

Stop Searching For a New Me

The scriptures tell us that our fundamental error is wrong identification. Gurudev says, “You are not this body, not this mind. Immortal Self you are,” and that the goal of life is God-realization. In other words, we are to make real that we are the Immortal Self rather than believing in our identification with the body and mind.

We have to shift our identity from the body and mind to the Immortal Self, and this is fundamentally a process of *neti, neti*, negating one thing and looking for something else. There can be, however, a flaw in this process that is vital for us to understand. Our fundamental problem is that we have objectified our identity. We, who are Immortal Self, in which there is no separation, have created an identity separate from ourselves. We have identified with a body and mind which we call a me, and now we want to shift that me from the body and mind to something we call Immortal Self.

However, the truth is that we are always Immortal Self whether we are creating a me identification with the body and mind or not. If that is not realized, then we simply go on forever with *neti, neti*. After each new experience we have—following much effort or what we call God’s grace—we think we have reached the goal only to find that that too fades away. Thus we must recognize that the *neti, neti* process is not meant for searching for a new me that is Immortal Self, but to negate all me’s and recognize that I have always been That. I am That right now.

When we create a me, we create something that is lost in the three *guṇas* and the pairs of opposites, that is lost in *avidyā māyā* and *vidyā māyā*. But Lord Kṛṣṇa wants us to be *guṇātīta*, to rise above the three *guṇas* and actually, finally, not even to be aware of them as something separate from ourselves. Thus in the final teaching verse of the Gītā, He says to take refuge in Me alone, I will save you from all sins. It means we are to drop our me which give us our sense of separation and sin. So the refuge we have to take, the Immortal Self we have to become, is here and now when we stop trying to objectify it. The search for a new me has to end.

Perhaps this is the significance of Lord Buddha—after years of the severest austerities—finally saying I will no longer go anywhere. I will sit and not move till I find the goal—even if the flesh rots off my bones. In

other words after going *neti, neti; neti, neti; neti, neti*; we understand the truth of the scriptures—that we have always been That—and thus we refuse to try to create a *me* Immortal Self. We stay exactly where we are, affirming and recognizing that we have always been Immortal Self.

We are Immortal Self when we stop objectifying a me. That is the true meaning of *brahmacarya*, knowledge of Brahman—no objectification. Objects exist but they are no longer separate from us.