

The Need for Fundamental Change

It is all too common in the spiritual life to find that we have spent many years sincerely doing our *sādhana* and then discover to our shock that, while we have done many things, learned a lot, we haven't fundamentally changed. What is the basic problem? The basic problem is that we feel that it is our mind that has to change. And it is correct, the mind has to be changed from *tamas* to *rajas* to *sattva*. It needs to be purified.

But all the purification in the world won't necessarily change our fundamental problem, which is our wrong identification, the false feeling that we are the center of the universe. We don't recognize that it is that feeling of being the center of the universe that has to be eliminated. "Die to live," Gurudev said.

Actually, the purification of our mind, while it has many purposes and is absolutely essential, its fundamental purpose is to refine our mind sufficiently so that we can identify what our basic problem is, see what actually is making up this wrong identification.

Sometimes we wonder about a guru's actions and words. Originally he perhaps seemed to be very understandable. But then, as time goes on he can become somewhat mystifying. He does one thing one time, something else the other. He says one thing one time, something else the next time. Sometimes he can be very disturbing, sometimes even shock us. The reason is that we can get quite comfortable with our *sādhana*, quite comfortable with the degree of purification that is going on. But he's after something else, something more fundamental.

We hear the words "die to live," but we don't really understand what the guru is after—that he wants to destroy that false idea we have that we are the center of the universe. That is what true renunciation and true dispassion involves. It is one thing to renounce and have dispassion for outer things, even for our mind. But all that is practice to lead us to have dispassion for being anyone, for the I itself. Because a separate I is contrary to the truth that One alone is without a second.

Therefore, no matter how much progress we have made, unless we're tackling that wrong identification, we will continue to have an underlying

feeling—consciously or unconsciously—that we haven't really made any progress at all.