



Questions and Answers with
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The Supreme Truth Lies within Everybody

Would you show me who I am?

You are you; you can't be anything else. You are that supreme Truth. When I-consciousness becomes attached to other things, it becomes limited. The pure I-awareness does not attach itself to anything; that is the light of God itself. When your ego becomes attached to a particular name or form, it becomes bondage. Through meditation you should get to the pure I-awareness within you.

This pure "I" is nothing but a vibration of the inner Self. If you are not aware of the pure "I," you know yourself as "I am the body" or "I am a man" or "I am a woman." The pure "I" that has no attachment in it — that is the true Self. That is Truth and that is Consciousness.

Who am I, and what is the purpose of my life?

This very question is raised by Shankaracharya in a work of his called *Aparokṣānubhūti*. "Who am I? What elements am I made of? Why have I come into this world? Where should I go? What should I do here? Who is my creator?" Then Shankaracharya adds, "Only the person who confronts himself with such questions can be considered to be a true human being, an intelligent, thoughtful human being." The others are human beings no doubt, but they merely exist; they merely eat and manage to stay alive. If man just continues eating and drinking and procreating, what distinguishes him from other creatures? Trees also beget more trees, birds also beget more birds, animals also beget more animals,

fish also beget more fish, so if that were all man did there would be nothing to distinguish him from these other creatures.

One should ask oneself again and again, "Why was I born? Who made me? What is the purpose of my existence?" because these are the most important questions in life. To find the answers to these questions, one must explore the inner Self as much as he can. "Am I this body? Am I the senses? Am I a name? Am I the waking, dream, or deep-sleep states, or am I the Witness of these states? What exactly is my nature? Who am I?" One should engage himself in such inquiry over and over.

The fact is that man is not what he identifies himself with. He does not yet understand what he really is. As long as he perceives his body separately, as "this," he cannot be the body. Shankaracharya says in this context that one who sees a certain article, for instance, a pot, will always remain different from the pot. He can never become the pot. The dweller within the body, who perceives the body distinctly as "this," will find in the course of his inquiry that he is not this body, the senses, any state, knowledge, or an object of knowledge.

If you turn within and contemplate the Self, you find that there is nothing like It. The Self is most marvelous. In the waking state, the Self perceives this vast universe while remaining different from it, and in the dream state — even though the senses don't function, even though there are no concrete sense objects to perceive — the Self perceives the dreamworld while remaining different from it.

In answer to the question "Who am I?" one Upanishadic sage wrote, "You are the one who, in the waking state, perceives the outer world while remaining different from it, who in the dream state perceives the dreamworld while remaining different from it, who does not sleep during sleep, and who perceives even the emptiness, the void of deep sleep." In fact, he is the same as the Lord, as God.

One sage asked another, "What is God?" The other replied, "The witness of the mind." So "the witness of the mind" is the answer to "Who am I?"

Lord Rama once asked his Guru Vasishtha, "Who is God, what exactly is his nature, and how can I know him?" Vasishtha answered, "God is the one, the Self, who perceives all sensations such as sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound. He is all-pervasive."

So you are the one I have described, and the purpose of your existence is to know who you are. The rest will take care of itself. Man should first know himself, and then he can participate in outer life. I have never suggested that one should run away from life in the world, because there is no escape from it.

Everyone has to live in the world one way or another. The world is made of the same five elements the body is made of. So the body and the world are akin to each other, and since they are intimately related, the question of renouncing anything is absurd. The thought that "I am renouncing this, I am getting deliverance from that" does not make any sense. What is there to renounce or accept when the fact is that even after renunciation you still have to live on the same Earth, eat the food growing from it, drink the same water, and breathe the same oxygen? You still get wet in the rains, dry in the sun, and cold in the winter.

This is the reason that the Lord emphasizes action so much in the *Gītā*. The Lord says to Arjuna, "O brother, this is the essence of the Vedas. You must engage in action. Never discard action or give up your duties. Never consider the world to be different from you and thus get caught up in an illusion."

Therefore, you should get to know the pure "I," the pure ego. This is why you undertake meditation. The only purpose of meditation by shaktipat is to know the pure ego.

Sometimes I find myself to be my own worst enemy. How can I overcome this tendency?

