

A Concentrated Mind

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī has frequently said that if we want to become God, we must become like God. But when he comes here in the mornings and offers worshipful homage unto the Lord, he will describe the Lord as the creator of millions and billions of universes. He will also describe Him as being unthinkable, unknowable, and sometimes as that stupendous silence.

None of these descriptions are easy for us to be like. Perhaps we can try to quieten our minds to make them silent, but we're not going to create millions and billions of universes, and it is difficult to be like something that is totally unknowable. However, fortunately God is described as love. He is also described as truth and purity. So Gurudev wants us to practice *ahimsa*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya*—to make them the foundation of our spiritual life.

Ahimsa, non-injury, rises into the practice of doing good, of love for others; it make us think about and leads us towards God, makes us like God. Telling the truth both to others and ourselves leads to the singularity of God's truth. And practicing self-restraint, not seeing others as objects but as our own self, leads us gradually towards the purity, the oneness, of God.

There is another description of God that Pūjya Swāmījī once used which is a little more startling and yet, perhaps, can be useful to us. He described God as a concentrated mind. "A concentrated mind is God," Pūjya Swāmījī said. This seems very strange unless we actually practice it and recognize it. Why is mental *japa* considered to be superior to verbal *japa*? Without a concentrated mind, mental *japa* isn't possible. When we offer devotion to the Lord by doing a *puja*, what is the key? It is not going through the rituals. It is concentrating, paying attention to what we are doing. What is it that gives us a good meditation rather than a distracted one? It is a concentrated mind. What is the key to *svādhyāya*, to study, to enquiry, to probe deeply into the truths of the scriptures? It is paying attention, concentrating on what we are considering.

Sometimes our mind feels at loose ends. If we will actually pay attention to the loose ends, they disappear; another quality altogether has entered in. The concentrated mind that Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī is speaking of is not something we do with effort. It is something that comes

about through practice. It is our natural state. When we have trained ourselves to want less and less from the outer world and take more and more interest in our spiritual practices, that natural concentration, that natural awareness and paying attention is automatically there. Pūjya Swāmīj Chidānandajī says a concentrated mind is God. At the very least, it is certainly like God.