

Purification, Purification, Purification

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used to tell us that as human beings we are a combination of animal, human and divine: “With our human part, we are meant to destroy our animal propensities and then sublimate the human into the divine.” In other words, we must use the *rajas* in us to actively overcome the *tamas*; and then, when we have become a good human being, we must let it go and allow the divine to permeate our being.

To overcome the *tamas*, requires action. We must work on ourselves. But then, when that is done, we find that while we are living a much better life, we don’t seem to be that much closer to God. Ramaṇa Maharṣi made it quite clear why. He said that to find God, you must know yourself. You must enquire, Who am I? This is an entirely different process. Whereas before we were aggressively trying to defeat the *tamas* in ourselves, now the process becomes one of letting go, of surrender, of finding that peace within that is beyond *rajas* and *tamas*.

When we discover it, or more correctly when it is revealed to us, we then discover what it means to be free, we discover what the sages were so enthusiastic about, and we can feel that perhaps we have reached the end of the journey. However, one morning a little over 20 years ago, Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī startled us by saying that the spiritual life doesn’t even begin until you know who you are. We thought that was the conclusion of the spiritual life, Pūjya Swāmījī was saying that it was only the beginning.

How can knowing who we are be only the beginning of the spiritual life? It is because previously we were basing our life either on a *tamasic* ego, *rajasic* ego or a *sattvic* ego. Now we can base our life on the Spirit. Therefore it becomes a spiritual life. But even more than that, no matter how much purification has taken place until we came to know who we are, much more purification is usually still left to be done. But as it is now done on the basis of Spirit rather than one of the *guṇa*-s, it becomes a spiritual life.

Thus we even saw in Gurudev and in Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī, great as they were, a continuing movement towards perfecting themselves. The spiritual life is, therefore, from beginning to end, purification, purification, purification.