

SELF

As the planet revolves, day surrenders to night, summer falls into winter. A new year! January 1st – joining in celebrations, exchanging good wishes, declaring resolutions to forgive the wrongs and strive for the good. It is an agreed upon, designated time that denotes a moving from the old into the new.

In the rotation of beginnings and endings, one may fail to notice the subtle, and yet undeniable, unchanging awareness that remains as a constant background. Just as colours need a canvas upon which to portray a scene, change exists upon a background canvas of conscious existence that does not appear and disappear with the changes. That underlying existence is not obvious to the senses and yet 'it' is.

What is 'it' to be called? What word describes that which is unseen by the eyes and yet without which, the eyes could not see? A dead man's eyes do not see. The physical eyes are windows through which the power of vision observes the scene. How to describe that which is not an object to be seen, not an event to be experienced, and not a person to be known, and yet is?

Enlightened sages have used various words to describe this vital principle of life: God, spirit, the divine, the observer, the Knower, and many more. *Adwait Vedant* (the knowledge of One Self) simply uses the term Self, indicating that it is not separate from you, yourself.

There are no two selves. Myself and yourself is the same Self. The 'my' and 'your' perspectives are relative. Identification of one's self conventionally refers to the individual person, consisting of a body, mind, intellect and ego. *Adwait Vedant* expands the awareness to include Self, the same Self of all. Self awareness does not exclude the individual, but identification only with body excludes awareness of the One Self.

Just as many waves are in truth the whole ocean, the individual self is nothing other than the whole Self. When the wave realises that its true nature is water, it no longer identifies as merely a wave. Knowing the Self as a whole is a matured state of awareness. A parent can be aware of the needs of the child, but a child is not mature enough to be aware of the needs of the parent. The matured consciousness of the parent does not interact with the child according to the child's ego-centric demands, but rather as a wise influence that allows the child's awareness to grow into its expanded potential. Similarly, the mature state of consciousness doesn't dwell in the realm of the dualistic human qualities (*klaysh*), which are five according to *Vedant*.

1. *Kaam* – desire
2. *Krodh* – anger
3. *Moh* – attachment
4. *Lobh* – greed
5. *Ahankaar* – pride

The five *klaysh* are based on *abhinivesh* (the fear of death), which itself is based on *avidya* (not knowing one's true, infinite, indestructible Self).

The expanded consciousness that realises the One Self is released from the struggle of the dualistic consciousness, and will naturally and spontaneously reflect the nature of tolerance, kindness, understanding, wisdom, subtlety, joy and unconditional love.

The question is, how to recognise the all-permeating, formless Self? True wisdom is to develop the power of consciousness to not associate with duality. Seeing the world projected through the limited, dualistic mind, one lacks the ability to grasp the depth of existence and thereby our true purpose, which is to live free from division, blame, shame, fear and hatred.

Going through life relating only to the differences between people and situations, one will eventually feel helpless when there is no respite from the struggles in the days, months, seasons and years that endlessly revolve. Despite the celebrations, the wishes, the resolutions, the struggle to right the wrongs, year after year, we are left feeling unfulfilled at the end because we missed the full picture.

Self enquiry, along with meditation, reveals to the inner eye the eternal and immutable nature of the underlying canvas of the Self, while not destroying the beautiful colours that have painted a miraculous scene. That is ONE, whole, complete and most magnificent Seer Self.