Yes, the Lord says in the *Gītā*, "One is one's own friend, and one is one's own enemy," and this is completely true. Nobody else can be either your friend or your enemy. It is you yourself who are the cause of your own progress or downfall. Unfortunately, you begin to hold others responsible for it. In the *Mahābhārata* there is a very important dialogue between Krishna and Duryodhana, where it is said that nobody else can give you either happiness or sorrow. If you feel that somebody else is causing you sorrow, you are deluding yourself. Similarly, if you feel that somebody else is giving you happiness, again you are deluding yourself. It is foolish to think that somebody else is causing you happiness or pain. You suffer the consequences of your own actions. The poet-saint Krishnasuta says, "Man has become his own worst enemy. Nobody else is his enemy. He never bothers to find out why he has come into this world, where he is going and where he should go, what he is doing and what he should do. By not concerning himself with these questions he remains blind, and it is this blindness which is his worst enemy."

This tendency can be overcome by contemplation of the Self, by right thinking, by thinking about the fundamental questions: "Who am I? Why have I come here?"

What is my duty? What should I do? What should I avoid? How can I achieve the highest good? What should I avoid in order to escape a downfall?" It is by engaging oneself in these questions that one can cease to be one's own enemy.

Therefore, man should take himself across the ocean of change. He should transcend body-consciousness by right thought, by studying the scriptures, and by finding the truth of the Self through meditation. He who comes to know his own inner Self directly through meditation — the inner Self which is shining as pure knowledge, as pure Consciousness in the heart — he is his own best friend. If he doesn't do this, then he passes from death to death. After taking birth in this world, man should think about what he has done, what he has been born for, where he has to go, and what he has to achieve in the course of his brief existence. You should be able to expel the various passions which keep arising and subsiding inside, and make friends with your own Self. Begin to value your own Self. Know it. Remain aware of it. Then you will be your own best friend, and you will cross over worldliness.

Lord Shiva is said to be the giver of both worldly enjoyments and liberation.

How does he give material enjoyment?

Lord Shiva is the giver of the fruits of action, and he presides over all actions. Whatever actions you perform, whether good or bad, the Lord is the owner of all those actions. If you continuously act with this understanding, you will attain liberation, but if you do not have this understanding, you will attain only material enjoyments, the fruits of the mundane world. Whatever action you perform, do it for the sake of God. If you act with the understanding that Parashiva is the final reaper of the fruits of all actions, then you will attain liberation. The *Bhagavad Gītā* says:

The wise, possessed of knowledge and action without desire for fruits, are freed from the bondage of birth and achieve liberation.

Knowledge is of two types, pure and impure. The awareness that "I am a gardener," "I am a potter," "I am forty years old," or "I have a family and children" is impure knowledge. To understand that "I am Shiva, I pervade this entire universe" is pure knowledge. With impure knowledge one remains

a limited being, whereas after gaining pure knowledge one becomes Shiva.

The *Śiva Sūtras* say:

As soon as a seeker attains pure knowledge, he becomes a Siddha.

Try to attain knowledge of the Self, discover the answer to the inquiry “Who am I?” In doing so, your environment or circumstances will not be an obstacle for you. Hanuman’s attitude of being a servant to Rama did not prevent him from realizing “I am Rama.”

The world is a drama. In a drama there are many characters, each played by a different actor. A skilled actor can bring out the character exactly as portrayed without forgetting who he really is. Similarly, while playing your part in this world, you must constantly be aware of your true nature. This true knowledge is the only source of happiness. You experience pleasure or pain according to your awareness. If you constantly remember “I am Shiva,” you will be in bliss. . . . This awareness is called pure knowledge. This knowledge brings you liberation.

Since forming a relationship with you, I have felt a force working within me in the form of inspiration and guidance. Now, since coming into contact with your physical form, I do not understand that aspect of our relationship. How can I reconcile the two?

Have a relationship with your own Self; don’t try to have a relationship with somebody else. My teaching is not that you should have a relationship with me. My teaching is that you should have a relationship with your own inner Self.

If a Guru teaches you something, it doesn’t mean you have to have a relationship with him. What he says is that you must have a relationship with your own Self — and that Self is what he reveals to you.

The power of the supreme truth lies within everybody. As you get close to it, you experience that force more and more. That is the only proof you have. That experience bears testimony that God is inside and functioning through you. The Upanishads say that there is nothing greater than the Self. Everything exists for the Self. For this reason, have a relationship with your own Self. 🙏