Nachiketa sees this charitable sacrifice as a farce; concerned that his father is going against 'Dharma' (morality), questions his father about such donations. But the sage continues his deed without considering his son's apt question, then Nachiketa questions his father 'To whom, you will give me away?'

The father replied in anger 'To death, I give you away' – but later repents for uttering a curse on his son, and requests Nachiketa not to take it seriously.

As Nachiketa was 'obedient and truthful'-he accepts his father's curse of Death, by visiting the abode of Yama - the Lord of death. As Yama is away, Nachiketa 'patiently' waits for three nights bearing hunger.

Yama arrives and is apologetic for this dishonour to the guest, So He offers Nachiketa three boons.

Nachiketa's first wish is that Yama discharge him from the abode of death, back to his family, and that his father should not be resentful and accept him, as he was before, when he returns. Yama grants the first wish immediately.

Nachiketa's second wish is to be instructed as to the proper execution of 'Panchagni' – a fire ritual that enables a human being to secure heaven. Lord Yama explains the ritual and declares that this ritual will be hereafter called as 'Nachiketa's fire ritual.'

Nachiketa's third wish is to explain "what happens after a person dies? Does he continue to exist in another form? or not?" Lord Yama tried to dissuade the kid saying "this subtle mystery was not clear even to the angels and even the Demi Gods are uncertain about answer to that question. As it is not easily comprehensible, Lord urges Nachiketa to pick another wish offering him all sorts of worldly wealth and pleasures like abundant cattle, horses, elephants, gold and huge empire and damsels, and also objects that are not available on the earth.

Nachiketa asks "if any of the gifts offered are permanent?" When Lord Yama says 'No' - then Nachiketa insists on being granted the knowledge which is permanent.

With kid's persistence, and after being pleased with the intense desire of the student, also appreciating the qualities of Nachiketa like-

1. Following Dharma
2. Being truthful
3. Having compassion for father and others
4. Having patience
5. Renouncing temptations of sense and ego

Lord Yama gives knowledge about Brahman.

So please understand this knowledge about Brahman which you are gaining, was kept confidential by sages as 'secret' and revealed in the form of Upanishads to the qualified. Still, many will agree that Upanishads are not comprehensible, unless guided by an enlightened Guru.

Who is the changeless in the changing world?

All the perceptible things in this universe undergo changes. There must be some unchanging, immortal pivot as the basis for the changing things.

For example, the axle is stable, on which the car wheel is rotating. Also, the surface of the earth is a stable base for the movement of all vehicles on the road.

Unless the 'Seer' of the 'Scene' is stable, objects cannot be properly recognised. Like a person who is stationary only, can watch the cars moving on the road.

Hence, the apparent world which is changing rapidly must be based on a changeless phenomenon.

Who is that changeless entity supporting the changing world?

Before we find answer for this question, first let us see what is changeless in a human being.

What is the Changeless performing the role of Witness in a human being?

A baby child when born is ignorant and innocent. When the kid is exposed to different activities in this world, everything is a wonder for it. As the child needs entertainment, parents provide toys, visual images etc. The child feels attracted to these toys, provided from time to time, and cries when it is not given what it wants. So, the parents, in order to pacify, give what the children likes.

This makes the child to value the toys. Later, parents and others train the kids like

“This is your nose; This is your mouth; These are your ears; This is your body;

They are your parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends and so on and so forth.”

This creates individuality and difference with others. Since a kid understands and repeats what it has been taught, it communicates what has been recorded in its mind, like an electronic recorder.

So, an individuality is developed and 'identity' completely shifts to physical body, which gets a name at birth- thereafter 'body' is referred to as 'I' and kid starts saying 'Me', 'Mine'.

The phenomenon of giving value to toys in childhood, develops as the child grows into an adolescent, and starts giving value to the worldly objects. This makes the 'I-ness' strong in the adolescent, and he or she starts saying

This is my bed

This is my room

This is my phone

As adolescent grows into an adult, the individuality gets much stronger and becomes permanent with a feeling 'My life', 'My family' 'My kids' 'My responsibilities' etc. Thereafter people are unable to change their individuality which is based on the impressions gathered since childhood.

The changeless 'I':

When 'I' review my life, everything changed in the world since my childhood.

