

## Helpful Practices In A Busy World

All yogas ultimately reduce themselves to a yoga of the head or a yoga of the heart; and normally when we think of these yogas, we think in terms of study, enquiry, rituals, prayers, all of which require time and considerable effort. Therefore, it is not infrequent that in this modern age, when most people are extremely busy, that the spirit is willing, but the flesh just doesn't seem to have the time and the energy for these more elaborate spiritual practices, even for meditation.

There is another difficulty. We can do these spiritual practices—study, enquiry, prayers, rituals, and meditation—but they don't seem to make any change in us. We are putting forth great effort, but at the root we don't seem to be changing. In this respect, there are two very simple practices, that we are all aware of, that could help us to solve both problems—both the problem of time and the problem of not seeming to get down to the root. One of them is repetition of God's Name, the other is selfless service.

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī has said, "Repeat God's Name. It is both the beginning and the end of the spiritual life." God's Name can be repeated at any time of the day. We don't have to sit for it. Even when we are busy, the Name can go on. In the beginning the Name helps to concentrate the mind. It can also be an introduction to meditation. Ultimately it begins to reveal Its truth that God is both our inner Self and He is the world outside. Finally, the Name is all there is. We are not there, just the Name in Its essence.

Selfless service too starts out at a relatively gross level as it helps us to overcome our basic selfishness. But as it moves up the scale, all activities are involved. Everything becomes selfless service: "Work is worship," Gurudev said. All work should be seen as worship, as selfless service, whether we are being paid for it or not. We see it as our contribution to the universe. Selfless service, continuously practiced in a spirit of offering, ultimately takes us to the realization that One alone is doing everything.

Thus, if we have the time available, rituals, prayers, meditation, study, and enquiry are invaluable; but if we don't have the time, we should not be discouraged, we should not turn away from our spiritual yearnings. Rather, at every moment, we should try to repeat God's Name, and we

should remember that, no matter what we are doing, it is God who is ultimately doing it. Therefore, all our efforts should be offered to Him, even if we only remember before we go to bed at night. If we do so with sincerity and understanding, it goes down to our spiritual root and will slowly, even if imperceptibly, bring about a gradual transformation in our being.