

Is God Personal or Impersonal?

Although there are any number of yogas, basically they resolve themselves into a yoga of the heart or a yoga of the head. Gurudev believed that they should be integrated, because if we only use our head, it may agree to the truth, but our heart may be going in a different direction. Conversely, if we are convinced with our heart, if we can feel God, but the intellect doesn't agree upon what the heart feels, then it, in its turn, can be a drag on our *sādhana*. Therefore, Gurudev said, "Involve both head and heart."

Meditation and selfless service more or less automatically involve both head and heart, especially if we do them consciously. But if we strictly stick to devotion or strictly stick to enquiry, there is a danger that we will exclude the other, and we will not only hurt our *sādhana*, but we may begin to think that our way is the only way. We may get into arguments about whether God is personal or God is impersonal.

These arguments come to us very easily because it is the nature of our mind to divide. It is actually a gift. It helps us to analyze, but we are meant to analyze in an impersonal way, not with likes and dislikes. And it is all too common for the human being to like what he or she prefers and to dislike what others prefer.

Ultimately if we can see ourselves doing this, it can help our spiritual life considerably, because it can expand our idea of God. One time Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī wrote a letter to a group: "What is this, having arguments about whether God is personal or impersonal? He is both." And this is the incredible truth about He who we seek for and worship. We say that there is no limit to Brahman, no limit to God and at the same time limit Him to what we think. It cramps our *sādhana*. It cramps our spiritual life. We have to worship a God that is absolutely unlimited by any human ideas. We can have all the ideas we want about God, whatever helps us to evolve, but we should know that that is just our idea or an idea of a group of people, or one teaching.

These are all indicators pointing us away from our narrow ideas. Ultimately, we have to let them all go and then come back and include all ideas. Because if God is both impersonal and personal it means that He is beyond all ideas we can possibly have of what He is. But at the same time

there is nothing that we can think of that is beyond Him and He doesn't include. We should, therefore, be aware of this tendency that we have to divide and to prefer, and keep stretching our mind, so that we can understand with Pūjya Swāmījī that it is foolish to try to describe God in any way, let alone as personal or impersonal, for He is both.