- My grandparents, teachers grew old and died.
- My friends, have grown and their bodies changed.
- I have studied in school, college and went out of state for Engineering.
- I have seen old houses replaced with new apartment complexes.
- I have seen plants grow into big trees.

But when I observe, the feeling of 'I' in my child-hood, my youth and my old-age remained the same; though the body, the mind and the surroundings changed and modified from time to time.

My body changed; My experiences changed due to knowledge; My objects which I experienced changed.

But irrespective of these changes in my life, the subjective sense of 'I-ness' was observing the changes since childhood, as I always say -when I was a kid, when I was studying, when I got married etc...

In all the experiences of -good, bad or indifferent, the 'I' has remained as a changeless entity, common in all situations, experiencing all the changes in my life, since childhood.

'I' is the common factor:

Ex: Getting different experiences

I went to Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Hyderabad, and encountered four different experiences at four different places. At Mumbai, I was happy to get a business contract, at Ahmedabad 'I was joyful' as I was honoured, at Bangalore 'I was worried' if I would miss my flight due to traffic and at Hyderabad 'I was sorrowful' when my bag was misplaced.

The experiences at these four different places, at four different times are different, yet all these experiences are mine, because 'I' was (the common factor) present in all the four places and involved in all the four experiences.

If there is an experience, then there must be an experiencer; there must be an "I" who is experiencing. Whatever is going on in my mind, there is this sense that I am the subject of it all.

This is same in the waking, dream and deep sleep states too. The 'I' in the waking state has become the dreamer in the dream and the deep sleeper in the deep sleep. But during these changes in the states of consciousness, 'I' never undergoes any change, and it is able to recollect the experiences as a witness.

When I respond, "I am happy", "I am unhappy", "I am joyful", "I am sorrowful", "I am worried", --in all these conditions, the 'I' is same, but the responses varied as per the change in the external world around me.

But what exactly is this sense of "I-ness?" I use the word "I" hundreds of times in a day without hesitation. I keep saying that 'I am thinking or seeing something', 'I have a feeling or desire', 'I know or remember something'.

'I' is the most familiar, most intimate, most obvious aspect of myself.

I know exactly what I mean by "I" Until, I try to describe it or define it. Then I run into trouble.

So 'I' or 'myself' is that changeless witness, who is witnessing the changes in my body; my dreams, my feelings and the world since birth.

'Who is that I'?

'I' is most important to everyone?

I know many people and things in the world, but if I question myself-

'Is everything important or 'Myself' important for me?

Obviously, I feel that 'Myself' is more important for me than any other person or things.

Everyone give utmost importance to 'self'

Even in family, people give importance to 'self', since supreme love exist only for one's 'self'.

It is pure and simple 'self'-ishness.

Let us see what Sage Yajnavalkya told his wife Maitreyi in 'Brihadaranyaka Upanishad'-

“My dear Maitreyi, know that a wife loves her husband not for his sake, but for her own benefit. The husband loves his wife, not for the sake of the wife, but for his own benefit. Similarly, it is not for the sake of the sons, that they are loved, but for parent's own benefit. It is not for the sake of wealth, that it is loved, but for one's own benefit that it is loved.”

So, please note that in this world, whether it is spouse, son or friend, people love only as long as the relationship is beneficial and derives happiness from them. If they are bringing unhappiness, the love is lost. Even when we worship and praise God, it is not to please God, but ourselves.

Let us go through a short story which I read in Andhra Prabha weekly magazine during my childhood:

“A girl Chitra had eyes defect from birth. As her parents could not afford costly operation, she grew up as a blind child. Her parents and siblings used to love her and take care of her needs. She received all the love & affection and never missed any fun and education, but the only handicap was her blindness.

Luckily, there was no one in the family, who avoided her or not been friendly because of her blindness. As she grew up, she made friends in school and neighbours, who enjoyed time spending with her. At college she met Krishna who is from a very rich family; and in spite of her blindness, Krishna became close to her. After the graduation, he proposed to her parents to marry Chitra and even to take care of her eye operation expenses.

Chitra and her parents were thrilled and happily agreed to the proposal and made preparations to get her eyes operated.

The surgery though a bit critical, the Doctor operated successfully. The doctor said she will be able to open her eyes within a week, and she may decide whom she wants to see first.

