

## The Secret of Lasting Happiness

Philosophers and thinkers throughout the years, in all parts of the world, have agreed that the human being is primarily motivated by the search for happiness and the avoidance of its opposite. And thus the whole world is spending its time offering us a way or ways to find the happiness that we are seeking and ways to avoid its opposite.

Usually the avenue is physical possessions and human relationships. Many do give it a moral dimension and others, finally, a spiritual one. Happiness is here they all say, and this is the way to avoid its opposite. And yet if we are prepared to take a hard look and to be realistic, even those who, by following the correct laws, gain economic welfare, live morally, and have a progressive spiritual life, when pressed, will admit that something is still missing. They are not totally satisfied.

Some teachers and philosophers will say that it is because the journey is endless; but, they say, live morally, strive spiritually and your degree of happiness will continuously increase. But this is in contradiction to what the scriptures promise and what teachers like Gurudev and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī declare. Pūjya Swāmījī especially speaks of being in a place where the deepest sorrow cannot touch you. He speaks of perfection. He speaks of total satisfaction, not approximate, but total. What is it then that the majority of good people and spiritual people are missing?

In the Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that those who worship the lower gods go to them, those who worship Me come to Me. The lower gods are all those gods that will help us to find what we call happiness and the avoidance of its opposite. On the other hand, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “Abandoning everything, all your *dharma*-s, all your ideas of right and wrong, righteousness and its opposite, take refuge in Me alone.” That means that we have to renounce what the whole human race is seeking, which is happiness and the avoidance of its opposite. It means that we have to recognize that this universe is a universe of differences, of the pairs of opposites and the three *guṇa*-s.

Therefore, to find happiness and avoid its opposite from the world is impossible. Living properly and spiritually can help us in a relative sense, but not in the absolute sense that our hearts long for. To achieve that we must transcend the pairs of opposites and the three *guṇa*-s, which means—

as a way of putting it—we have to swallow the whole world. We have to take it as it is. We have to transcend it by letting everything go.

Jesus promises a peace that passeth understanding. It means a peace that is found when we drop all our *dharma*-s, all our desires and take refuge in the Lord alone. And this is what Lord Jesus, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the saints are calling us all to.