

Who
am I ?



by
AiR

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PREFACE

Have you ever pondered on this simple question “Who am I?”

Am I this body that I seem to be, am I the mind that thinks, or am I the intellect that decides what I do?

Maybe I am none of the above. Maybe I am just that which tells me that “I am Mr. Smith, I am the son of John, and I am the owner of John and Smith Enterprise”.

Somebody casually mentioned that neither am I the body nor the mind nor the intellect or ego. I am the Soul. I was

completely confused about what is soul and where is the soul as I was unable to see it. How can I be something that is invisible?

For centuries now, this question has made people ponder and wonder what we truly are. Are we this mortal body that is born to die or are we the mind or something that lives beyond death?

To most people, the question “Who am I?” is irrelevant, and they do not want to waste their time on it. For many people, it does not matter as long as life is fun and they are happy and they are enjoying life. Why should one waste time on a question such as “Who am I?”

But there are a few who are curious and who want to know where we came from and where we will go. We may look like this body, but we are a complex being of the body, mind, intellect and Soul. So, such curiosity finally leads them to realize the truth of who they really are!

WHO AM I ?

One day, King Janak was sitting at his bedroom and suddenly a courtier came and informed him that there was an attack on the kingdom. King Janak called his journals and ordered to prepare for war. He himself prepared for the war. At the battlefield, it was the toughest war he ever had. He lost the war and was wounded. The enemy King captured King Janak and ordered to leave the Kingdom immediately. King Janak who was tired, wounded and out of energy somehow managed to start walking. He asked for water, food from his fellow citizen but they refused due to the fear of the new

cruel King. He kept walking tirelessly for days and night with no food and water. He was about to lose all his hope as he crossed his kingdom and at the entry of the new Kingdom, he saw food was being served to the poor people. He was so hungry and thirsty that he walked towards the line of poor people. But the moment he reached the counter, the food was over. The cook saw him and said, "Hey, Poor Man, I can give the starch, I am sorry but this is the only thing which I can offer." King Janak cried at his helplessness but he said yes to the starch. The cook gave him a bowl full of starch and closed the counter. The moment King Janak took the bowl to his mouth to have

a sip of starch, an eagle jumped on the bowl, and the bowl dropped in dirt. All the starch got mixed with dirt. King Janak lost the last hope and fell down. He was in so much pain, as his wound was bleeding. He was hungry since days and he was not having any energy left to cry either. He collected all his energy one last time and shouted – “Hey Lord” with agony of entire world in his voice.

This was the moment his body guard entered in his bedroom and saw King Janak sweating heavily, sitting on his bed, looking all around with full of surprise and pain in his chest. It was a DREAM. His bodyguard asked him, “My Lord, are you alright?” He saw the

bodyguards, looked around, took a deep breath and said, “*Ya Ye Sach or Ya Vo Sach*” i.e. “Either ‘this’ or ‘that’ is truth”. Bodyguards called the queen and respected courtiers. Everyone gathered and asked for his well-being, but King Janak only uttered, “Either ‘this’ or ‘that’ is truth”.

Days passed, many doctors, sadhus, gurus met the King and tried to talk to him but the King didn't speak any other words other than these. There was a lot of rumor in the palace and kingdom and King Janak was losing his control over his mind (while King Janak was one of the noblest man in the earth during these days).

This continued since days, King Janak daily attended his court but no work took place. He keep watching the court and all around and every time spoke, “Either this or that is truth”.

One day, a Gyani Rishi Asthavakra Muni was passing by his capital and heard few rumors about the King’s mysterious behavior. He decided to visit the court. He saw King Janak sitting with a blank expression on his seat. He asked, “King Janak!! What is the matter?” King Janak saw him. On any other occasion, King Janak would have stood up from his seat and lied on the feet of the Rishi, but that day, he murmured again, “*Ya Ye Sach or Ya Vo Sach*”.

Listening this, Rishi Asthavakra closed his eyes and understood the matter and said, “Hey Raja Janak!! *NA YE SACH AUR NA VO SACH. TU HI SACH!!*” i.e. “King Janak, Neither ‘this’ nor ‘that’ is truth. YOU ARE THE TRUTH!!!”

Listening this, King Janak by his own knowledge understood the meaning, and asked Rishi Asthavakra, “I am the TRUTH, but Who am I?”

That is the same question, which is being searched even today by all or most of us – What is the truth? Who am I?

The most usual answer to this question would be “I am (name)” or “I am a (profession)”. In this world, we are

identified by our name, position, religion, nationality, caste etc. We think that we are this physical body and mind. We get so caught up with such labels in and around us that we forget to ponder on what we really are, to find out our true self, our true nature.

The Vedas and the Upanishads urges us to focus on the truth – “Who am I?” The spiritual journey starts with the question “Who am I?” Once one understands and realizes the answer to this question, one becomes a self-realized person.

