

***Jīvā* - A Seeker**
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To discover harmony with the world is to discover the real nature of the world. And therefore, the nature of my relationship with the world and how I should transact with the world is to be understood.

Vedānta says that this limited individual is in itself *brahman*, the limitless. I take myself to be sorrowful or limited but in reality I am of the nature of fullness or *ānanda*; this is what Vedānta says. That limitless, that immortality that you are searching for is indeed your own nature. There should be no struggle in life at all. There should be no unhappiness at all. I am already limitless. I am immortal. I am of the nature of fullness. What I need in life is nothing. If I could really understand and own up what Vedānta reveals about myself, life would be wonderful, ever a source of joy. This is not the case at the moment. I am not able to own up my nature. Since I am already immortal, since I am already limitless, there is nothing that I need in life. Whatever I need is already with me.

Then, what do I have to do to own up my real nature? I have to get rid of something. Some obstacles prevent me from experiencing myself as *saccidānanda*. It is not a matter of acquiring something that I do not have. It is a matter of getting rid of something that I have falsely taken upon myself. This sense of limitation, sense of being bound, sense of being dependent is false and that alone is to be given up. Life is meant for that. Today my life is committed only to acquiring things. By acquiring wealth, by acquiring possessions, by acquiring name and fame and power and

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possession that are limited and insignificant, I am trying to fill up the ocean which is already filled up.

The Upanishadic teacher tells us not to bother about these little things. We are already filled up and therefore we need not waste our time and energy in acquiring what we do not have. Actions, progeny or wealth cannot fill me up, I being the one who is already fulfilled. Giving up all the fallacies, notions, sense of limitation is all that is needed. I am already the tenth man². I think that the tenth man is lost but he is not. I am myself the tenth man, whom I forgot to count. So what is to be done in order to find the tenth man is only to give up the notion that the tenth man is lost. I am already the one whom I am searching for. If this is understood, I come to know for sure that nothing need be acquired in life. Life is not meant for acquiring things; it is meant for getting rid of the ignorance, getting rid of *rāgas* and *dveṣas*, passions and aversions, likes and dislikes which actually deny me what I am. Getting rid of them is called *tyāga*, renunciation. *Tyāga* means renouncing that which is false, which is useless. For an intelligent man who has understood this fact about life, life is now for getting rid of things, for renouncing, for serving. All of a sudden, when this Vedantic approach is understood, I no longer wish to be served by the world: I now start serving the world. I continue to perform actions as before, not to get something I do not have, but to get rid of things that I have falsely taken upon myself. This is done by serving the world as the Lord, by knowing that the Lord and I are not different, that every human being, every living being

² According to the ‘Tenth Man story’, ten young disciples of a Guru wanted to make a trip to the next village. The Guru cautioned their leader to be careful in crossing the rain-swollen river. In fact, at the river it was too deep to wade and they all had to swim across. On the other side the leader counted to make certain all had made it across safely. To his enormous distress he found out that only nine had reached the other shore. For a long time they all searched for the missing tenth man until a wise old man who happened to come to the scene pointed out that the leader had forgotten to count himself.

is essentially God, that the Lord alone pervades all the names and forms. And so anything that I can serve with the *īśvarārpana buddhi* is the service of the Lord.

So what does a student of Vedanta do? He does not seek anything in life. He wants to serve. He dedicates his life for the world and not for himself. He also eats the same *khicadi* and *capati* that we eat. He does the same work with the same instruments available to all. He sits in the same way, walks in the same way, and eats in the same way and talks also in the same way as we do. Then what is the difference? The attitude is different. Now he walks not for himself but for the Lord. He eats not for himself but for the Lord. Anything and everything that he does is not for himself but is for the Lord.