

The Lion Who Believed He Was a Sheep



What I talk about is really simple because it is about life. Life, for so many people has become incredibly complicated. We are all drowning in the sea of definitions. A simple question is asked: "Who are you?" And the number of answers you get is unimaginable.

Recently, I was speaking somewhere and they had this motto: "Service above the self." I said, "But if there is no self, what is it going to serve? There has to be a self." This is what Socrates said: "Know thyself." What does it mean to know the self that you are?

I have a simple little story that my father used to tell. One day, a farmer was walking through a jungle and he came across a tiny lion cub that had been lost. He picked it up, brought it home, and put it in the barn with his sheep. As time passed, the cub got bigger and bigger, playing and grazing with the sheep. This was all he knew.

One day, while the sheep were grazing, a big lion stepped out from the jungle. All the sheep got scared and started running around, and so did the little lion. The big lion went over to this little lion, who wasn't that little any more, and said, "Why are you scared of me?" He said, "I am a poor little sheep, and you will eat me!" The lion said, "You're not a sheep. Come with me." He took him to a pond and said, "Now, look." And when he looked, he was shocked: "I'm not a sheep. I am like you!" The lion said, "That's right. You are like me. Now stop mimicking sheep and roar like a big lion should." So the big lion roared and the little lion roared. And the little lion began to thank the big lion. And the lion said, "All I did was show you who you truly are. Even before I stepped out of that jungle, this is who you were, because this is what you truly are."



We, too, lose who we are on the face of this earth. Your ability to feel joy is unique. This is your nature—a part of you. You have an aversion to suffering and an attraction to joy. Then find in your life the joy that never ends, the joy that you cannot leave behind, the joy that you carry with you wherever you go.



If you have a boat and want to dock it in the harbor, you need to tie it to something that will not drift. That's why people bring an anchor with them. What is it that does not drift? To find the answer, you need to be able to know your true self, because the true self does not drift. In thought, the lion was a sheep, but when he could see the reality, he understood that he was not a sheep.

Your reality is simple. The want to be fulfilled has always been there. The want to be content has always been there. That is not new. And this want will be there till the very end. It is there from the beginning; it is there to the end. That want to be in peace does not change. That thirst to be fulfilled does not change. Anchor then to that reality, and you will not drift. Anchor to that beauty that is inside of you, and you will not drift. Everything else will change as it always has. As it always will.

Everything keeps changing, but *you*. There is something about you that does not change. Find the changeless. And tie well this boat of life to the changeless. Then, relax.

Maharaji