

Feeling the Need of God

There doesn't seem to be any doubt that of all of Gurudev's teachings his best known words are Be good. Do good. They seem to be the heart of his instructions to us. And in one sense if we dedicate our lives to being good and doing good, it can do everything for us. It can take us to the gates of heaven.

However, no matter how hard we work at being good and doing good, we can sometimes feel that we have made no fundamental progress at all. That will not be true. We have made progress, but still, something seems to be missing. There is some fundamental change that hasn't taken place.

Lord Yama gave the same basic teaching to Naciketas. He said that man chooses between the good and the pleasant. The good leads to his highest welfare, the pleasant to his destruction. But then, he added, "Both are bound." Therefore, we are meant to choose the good over the pleasant, because it will lead to our highest welfare. However, something very significant is still missing because both are bound. What is it that can be missing?

One time, many years ago, when Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī was in South Africa, he was invited to speak to a group of children. In fact, I believe they were somewhat retarded. During his talk to them, Pūjya Swāmījī said something very beautiful: He said, "All God wants is for you to feel the need of Him." So perhaps with great earnestness and considerable success we can choose the good over the pleasant. Perhaps after years of effort we have to a large extent become good and we do good. But what really counts in the final analysis is for us to feel our helplessness before God. It is that feeling of need that connects us with God finally.

Being good and doing good is absolutely vital and necessary. But to connect ourselves with God, to ultimately become God, our self-reliance has to go. It has to be a total reliance on God. We have to offer everything to God, to take refuge in God. We must be good, do good, but our final salvation is in taking refuge.