

## Resolving a Paradox

One day Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī was discussing a disciple's spiritual practices with him. Finally Pūjya Swāmījī said, "And then offer it all to God." Offering it all to God is something that Gurudev often instructed his disciples to do. It is a fundamental of the Divine Life teachings, and it has meaning at more than one stage of our *sādhana*.

We could say that at a fundamental level, after having completed our spiritual practices with a natural feeling that we are the doer, we offer them all to God recognizing that without His strength, without His breath in our lungs, we can make no effort whatsoever. As we grow in our understanding, when we offer it all to God, it is something like Pūjya Swāmījī used to chant every night at *satsang*: "I am not the doer. Lord Hari is the doer." We offer it all to God because there is a recognition that He alone is the doer.

But then, why should we make effort if Lord Hari is the doer? This can cause a very serious confusion for many devotees and seekers. On the one hand, we are constantly urged to make effort, and on the other hand we declare that the Lord is the only doer.

We can ignore this confusion if we want, but it can be an underlying problem for us. Part of a whole culture can hesitate to make effort feeling that the Divine will is doing everything. And yet if we look at the active lives of Gurudev and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī, we recognize that as their disciples we are in no way meant to be passive. We are meant to exert to our utmost.

Therefore, one way or another, we should try to resolve the conflict: Do things happen by my will or God's will? One wise philosopher said, "Pray as if it all depended upon God. Work as if it all depended you." This is a very wise and practical guideline. But ultimately we want to resolve the paradox, and it is only finally resolved when we recognize that there are not two. There is only One. We make effort as part of that One. It is the Whole making effort through us. The inspiration to make effort is also part of the Whole. It is not individual.

We recognize that because we are That, we are totally responsible for our own progress. There is only ourselves, but not ourselves as we imagine

ourselves to be, but as we truly are, that unknowable, unthinkable—but manifest everywhere—One alone.