

Silence Reveals the Here and Now

Gurudev said that the goal of life is God-realization. He not only gave us the goal, but he gave us many alternate paths to follow to achieve that goal. Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī also made it very clear that we must be active in the pursuit of the goal. Otherwise, he said, our karma only will take place. Therefore we must be up and doing.

Why is it then, that after years and years of being up and doing, we so often don't feel closer to the goal? The fundamental reason seems to be our difficulty in shaking the conviction that the goal is something outside that we have to attain. This is in spite of the fact that all the scriptures and the *mahavakyas* tell us one thing clearly: that we are already what we are seeking.

Therefore, one of the problems seems to be that we are ignoring the negative side of the spiritual life. We are doing the positive things—Serve, Love, Meditate, Realize—but we are ignoring such things as renunciation, dispassion, *neti neti*, and perhaps, above all, silence. Dakshinamurthi, when asked to reveal the truth, just remained silent. The key *sādhana* in this Kali Yuga is said to be repetition of God's name. Repetition of God's name is not silence—it seems—but to repeat God's name with the required concentration means silence to the world. When we repeat God's name with concentration, our mind is silent to everything else.

What is the key to silence? Ramaṇa Maharṣi once said that if you are seeking something that is not in deep sleep, you are not seeking the truth. In other words, the truth is present in deep sleep where we know nothing. It is, therefore, absolute silence. Someone once told Pūjya Swāmī Chidānanda about an experience. It was just something very brief—three short phrases that happened within. Suddenly the person said to themselves. “I'm free.” Immediately the question came, “Who's free?” And then the answer: “I don't know who's free.” That not knowing is silence, and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī immediately said: “That's it!”

In other words, if we don't feel that we are as close to the goal as we would like to be perhaps it is because we are still seeking something tangible. What we are really seeking can never be grasped, but it is permeating everything here and now. As our late revered Vedānta teacher

Swāmī Brahmānandajī used to say, “You just can’t believe that this world, just as it is, is God.” Here and now!