To understand “Who am I?” one should start with self-negation, understanding – *Neti Neti* (Not This Not This) – that I am

not this body, mind or intellect. This body keeps changing; it grows, decays, dies. It is an inert thing. How can I be that? What is real remains so at all times, but during deep sleep, the mind ceases to exist. It reappears when we wake up. So, we are neither the physical body nor the mind.

It is actually difficult to accept that we are not the body or the mind. We are used to taking care of the body as everything, and we rely on the power of our mind to think. In due course, we identify ourselves as the body–mind complex. But once the reality dawns upon us, we realize and accept that we are neither of these.

After negating that one is not the

physical body or the mind, one realizes the concept of Tat Twam Asi, which is one of the principle statements of the Mahavakyas. Understanding this, one realizes “I am the Atman, the Divine Spirit, Consciousness, the Soul, or the Spark of Energy within”. It is a Power – immutable and immortal.

The actual self remains hidden under the veil of Maya, Ego and Avidya. This veil is removed once the knowledge dawns upon us – “We are not this, but we are that”.

The realization that one is the Atman leads one to the realization that God lives within us. We are nothing but a part of

Paramatman. We are God – a manifestation of God.

A *Jigyasu* or Seeker must ask this basic question “Who am I?” to attain Spiritual progress. It is this curiosity that leads one to self-realization and takes one to God-realization and finally enlightenment. Without understanding the true nature of the self, spiritual progress is not possible. To start the search, one must contemplate on this question: “Who am I?”

Adi Shankaracharya met Guru Govindpada, his future Guru, in the mountains when he was 8 years old. The master asked him – “Who are you?”, to

which Adi Shankara replied:

*Mano Buddhi Ahankar Chittani Naaham
Na Cha Shrota Jihve Na Cha Ghraana Netre
Na Cha Vyoma Bhumir Na Tejo Na Vaayu
Chidananda Rupah Shivoham Shivoham*

I am not the body. I am not the mind

I am not the ego.

*I am not the five elements of earth,
air, water, fire and space.*

I am Shiva. I am Shiva.

Yes! You are Shiva. I am Shiva. We all are Shiva. But we don't realize the Truth about "Who am I?" On realization, the mist disappears and the truth appears.

About AiR

AiR is not what the dictionary defines as the invisible gaseous substance surrounding the Earth, which is a mixture mainly composed of oxygen and nitrogen.

AiR is the author of this booklet. AiR is a Spiritual Seeker who has set out to find the truth about life.

Born as Ravi V. Melwani, he was a very successful retail businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores – Kids Kemp, Big Kids Kemp and Kemp Fort. After making millions, he realized that life is not just about making money. He shut down his business and

instead of making money, transformed his life to RVM and started making a difference with H.I.S work – Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work.

His objective was to “Make a Difference” in this world before his journey was over. He was the happiest man on Earth living the RVM Philosophy – to Rejoice, Value Life and Make a Difference.

However, one day, several questions and thoughts flashed in his mind: What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to seek happiness and to live and to die, without any purpose? What happens after death? Will we be reborn? Where is God? Where

is Heaven? Are we the Soul? What is Enlightenment? Several questions like these took him on a Talaash, or a search for the truth.

After a few years of intense search in silence, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this body, but we are the Atman, the Soul. Thus he changed his name for the second time from RVM to AiR (the Atman in RVM the Soul in RVM) as realization dawned upon him that we are not this physical body, but we are the Atman. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire life as RVM. He started the study of Atman, God and Life. This led to several realizations that formed the mission of life – to realize God

and to help Seekers realize God.

As RVM, AiR had built a Shiva Temple in the year 1995, which attracts millions of visitors all around the year. As AiR, he now believes that Lord Shiva lives in the temple of our heart. The temple in Bangalore is now called Shivoam Shiva Temple. Being a devoted believer in Lord Shiva for long, he now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of spirituality, and we all have to go beyond religion to truly realize God.

AiR booklets are small, easy-to-read booklets for Seekers who want to realize the truth about God, life and themselves.

Who are we? Where did we come from? What is the purpose of life? Where is God? Where is Heaven? Is Rebirth real? Does the Law of Karma exist? What about the Soul? What is Enlightenment?

These AiR booklets attempt to clear such doubts and answer questions about God and life that many people have in their mind and also help Seekers to move forward on the path of self-realization.

Who are you? Are you the body? Are you the mind? Are you the intellect? Are you the ego? Or are you a combination, a complex of all these?

Most of us look at our physical appearance and think we are this. But how can we be this when the physical body continues to change. This body is not the same as it was few years before, and it will not be the same a few years ahead. Therefore, we are not this body. We are something else!

What are we in reality?

For more information on AiR booklets and AiR, please visit www.air.ind.in or  9739522222.