On the day Chitra's eyes were to be opened, all were anxiously waiting about whom Chitra wanted to see first. Parents have given their love and affection, siblings have been so close to her every day and night, Krishna has agreed to marry and main benefactor to get her eyes back, Doctor gave her sight through critical operation.

Doctor removed the bandage covered on her eyes and said - Chitra you can now open your eyes and you will be able to see the world with your own eyes for the first time - whom you want to see first?"

Chitra said "I want a mirror".



So Chitra's curiosity is first "How she looks like" - and wanted to see herself first. Then comes others like parents, relations etc. Without seeing herself, she cannot relate herself with others. Without knowing 'self', the world is a delusion for her. All relationships are delusive in nature.

This is common to all of us. When we go through a photo album, we see our photo first, and analyse our face and style and then see others photos.

Self comes first as it is closest to you. Now let us go through a story narrated by my

Guru Sri Raparti Ramarao:

"A house holder got a phone call that his house caught fire, while he was in office. He immediately rushed to his house with anxiety. On the way, the post man tried to congratulate him on his winning a lottery of ten million, while handing over the envelope containing the cheque. He pocketed the cover without even looking at it and without even thanking the post man; he started running towards his house. By the time he reached his house, he found his wife crying in front of the house which is in flames. Immediately he enquired from his wife about the child. She replied that the kid was stuck inside the building. He started requesting every passer-by to rescue his child from the flames duly announcing the gift of his prize money of rupees ten million to the rescuers. He also prepared to enhance the amount. He made hue and cry, but he dared not to get into the flames.

In the above incident, the house holder likes his life (himself) more than any other thing which prevented him to get into the flames. Thus, it is convincingly proved that one loves himself the most, which is represented by 'I' or 'me'.

So to conclude, 'I' or 'myself' is important for anyone than anything else. Then it is more important to know one's own self

Let us find out - Who am I ?

When a person ponders on this question, the person feels "it is me"

But who is that "Me" or
"Myself" that everyone talks about?



“Know thyself” said Socrates more than 2000 years back and the Vedanta proclaimed the same more than 5000 years ago.

It is necessary for one to know about one's own self. Everybody thinks, what is that 'I' should know about myself? Yet many are unaware of who is that 'I' or myself'.

Sri Mata Amritanandamayi says:

Who are we referring to when we say 'I'?

Is it the body? Do we own the body?

How can the body, conceived of by our parents and sustained by nature, be ours? After the body dies, the body that we call 'mine' will not be with us anymore.

Is it the name?

If the 'I' is in the name, where was it before our parents named us? And what if we change our name, what happens to the 'I'?

Is it the mind?

If we were the mind, it should be under our control, but that is not the case. Sometimes we say 'I am -lazy, active, happy, sad'. Thus, it has different characters at different times.

Where is the real 'I' in all these?

Can we introduce ourselves to others by merely saying 'I'? Without adding information pertaining to -our name or occupation or the fact that we are someone's son or husband, or that we are from a certain place-Without giving some background, our identity is not clear.

Yet, are any of these permanent?

No. Our job can change. Our address can change. We will lose our dear ones someday. But, 'I' exist even without them. “If I do Exist, then who am ‘I’”?

To understand better, let us go through this story:

One day when King Janaka was sleeping, his sentry came running in and cried, "Maharaja, wake up. The enemy king has attacked our kingdom." King Janaka woke up, and without any preparation or preplanning he came to the battlefield with his army. A fierce battle was fought, and king Janaka was defeated at last. He was wounded and exhausted. The victor king, who was the new ruler of Janaka's kingdom, banished Janaka from that kingdom.

So Janaka fled to the adjacent kingdom. There as he was hungry, saw that poor people were being offered food. He then stood in the long queue and was left with only starch. Janaka was happy to take that. As he was about to eat, the bowl dropped accidentally. Janaka then cried out in misery.

The sentry came running in and asked, "What happened Maharaja?" King Janaka woke up only to realise that he was dreaming. But he had an analytical mind, so he asked, "Is this real or was that real? Is this the truth or was that the truth?"

The sentry was taken aback. He called the Queen, and Janaka asked her the same question. She too got confused. He went on asking the same to everyone, but none of them was able to understand his question.



Meanwhile, the news of the king's weird question reached the ears of the great Sage Ashtavakra, who readily understood why the king was asking such a question?

