

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī's Call

One of the notable things about Gurudev is the number of outstanding disciples that he attracted. One time a number of those disciples were with him and they said, "Gurudev, some of your devotees say you are a *jñānī*, others a *bhakta*, others a *karma yogi*. What are you really?" Gurudev answered, "Let them see what they want to see."

And so it was with Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī. Perhaps the vast majority of his devotees saw in him the epitome of love and caring. And perhaps that was the central feature of his life. But if you are to read the talks that he gave in the Samādhi Hall in the mornings, especially in a book like *A Call to Liberation*, you see the essence of what made him what he was: A one-pointed determination to achieve the goal, a sure knowledge that the goal was the only thing worth having, and a determination to try to convey that knowledge to anyone who wanted to listen.

Talk after talk, he was uncompromising as to the value of the goal, uncompromising as to the necessity of the goal and uncompromising in urging his listeners to leave behind all other considerations except the goal. Does that mean that wanted us to ignore our duties? No, as the Lord is everywhere we are to see the Lord in all our duties.

Our temptation is to try to get satisfaction out of our duties or our pleasures in life. Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī saw that as a trap that, one way or another, we needed to overcome. It isn't that we can't enjoy certain things or do our duties with some satisfaction, but we must bring God into them as much as we do in our spiritual practices.

In some ways this is the real challenge of our spiritual life. It is quite possible to set up a routine for our spiritual practices, stick to it and find that we make noticeable progress. The real challenge is to bring what we learn during our spiritual practices into the rest of our day. Our great enemy is our habits. We're used to getting certain satisfactions in this world from our activities. It is most difficult to bring God into them in a central way. We will perhaps acknowledge God, but still our desire for personal satisfaction comes in the side door. And we can easily slip back into our worldly way of doing the activities and seeing the activities.

Pūjya Swāmījī, underneath his beauty, his kindness, his devotion, was above all a seeker, an uncompromising seeker because he knew from his personal experience that God and God alone will give us the satisfaction that our hearts long for. Therefore, day after day, he encouraged us all to convert our entire lives into seeking, seeking, seeking.