

The Need for Dispassion

The scriptures tell us that the mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation in the human being. Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī puts it in his own way. He says that your body is inert, your spirit is ever peaceful, so, therefore, whatever problem you have is in your mind. This means that, as seekers, mind management or control is both our immediate and long-term goal.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has told us the secret of how to do it. It requires practice and dispassion (Gītā 6.35). And he didn't say it, but it is certainly implied—over a long period of time. The practice, no matter what form it takes, is the practice of the presence of God—whatever spiritual practice we do that makes God real for us. “Ultimately,” Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī tells us, “God is a concentrated mind, a mind that doesn't move.”

But what is it that makes our mind move, be constantly agitated? It is two factors, both of which we have to have dispassion for if we are to develop a concentrated mind. We have to have dispassion for our outer world—for things, the opposite sex, name and fame. But we also require dispassion for our inner world, our world of thought that is built upon our identity with the body and mind: “This is who I am. This is how I think. This is the way I want to be.”

All this is *samsāra*, the world of our imagination. The world of sky and earth and sea and buildings and other people is not *samsāra*. *Samsāra* is the world built upon the false idea that we are separate, the world is out there, and God is somewhere else. Jesus said, “You cannot love both God and mammon.” We would say, “You cannot love both Brahman and *samsāra*.” Jesus added, “Either you will hate one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” You cannot love both at the same time.

So if we are in love with our identity with the body and mind and all our ideas, we are in love with *samsāra*. Therefore, along with our practice of the presence of God, we have to steadily develop dispassion for the world and for our identification with the body and mind. The truth is that there is not much that we can do about it directly. It is something that has to happen by itself. But unless we recognize its necessity, unless we long for it, it is very unlikely to happen.

We are quite good, in our own way, at the practice of the presence of God. But perhaps most of us don't long for dispassion, we don't long for the disappearance of *samsāra*. Therefore, our true Self cannot shine forth.