The next day Sage Ashtavakra visited Janaka's court.



King Janaka, on seeing the great sage,
asked the same question, **“Was That true or is This true?”**

The great sage then counter questioned him,
**“When you were defeated, were all these wealth and
kingdom of yours, there or not?”**



The king answered, **“No, they weren't!”**

Ashtavakra again asked him,
**“And now that you're sitting here on your throne,
are those experiences of defeat, misery, here or not?”**



The King replied **“No!”**

Ashtavakra said,
“So Raja, neither That is true nor This is true”.



King Janaka was confused and questioned,
“Nothing is true - Both are unreal?”

Then Guru asks him - **Were you there when you were as a Beggar in dream?"**



King says **"Yes I was there"**



Are you here when you are as a King?



King says **"Yes I am here"**



The Guru says **"This 'I' which is witness in both dream and present waking worlds is real"- and asks him to find who is that 'I'; which is truth and his true reality.**



In our daily life, we operate with our senses. But let us ask ourselves these questions: When it is said

- I am listening ----- who is listening?
- I am seeing ----- who is seeing?
- I am tasting ----- who is tasting?

Why we love 'I' or 'Self' more than others?

When frankly observed by us, we love that thing most, which gives us maximum Happiness. For example - I say 'I like my car or a sweet', why? Because, it gives me 'Happiness'.

So, when I say I like an object, country, game etc, it is because I derive 'Happiness' from it.

So, when I finally say 'I like myself most' -it is because I am Happiness.

Now a question arises 'How I can be Happiness?'

Because I am loving myself the most. And happiness is in what I love most.

Happiness is actually a state of infinity. We have already seen that Happiness doesn't come from objects. As soon as a desire is fulfilled, the disturbance subsides resulting in thoughtless moments.

The experience of thoughtless moment is infact the experience of 'Infinity' remaining as 'Infinity' which is labled by everybody as 'Happiness'.

What is this 'I' or 'Self', who is having all these experiences ?

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states

“That faculty in me because of which I am able to know, constantly, all my experiences of wakefulness, dream and deep-sleep states is called the 'Self'. By this faculty I am not only aware of the world of objects around me, but I am also equally aware of mind and intellect.”

The basic message of the Upanishad is “Know the Knower by whom all is known.”

In my mind, I can observe all agitation of thoughts and also the absence of them in deep sleep. This knower, 'I' or 'Self', is to be realised or understood.”

Who is this person 'I'; we are told we have to know?

It is said that whoever is having qualities like Nachiketa mentioned above; the 'who am I?' enquiry itself will directly take them to 'I', that Infinity, which we are trying to understand.

But for others, they need further explanation and discussion.

Who am I?

For finding that 'I', enquiry in the form “Who am I?” alone is the principal means.

This question was first popularised by Bhagvan Ramana Maharshi.

Bhagvan always asked people to ponder over this question, when they used to raise the problems or sufferings

they were facing in life. He asked them to enquire, to whom that problem or suffering is arising .
Usually person used to answer “I am having problem and I am suffering”.
The Ramana Maharshi suggests to enquire who is that ‘I’?

Let us check - who is this 'I', using some logic.

In the olden days in India, ladies do not call or utter their husband's name in any discussions.

This topic is used in this example

Ex: A Newly married couple came to bride's parents' home to attend a function. There were four young persons sitting along with bridegroom in the drawing room. Some elderly women who were sitting in the inner room asked :

“who is your husband?”

Whether that person with beard - She says 'No'
Whether that tall person - She says 'No'
Whether the person with Blue shirt? - She says 'No'
Whether the person with spectacles? - she says 'No'

Finally, the person left behind – (after elimination of all those other men present) was her Husband.

This has been recognised or understood by the elderly women, even without being told directly.

In manufacturing, to reduce defects, people use– 'Six sigma' process, where they first eliminate the reasons not related to the problem one by one, to arrive at the solution for the actual problem.

Similarly, in scriptures, Mandukya upanishad's 7 th Mantra, negates all (eliminating one by one) using 'Neti Neti' which means 'not this---not this' technique and try to pin point the 'Self'. After negating all, finally who is left behind is the 'negator'. The mantra at last says- negate the negator, because till now, the 'ego' is negating all and we have to transcend that also, to stay face to face with your real nature, which is your true 'self'. Once the 'ego' is also negated then who will know the Self. Self knows Itself.

