

Letting Go and Remembering

The world over, the spiritual life has two aspects—an inner and an outer one. The inner aspect is what we do within—a search for God, a search for the Self, a search to know Who am I? The outer aspect is how we live our life in this world. Gurudev says that the basis of Divine Life is to practice *ahimsa*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya*, in other words, to lead a divine life. At the same time we are to practice integral yoga: Serve, Love, Meditate, Realize.

The idea that most of have in our mind—and this is common the world over—is that the goal of our life is God-realization or its equivalent. To be able to practice that within, our outer life has to be in harmony with it. It has to become *sāttvic*, so that we are qualified to realize or to make real the Self within. From a practical point of view, this approach is quite appropriate, but ultimately we are meant to see it from a different angle of vision. This changes our attitude to our spiritual life and makes it truly fruitful.

We are meant to recognize that, in Ramaṇa Maharṣi's words, we are already realized. We are meant to believe Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī when he constantly tells us, You are Divine. We are meant to believe Gurudev when he addresses us as Radiant Immortal Ātman. In other words, the recognition, that we are Divine is not meant to be the fruit of the spiritual life, but from a certain angle of vision, the very basis of it. Indeed, Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī has even said that the spiritual life doesn't begin until you know who you are. Therefore, the inner spiritual life is meant to discover that truth, to verify that truth in our own consciousness, and the outer spiritual life is meant to express that truth.

If we base our spiritual life upon knowing that we are divine—but wanting to confirm it through experience—then we need to lead an inner spiritual life where we let go of the outer life. Our inner spiritual life cannot be an extension of our outer life. It cannot be more attainment, more knowledge, more outer practice. Rather the practice has to be a letting go, a negating of the reality of our outer life. It is a matter of *neti neti*, negating everything, totally letting go of our outer life, all our knowledge, all our *dharma*, and finding or recognizing what it is that cannot be known by the mind.

On the other hand, as far as our outer life is concerned, it is meant to be lived with the full remembrance of what we have finally found in our inner life. That is the vital difference. Our inner life is meant to be a total forgetting of our outer life. Our outer life is meant to be lived in total remembrance of what we have found in our inner life. It is somewhat circular.

It is entirely different than feeling that we must live an outer life in order to accomplish something within. Rather the inner life is a total letting go of everything, including our normal spiritual practices. The outer life is meant to be entirely lived with the constant remembrance of what we have discovered when we have let everything go.