

## Where True Happiness Lies

Some of the Yoga Vedānta Forest Academy students were asked about the purpose of doing *sādhana*. They could have answered to get a better birth, or to go to heaven, or to get things in this world, but there were two other answers that came from the different students. One was to be happy and the other was God-realization. Actually, the scriptures would tell us that they are one and the same thing.

Philosophers around the world and through the centuries have said that the one thing that the human being wants is to be happy. Gurudev constantly told his disciples that the goal of life is God-realization, and saints have said that there is no happiness outside of God.

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used to frequently say, “Without peace, there is no happiness.” He didn’t mean no warfare or necessarily just no fighting and quarreling, rather, he would be referring to what Jesus meant when he spoke of a peace that passeth understanding. It is beyond our understanding because we think in terms of subject and object, of differences. The peace that is beyond understanding—that is happiness—is the peace of God, the peace of our true nature that is here and now but is not recognized.

The most common description of that peace that the saints have found is that there are no differences here. When everything is seen as our own Self, nothing disturbs us. Actually, here and now we already have that peace, but our mind cannot recognize it because it has created a subject that thinks that it is the center of the universe and that everything else is its object. It cannot find peace because it feels uneasy when everything is outside itself. It feels threatened.

Thus the ego spends all its time trying to control the objects or trying to own the objects. It constantly wants things. It wants to make objects part of itself. But, of course, that can never happen. Even if we own something, it still remains separate from us. We can lose it at any time, and thus we are never at peace.

Therefore, the only answer is that we have to renounce this false created identification of being the center of the universe. The truth, in one sense, is that we really are the center of the universe, but that center is

everywhere. Our goal is to gradually wear away this idea that we are a separate center of the universe until bit by bit our true Self, whose center is everywhere, gradually reveals itself, and in that oneness we find the peace and happiness that we have been seeking.