So, let us filter out and try to understand 'who am I' from the clue given is this conversation.

Who am I?

YOUR REAL NATURE - briefed by Guru Raparti Ramarao and elaborated by author for clearer understanding:

The following conversation between the Spiritual Master (Guruji, denoted as G) and devotee, (a government bureaucrat, denoted as D) will enlighten us on the 'True nature' of ourselves (the inner essence)

Devotee pays respects to guru and says “Guruji I heard you are a great holy person and I am sure you should have met God and I also want to meet God. Please help me to meet God.”

Guruji asks- If I want to meet your boss who is the Chief Minister, can I go and meet him directly?

D: No guruji- we have to inform CM secretary about your details and purpose, then if CM permits-you can meet him.

G: Similarly, I have to ask the permission of God whether I can take you to him. So I need information about you, so give me details of yourself. Who are you?

D: My name is Bharadwaj

G: I am not asking your name- were you there before your parents named you?

D:Yes

G: So, who are you?

D: I am son of my father-Somayajulu.

G: I am not asking who are your parents or family- who are you?

D: I am a man

G: I am not asking which gender you are- what you know about yourself?

D: After long thought “I am my body” (putting his hand on his heart region)

G: So, you are your body?

D: Yes

G: Whose is this dress you are wearing?

D: My dress

G: Whose pen is this in your pocket?

D: It is my pen

G: Whose keys are these?

D: They are my car keys

G: Whose car is this?

D: It is my car

G: When you are saying-My dress, My pen, My keys, My car, so they all belong to you. They are not you- correct?

D: Yes Guruji

G: All these can be seen and they are all 'objects' seen by a 'subject'-which is you. Correct?

D: Yes guruji.

G: Likewise, when you can see and say - “my body” it means it belongs to you, as it is also an object to some subject?

D: I agree guruji

G: Ok let us proceed further -I have three photos of yours since childhood. Which body is yours- showing 3 photos of the devotee -

This photo -when you were born -3.5 kgs weight and 1 foot high Who is in this photo?

D: It is me.

G: Who is in this photo- when you are 15 years-30 kgs and 5 ft height

D: It is me.

G: Who is in this photo- when you are 25 years-60 kgs and 6 ft height

D: It is me.

G: Now you are 35 years and 70 kgs weight

Which body is yours- it should be only one body?

D: Yes -my body has changed.

G: Hope you remember your experiences from childhood and you have seen your body grow along with others?

D: Yes guruji, I remember my body and some experiences when I was boy, youth and adult.

G: The one who sees a pot is different from the pot; he never becomes the pot. Similarly, the one who sees the body is different from the body. He never becomes the body. Since you are seeing your body and its changes since childhood, so you are not the body. Correct?

D: Yes guruji

G: Thus, we can understand that you are not the body but there is one thing which is constant-which is “I” “my” “mine” etc -correct?

D: I agree Guru- Since I am able to see 'my body' with eyes- am I the eyes?

G: Okay we can conclude 'eyes' are seeing all the objects including your body. So eyes are 'subject' and others

are objects. But when the eyes are paining or not able to see without glasses, what do you say?
D: I say 'My eyes are paining' and 'I am not able to see with my eyes'
G: As you say, 'My' eyes and can see them in a mirror, so they are also an object for you, now who are you?
D: (after deep thought) I got it - it's Mind.
G: Ok let us discuss your mind. When your mind is wandering with thoughts and suddenly attention is brought back to Present-who has brought it back?
D: No idea
G: Sometimes you take a wrong decision-and say -my mind (intellect) did not work properly
D: Yes, I agree.
G: When you say 'my' mind, it has become a mental object to someone-and that someone is able to observe the thoughts and emotions; and comment on the mind that 'I am feeling bad'; 'I am angry'; 'I feel happy' etc. In other words, the body, senses, mind and intellect are all perceived and experienced by you. Then whose mind is that? When you say mine, Who are you?
D: I am not able to answer.
G: Take a look at the explanation below, where we shall see different states we experience daily.

