

AHAM BRAHMASMI

Aham Brahmasmi. This Mahavakya means, 'I am Brahman'. What is this 'I am'? Am I this body? The body is subject to death; Brahman is deathless. How can this perishable body be the imperishable Brahman? Am I this name? When this body dies, the name also disappears. The body is subject to change and moves from childhood to youth and then old age. Is Brahman that which changes?

If I am neither the body nor name, then who am I? Am I the mind? What is the mind? It is a bundle of thoughts. Every moment thoughts appear, come and go. Is this Brahman? The mind is that which does not exist. When there are no thoughts, there is no mind. Is this Brahman? No, no, I am not the mind. Am I the life force, the Prana? On death, the Prana leaves the body. It is not permanent, it is not Brahman.

Then, who am I?

Now I am fifty years old. Where was I fifty years ago? Where will I be in the future? I see myself as a combination of body, mind and the life force. I call this mixture, 'I am Rama' 'I am Krishna'. This Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Radha, Sita and Lakshmi are only names. These names and forms will die one day, but there is one thing that does not die. It is the 'I'. All born on earth continue to identify with a name and form. These names and forms are temporary; the 'I' alone is permanent.

The 'I' is eternal, indestructible. It exists forever. However, all think that the 'I' belongs to a single name and form. A person thinks, 'I am the body called Rama. All who are related to this body are mine.' Truly speaking, all that is related to the 'I' perishes.

The 'I' is not limited to a name and form. It is all expansive and ever in existence. It cannot be bound to time, place, name or form. The 'I' has no connection with the perishable body. 'I' is not contained within a body or a name. When one realizes this, he becomes Brahman.

The 'I' that is connected with a name and form is limited to a particular place and period. It pushes one into the cycle of birth and death. For example, I say 'I am Vasantha', Vasantha's place of birth is Vadakkampatti and her life span is 1938 to 2018. Here the 'I' is confined to a place and time. The 'I' that is not bound to a name and form becomes the all expansive 'I'. If it identifies with a body, the ego self 'i' is created. Through sadhana one leaves the 'i' connected to the body and name; then 'I', the Indweller, grows and shows its expansive form. When one realizes that he does not belong to a particular body and name, he is able to attain the all expansive 'I'. The infinite all expansive 'I' is Brahman. Only the one who has attained this state can say, '**Aham Brahmasmi**'.