

## The Real Purpose of Sādhanā

Gurudev used to frequently say, “Do *sādhanā* my dear children. Do *sādhanā*.” Why was he so anxious that we do *sādhanā*? Indeed the first question might be, “Why do we do *sādhanā*?” Some people do *sādhanā* in order to get material benefits. Some, to make themselves better persons. Others have ideas of rewards in heaven or a better birth. But Gurudev said that the goal of life is God-realization. God-realization means to make God real. Therefore, we do *sādhanā* to make God real.

There are two ways that God can become real to us. The first is the final goal. God no longer is an object to us because we become That. There is no longer any separation. The second way, the way of *sādhanā*, the way we must adopt for now, is that God becomes real to us as an object, which gradually leads us to the final goal where God is no longer an object because One alone remains.

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used different teachings to indicate that our *sādhanā* is more to integrate ourselves with God rather than have Him as an object. He gave talks such as “Be Rooted in the One” and “Connect Yourself with God.” These have an organic feel about them. They convey a sense of intimacy. Further, Pūjya Swāmījī used to say, “If you want to become God, become like God.” In other words, the emphasis is that we have to change.

Our *sādhanā*, therefore, isn’t meant to be a matter of us remaining the same and making God real as an object or having some series of experiences, but rather it is about bringing about a change in our very being, about being modified. Why is this approach practical? Because underneath who we think we are, we are already what we are seeking. Indeed, it is not underneath anything. It is here and now. It is not recognized because we have a fixed idea that we are an individual body and mind.

As long as we keep God as an object to be worshipped, to be adored, to be understood, it doesn’t change our fundamental problem. We remain fixed in the idea that we are a separate individual. Theoretically we may say that we are not, but practically we stay the same. The only way to change that is to change ourselves. Therefore, Gurudev said, “Practice *ahimsā*, *satyam*, and *brahmacarya*, non-injury, truthfulness and purity. This

is the foundation of yoga and Vedānta.” In other words, if we practice non-injury, truthfulness and purity, it demands that we change. We become more like God—God as love, God as truth, God as purity.

The purpose, therefore, of doing *sādhana* is that we become like God, that we change. We try to change a little bit every day by gradually wearing away the rock-hard ego that we are now identifying with, until gradually it dissolves, and what is left is who we really are—and have always been.