

Becoming Like God

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used to say that a *guru* is his teachings. He would say that as far as he was concerned Gurudev's *Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions*, *Sādhana Tattva*, and *Universal Prayer* were Gurudev for him. Pūjya Swāmījī also used to speak of the seven pillars of The Divine Life Society, the well known Serve, Love, Meditate, Realize, from The Divine Life Society crest, representing the four principal yogas, and *ahimsa*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya* which are the three vows we take when we join The Divine Life Society.

Frequently those vows are underestimated; indeed, frequently bypassed by devotees eager to get on with the so-called higher practices. But perhaps, if properly understood, *ahimsa*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya*—non-injury, truthfulness and purity—are not only simpler to practice, but are more direct yogas than many of the better known ones. The reason for that is that Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī has also said that if you want to *become* God, become *like* God.

Serve, Love, Meditate, Realize are relationships we have with God, but the practice of non-injury, truth and purity put us in direct contact with God as love, God as truth, and God as purity. In other words, they are the direct practice of being *like* God. They not only make us like God, but they directly help us to develop a *sāttvic* ego, and Pūjya Swāmījī has also said that there is no way to God except through a *sāttvic* ego.

The practice of love, becoming like God as love, starts with not injuring anyone else or, indeed, anything else. It develops inwardly where mentally we not only do not want to harm anyone, but as Pūjya Swāmījī said, we want to do good for others. Ultimately, at a spiritual level, love becomes God's love, which means seeing no other. Love actually means there is no other.

The practice of truth begins with telling the truth to each other. It then moves on to the still more difficult task of telling the truth to ourselves, of avoiding self-deception. Ultimately it is God's truth—seeing no other. And the practice of *brahmacarya* or self-restraint begins by reigning in our tendency to want satisfaction from objects. It develops in the practice of seeing God in all things. Ultimately, purity means that we see One alone. Impurity is seeing anything outside of ourselves.

Therefore, if we want to become God, we should practice becoming like God, and there is no better way, there is no better yoga, than the simple but effective practice of the vows of *ahimsa*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya*.