

## The Natural State

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī once said that Gurudev was not interested in higher states of *samādhi* that came and went. Rather, he was interested in the natural state, a state that would always be with him night and day. What is meant by the natural state? Surely it means exactly what it says. It means *our* natural state, which, if it is something to be sought, suggests to us that our present state is unnatural.

It is unnatural because we are identifying with something that is constantly changing—our body and mind—rather than something that is unchanging. But what is unchanging? The scriptures speak of the Indweller. Does the Indweller change? In some ways It seems to, because from time to time we get in touch with peace or expansion or a voice within, which indicates to us that Something is there, but It is changing.

But then, we have to understand that those experiences are not the Indweller in Its essence, but rather what the Indweller shines forth in our consciousness. The Indweller itself being the Divine, being our own Self is unknowable. We know Its characteristics by what it shines forth. The goal of all our spiritual practices is to put us in touch with the Indweller through resting in It. It is a question of letting go of our false identity and simply resting in our natural state—which is always there—allowing it to function through our body and mind rather than having the false, changing ego in charge.

Thus the purpose of our meditation is to sit quietly and perhaps repeat our *mantra* until unconsciously, just as we slip into sleep, something else takes over our mind. It is the Indweller, our natural state, and our meditation has developed a different quality. When we repeat God's name with concentration, we let go of the ego and rest in our natural state. We may say that that doesn't seem to be anything special. But then, of course, it is what we are. It is what we are at this very moment. But our mind tells us that we are body and mind, not that natural state. It is simply unrecognized.

We spend all our time looking for God or our Self outside ourselves. We want to make it an object, whereas all the time It is here and now unrecognized. To bring about that recognition, to have it in a steady state,

the mind needs to be purified, refined, made subtle. That is the purpose of all our spiritual practices.

The key thing that we should try to understand as quickly as we can is that what we are seeking can never be an object. It is what we discover ourselves to have always been when we stop looking for ourselves somewhere else.