

## Total Satisfaction

There is an old adage that the basic nature of a human being is to seek happiness and to avoid pain. Normally we seek happiness in relationships, in possessions, in recognition by others; but none of these things give us real happiness because none of them are capable of giving permanent satisfaction. They constantly change. At one moment they give satisfaction, at another moment they do not.

Ultimately, we will be told that our error is in seeking happiness from the world, that happiness is in God alone. But when we go seeking for God, we don't seem to be able to find anything permanent either. We may have an experience or meet a teacher or read a book that seems to be the answer for us, but just like the things of this world, they too seem to change and disappear.

Finally, we begin to realize that what we are really seeking for is meaning for our lives. What do our lives mean finally? What is their purpose? We do not seem to be able to find lasting meaning in the things of the world, and the meaning of the spiritual life seems to keep escaping us. There is nothing that we can rest in. Sometimes we will be able to position ourselves in a certain way that seems to be the answer. But, on analysis, the problem is, it isn't permanent either. It comes and it goes. And all the time there is something in the back of our mind that still feels uneasy, unsatisfied.

The reason is that the goal that we are seeking is its own meaning, its own happiness, its own satisfaction. It doesn't require anything else. And that place is where we are right now, unrecognized. We think we have to go somewhere else, we have to get out of the ego, slay the ego, become God. We need to recognize that right now we are where we are seeking, that life is made up of the ever-changing three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* and the pairs of opposites. We are not meant to escape anywhere, but to recognize, in the words of our revered late Vedānta teacher, Swāmī Brahmānandajī, that this world—just as it is—is God, and, by extension, that we, just as we are, are also God.

God has, so to speak, two aspects—that which never moves and knows all this and that which is constantly changing, is in a state of evolution. We are ever both. Neither are we meant to reject that which is

invisible and cannot be grasped, nor are we meant to reject that which is visible and constantly changing. In the total acceptance and understanding of both, life gives total satisfaction and absolute meaning.