

Peace, Happiness, and Surrender

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used to frequently say that without peace there is no happiness. In other words, happiness is not so much something new as it is what we find and feel when the disturbances have faded away—where there is nothing bothering us and there is a sense of peace. Most people seek that peace by indulging their senses in many different ways, including alcohol and drugs. Temporary peace comes, temporary happiness comes, but it never lasts.

Even the spiritual life promises peace and happiness, but still, nothing seems to be permanent. We may have a certain experience which gives us great joy, but then, it can just as quickly leave us—sometimes with a sense of great loss, so that we not only are back to where we were originally, but feel a great disappointment. Is there then no happiness that can last? This is not what the sages tell us.

Jesus spoke of a peace that is beyond understanding. Many sages say that happiness is in God alone, as if they are distinguishing between the spiritual life and God. In the spiritual life we continue to strive for something, but when something is present everywhere, within and without, what are we striving for? What is required is a recognition.

However, it is impossible to have the true recognition of what is here and now without, so to speak, having a divine eye. With the divine eye all differences disappear. There is a peace that passeth understanding which is pure happiness. How can we approach that state that can only come as a gift from God? All religions agree it is a question of surrender, of acknowledgement, of knowledge. We surrender to that One alone, we acknowledge that One alone is, and finally, it becomes our knowledge.

That knowledge gives peace and happiness. That knowledge comes about by surrender, by letting go. And that knowledge is the doorway to the place where there are no differences.