

We Are the Ultimate Knower

There are many ways of looking at our life on earth. One way would be that it is nothing except experiences. We experience thirst and the satisfaction of that thirst. We experience hunger and the satisfaction of that hunger. We experience being cold; we experience being hot. We experience being loved; we experience being rejected. We experience being well off; we experience being poor. We experience being happy; we experience being sad. We experience being clear in our thinking; we experience being confused.

Most of these things we have in common with the animal kingdom. But as human beings we also have another experience. We experience a sense of "I": "I" am this, "I" am that, "I" am cold, "I" am hot, "I" am clear in my thinking, "I" am confused in my thinking. "I" am this person who was born; "I" am this person who is growing older; "I" am this person who will die. This is who I am. It never occurs to us that this "I" is an experience just the same as being hot or cold, having good thoughts or bad thoughts.

If we enquire further, we recognize that something, which we can never find, is knowing this "I". And if we ask who it is that is knowing this "I", the only answer we can give is that I am knowing the "I". This puts us in a peculiar position. If I am something that can never be known, but I am always identifying with something that can be known, that is simply a passing experience, then it must mean that I am divided from myself, separated from myself.

This has to be as unenviable position, because happiness is always in wholeness, not in division. Hell means division, to be separated from. Heaven means harmony. Therefore, we need to have a harmony or union between that which I can never know, but is what knows everything else including the experience of an ego—and the ego "I." We require a union, a harmony between what we are experiencing and the ultimate experiencer.

How to bring about that harmony, that union? We have to actually bring into our field of experience a new factor. That factor is the knowledge that who we really are is much vaster, much more subtle than what we have been thinking we are. In other words, we must broaden our consciousness, lift ourselves out of ourselves. That is the purpose of all our spiritual practices.

But again, no matter how broad our experience, how sublime our experience, we'll be caught up in it unless there is a constant reminder that ultimately we are That that knows all experience—no matter how sublime, no matter how universal the experience. This knowledge can only be retained in our consciousness through a spirit of profound humility, of surrender, of knowing that we can never know the ultimate knower. It is this profound humility that is the goal of the spiritual life. It is this profound humility that keeps us in touch with our ultimate truth and that recognizes that everything comes from that ultimate, unknowable truth.