

There Is a Difference Between the World and *Samsāra*

There is one confusion in the spiritual life that, if we really work at trying to understand it, can help our spiritual life move forward; it is a puzzling comment that both the scriptures and many sages make that simply does not make sense to us. They will say that for a realized person, or realization, both the world and the mind disappear. Gurudev himself used to frequently say that the mind becomes no mind. But then, Gurudev certainly seemed as if he had a mind; he was also obviously aware of the world. And he was certainly a fully realized saint. What is the answer to this paradox?

We have to understand that there is a difference between the world and *samsāra*. The world is as it is. *Samsāra* is what we have created in our own mind. What is the distinction? The scriptures tell us that our fundamental error is wrong identification. We, who are the indweller of the world and the indweller of the body, have somehow lost that status by identifying with an individual body. We have never lost that status in reality, but we have created an identification with the body which we think is our real identity.

How has this happened? The answer that the scriptures give is through desire. Therefore, the solution to the whole problem of *samsāra*, Pūjya Swāmījī Chidānandajī has told us, is to want nothing. Wanting creates this false identification, creates *samsāra*. Not wanting dissolves it. The world remains, but there is no *samsāra*.

We can discover this for ourselves, even this very moment. And this is a good place while sitting in meditation to discover it. In our mind we simply let go of every desire we have and practice and feel that we want nothing. When we want nothing, we can't find an identification with the body. The I, that is the ego, disappears; but we're still there and so is the world. It is *samsāra* that has disappeared. *Samsāra* is all our false identifications and the pairs of opposites that arise from that original wanting.

So the way out is not to have the world disappear; and we too don't disappear. It is *samsāra*, the world created by wanting, that disappears when we want nothing. We have a mind, but the mind is no mind because it is not the *samsāra* mind. There is a world, but there is no world because

the false world created by our wanting has disappeared. So this is the truth for a realized person: Neither the world of *samsāra* nor his mind exists. But he exists and the world exists, and he is a blessing to all. That is our ideal.