1. Wakeful state
2. Dream state
3. Deep sleep (No-dream) state.

Let us see how we express our experiences:

When I wake up, I am in wakeful state --- I am in physical world – let us call it 'A'
When I am asleep, I am in dream state --- I am in subtle world–let us call it 'B'
When I am in deep sleep state--- I am in no world(blank) – let us call it 'C'

D	State	Called as	World	Example
THURIYA Is common consciousness in all three states-like Gold is present in ornaments given as Example	Wakeful state	A	Physical world	Bangle
	Dream State	B	Subtle world	Necklace
	Deep Sleep State	C	No world (Blankness)	Bar

G: For that "I" called "A" -What are all in existence in that wakeful state?

D: I see all the objects and experience them physically.

G: Alright! Now let us discuss the second state "dream". Are all the things of wakeful state available in the dream state? Are there any items missing or new items appearing?

D: All the things I experience in wakeful state are also available in the dream, and I am also there.

G: Right! You are using "I". Is that 'I' in wakeful state the same as in the dream state or is it different?

D: Even in dream also that same "I" exists.

G: O.K. Let us discuss this point. I shall narrate this. For instance, you are admitted in hospital due to fracture of your leg in an accident and you are lying on the bed. You are given anesthesia by the doctor. You got into dream; you are walking on the beach in Visakhapatnam and the waves of the sea are touching your feet and going backwards. Do you call "I" there in dream state and "I" here in wakeful state as one and the same?

D: NO! Master both must be different.

G: Then, let us assume the "I" in dream state is "B". Now in third state deep sleep state; what are all available?

D: Nothing but void! Guruji!

G: When you wake up what do you say?

D: I say "I have slept happily"

G: It is clear that you (I) only exist.

D: Yes, Guruji! "I" was only there without any world.

G: Let me name that "I" in the deep sleep state as "C". Now; tell me what all you have carried from the wakeful state into dream?

D: Nothing from wakeful state.

G: Could you bring anything from dream state to wakeful state?

D: No nothing.

G: Similarly, are you able to take any things from waking state to deep-sleep state? Or from one state to another?

D: No, nothing is transferrable. All that are appearing in one particular state, are limited to that state only. While entering another state, existence of the first state is totally disappearing, except awareness of them in wakeful condition.

G: What is happening to the 'I', when you are shifting from one state to another? Are "A", "B" & "C" also shifting?

D: A is in the waking world and that experience is known to A. B is in dream world and that experience is known to B.

C is in deep sleep and that experience is known to C.

They are limited to their respective states and passing away along with those states

G: Then, how do you have knowledge about continuity of experiences in all these three states including all the happenings respectively?

D: Oh! You put me a critical question. Even though I am having different experiences in different states- there is a continuity of experience that 'I have slept happily' in deep sleep state; 'I had bad dreams' in dream state; and 'I recollected those experiences after waking' about the deep sleep and dream states.

G: So even though 'I', as we know of ourselves, is not there in deep sleep and dream state, still we are having the knowledge of those states on waking up. So, there is one 'continuous I' which is knowing all the three states.

Let us treat this 'continuous I' as "D" for explanation. This "D" is aware of all the three states and seems exclusively different from the three experiences of the state. He is knowing everything like a witness. (Sakshi).

D: Guruji! What does witness means?

G: Suppose two people are fighting with each other. Consider that you are an onlooker. Are you affected by the injuries, pains, or the sufferings of the incident?

D: No Guruji!

G: Similarly, if these two persons get into legal tangle, and during the argument in court, they call for anyone who was there at the time of incident. In case your name is referred, court wants you to be present for recording your statement. Then what are you called?

D: The witness! Guruji!

G: With this example, you have understood the usage of "Witness"

D: Yes! Guruji! Well that means "Witness" is not being influenced or connected with the happenings. He is just an observer.

G: Yes. So also, the "Continuous I" which we call as 'D' is different identity, and witnessing the three I's called A, B, C Who are enjoyers of wakeful, dream and deep-sleep states respectively.

However, there is a difference between an ordinary 'Court witness' and the "Witness" here. The witness in the court is the knower of the things going around him, with the help of external aids such as-eyes, ears and light to perform

his functions. Whereas this inner witness “D”, is knowing every state with its 'awareness', without any aids. It can be understood that all the three states are happening in its full knowledge only. Is that 'D' attached to the suffering, comforts and troubles of “A”, “B” & “C” ?

D: Not at all- but Gurujil! All the states happening in his knowledge, yet not connected. Can you kindly explain me elaborately?

