



## Know Yourself

Beloved immortal Atman! Seekers and *Sadhakas*! The New Year will have its birth within a day of prayer, a day of abstaining from ceaseless, feverish secular thoughts, worldly feelings. We shall not exercise our minds in the field of “I” and “mine”, in the field of desires, passions, cravings, in the field of imaginations, anticipations and memories. For, all these constitute *prapancha*, earth consciousness, all these constitute bondage. Yourself and your life in this universe, in this temporary frame of time and space, name and form constitute *prapancha*. And it is precisely this that we have to transcend.

This *prapancha*, earthly level of consciousness, is what constitute our afflictions, not anything outside. The afflictions that are caused by the various manifestations of nature are occasional and very minor compared to what we can produce. The human being has severe limitations on his ability to change nature around him. They say “Grin and bear it.” A Sanskrit saying is “*Prarabhda karmanam bhogadeva vinashaha* – it is only through undergoing, experiencing that the *prarabhda* karma is ultimately finished.” There is another way. “*Tasmad apariharye arthe na tvaa shocitum arhasi* – Therefore, over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve.” [Gita 2.27] Make up your mind first of all, that you will keep your mind positive. This is the way to face the world and go through all experiences.

Our world ultimately is this inner realm of ours, where we create our state, *avastha*. The *prapancha*, the worldly field, is something within us, not outside. They say: “Man is what he thinks.” “As man thinketh, so he becometh.” Bad company from outside cannot spend the whole twenty-four hours with you; but will the thoughts you keep company with never leave you. Therefore, know yourself in depth. Not in the *vedantic* sense “Who am I? I am Atman, I am Brahman.” No, no, no, that can wait. The immediate necessity is to use common sense to know yourself in truth without self-deception. Know yourself in honesty in the light of deep introspection, self-analysis. Problems will start vanishing. This inner being is also the source of your solutions, of breaking this bondage. So it is not at all a dark picture. All solutions are there, and the key is with you. “Know thyself and be free.” Look for your solutions within yourself where all the problems abide. Move towards the New Year with self-knowledge, with wisdom. “Help me God to help myself.” God help you to be a success unto yourself. You can be totally transformed if you wish.

The sky is the limit. God bless you!

■ Swami Chidananda