G: Think that you have gone to a movie. You will see on the screen, different scenes like

- Floods rising from the sea and inundation of hamlets
- Buildings damaged due to bombing in a war
- Burning of many vehicles, by anti-social elements, fighting with one another and stabbing etc.,

After the movie is over, has that screen been wet by flood water, or burnt in bombing or covered with blood stains in fighting?

D: No! Gurujil!

G: So, also pictures of wakeful, dream, deep-sleep states are coming and going one after another on screen “D”. Though these particular states are happening in 'D', he retains a distinct identity from them like the movie screen, without being influenced, “D” remains as spectator (witness).

D: Does it mean that I am “D” sir? Which is present in all three states as a mute witness?

G: Yes! No scope of doubt in that!

D: Since I am “D”, I am not in this world and changing worlds like wakeful, dream and deep-sleep are within me.

G: Yes! Exactly! Now answer my question- 'who are you?'

After a long pause, he questioned the guru

D: Is it Consciousness?

G: Yes, 'D' is Consciousness or Awareness.

If you analyse who is this 'I' or 'Me' who remains unchanged in spite of different bodies since childhood, different states, different lives-we are left with the 'Consciousness', one which remains unchanged.

It is the real nature of you. That is real 'You.'

You are not by name, by body, by mind -You are 'Consciousness' also called as 'Thuriya'

'D' is not a separate entity or state:

To explain Consciousness or Thuriya: Though we have given a separate identity for 'continuous I' as 'D', it is not a separate entity. This identity has been given, so that the seeker is not confused with three states already explained.

There is only one state, that of 'Infinite Consciousness or Awareness'. The three states of waking, dreaming and deep-sleep cannot be real as they come and go. The 'I' called as 'D', which is in continuity in all the three states alone is real. This Infinite Consciousness alone is there and expresses as individual Consciousness in waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Consciousness is like the screen on which the three pictures of wakeful, dreaming and deep sleep come and go.

It is Thuriya or Infinite Consciousness which alone is always present in all the three states - like Gold alone is present in all the three ornaments bangle, necklace and ring as shown in the figure on page no. 18.

D: So, I am Infinite Consciousness- The Brahman?

G: Yes- You are that 'Infinite Consciousness' which is manifesting as different sentient and non sentient beings .

Sri Ramakrishna paramahansa says: "The jiva is nothing but the embodiment of Satchidananda. Due to Maya illusion or ignorance 'Self' disguised itself in various bodies, and jiva has forgotten its real Self."

How Infinite got embodied and individualised?

When in the Infinite Consciousness, there arises the notion of limitation due to ignorance, it appears to descend into the body being formed in the womb. Thus the Infinite Consciousness appears as Individual Consciousness or limited Consciousness (Jiva).

The Pure Consciousness reflected in the mind (Anthahkarana), brings the notion of 'I am' and appears to be divided or Individualised Consciousness. Individual reflected Consciousness identified with body- became body consciousness. The 'ego' faculty in individual (Jiva) mind, expressed as 'I' or 'self', veils the Infinite Consciousness and makes it feel as a separate individual.

It then appears to be divided as individual self and world, giving rise to the belief of different living beings and diverse objects and these are experienced by the Jiva as a solid reality. These experiences of the world though

conceived to be inside, but perceived as if they are outside the Infinite Consciousness through the illusion caused by the medium 'Mind'. That is the reason 'Mind' is called Maya or ignorance.

And from then on, the individual living beings, own 'sown actions' become the cause for their subsequent experience of pleasure and pain.

This is how the Infinite Brahman appeared as individual Jiva.

So, for simple understanding we shall call 'Jiva' as small 'i' which is the 'ego'. Brahman or God or Infinite will be called as Big 'I'

Hereafter, the Jiva or individual consciousness or ego, will be represented as small 'i'.

What is the function of ego (i)?:

In Sanskrit Jiva is defined as

'Gnatha' -which means the 'Knower'

'Karta' - which means 'Doer'

'Bhokta' - which means 'Enjoyer'

In all people, "individuality or ego" creates the vanity of feeling that 'i am perceiver- feeler-thinker- Knower'. Then, person ascribes actions to himself by saying, 'i am the doer' and as "i am the enjoyer' out of arrogance.

Ego is the 'i ness"

Ego is not to be treated in the same meaning, as we use for saying an 'egoistic' person. Ego, which is also another function of the mind - is the identity of individual 'i ness' and is the 'owner' of all actions done through our mind and body which is expressed as 'i have planned' 'i have done' and later takes strong ownership of the result as me/mine.

In our life, we regularly use 'i'- for instance, "i am the best," "i am highly intelligent," "i gave the idea and made it successful", "i take care of my family", "i own this facility", and so on. When an individual demonstrates any of these assertions with actions, he is taking ultimate ownership of individual self and his actions.

The desires forces a person to do actions and the 'ego' assumes the roles of 'Knower', 'Doer', 'Enjoyer', which gives

rise to attachment, anger, jealousy etc. The Jiva thus gets into the cycle of 'Desire- contemplate -action-result- Desire' forgetting its own Consciousness as Brahman, and gets entangled in the objective world.

Thus, individual desires, binds the jiva as a slave of the 'Mind', and acts as being apparently tied down, like an animal is tied to a rope. This makes 'Jiva' fall into the trap of 'the law of Karma' and rebirth in order to experience pending desires, resulting in cyclic births.

If only Brahman is there, how is jiva super imposed on Brahman ?

When there is some real object only, there can be a chance of superimposition.

A popular example given in scriptures is Rope and Snake. When a rope is not visible properly during dusk in an error of judgement; the image of snake is superimposed on rope, by our conditioned mind. Non comprehension of reality leads to misapprehension of it.

Where there is no real 'rope,' superimposition of the 'Snake' cannot happen.

If there is no Brahman, there will not be any chance of any superimposition of worldliness.

This trick of false imposition on 'Real' is called Maya (illusion) which is the result of ignorance. So, when rope is mistaken for a snake due to delusion, we fear to go near it and continuously suffer from the fear of attack. This experience of the false “existence” of the snake is the cause of suffering. One fine day, a courageous person comes and shows us that it is just a rope, but it is 'appearing' as snake due to dim light. Where is the snake now? Did it run away?

Similarly, until a Guru guides us with knowledge of Brahman and shows us that there is no jiva or individuality, the ignorance never ends. Till then, we shall be entangled in the worldly affairs -by enjoying and suffering.

This knowledge is enough to take us to the Supreme Truth or Brahman, says Vedanta.

A seeker of Truth, purified by selfless service and selfless devotion, goes to an illumined teacher and gets 'Self' realisation with the grace of God and Guru.

So, Who is the changeless in this changing world?

Brahman or Consciousness is that 'One' who is ever changeless and supports the changing world.

From this chapter, we understood the following:

- First, we were thinking that we are body and mind.
- Next, we understood that we are Consciousness within the body and mind.
- Later, we understood that body, mind and the world are in Consciousness.
- The ultimate reality is that Consciousness alone is there which is appearing as body, mind and world.

Having known that we are none other than 'Consciousness', we should now aim to know that this jiva which is 'i' or 'ego' is none other than Big 'I' or Infinite Consciousness.

The realisation of 'i' (Jiva) is nothing but a mere appearance of 'I' (Brahman), is known as Moksha or Liberation or Self realisation.

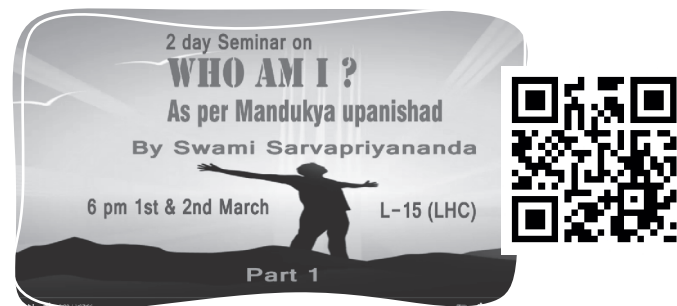
Let us understand 'Consciousness – our real Nature' -in next chapter and achieve Moksha.

End of chapter

Note: Please watch Sarvapriyananda Swami videos in U tube – “Who am I”- Part 1 and part 2, to firmly establish what you have learnt in this chapter.

1. <https://youtu.be/eGKFTUuJppU>

Part - 1



Scan QR code
to watch video

2. <https://youtu.be/F0dugc4TrlE>

Part - 2

