

Dynamic Be Good, Do Good

Gurudev's best known aphorism, which is in some ways a summary of all his teachings, is Be good, Do good. Actually it is very difficult to do good unless we first become good. Normally our actions are an expression of what we are. Therefore, many devotees concentrate on eliminating lust, greed, hatred, anger, and jealousy and practicing divine virtues, which is certainly admirable and necessary. But was this the real message of Gurudev's life or the life of Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī? Is this the teaching of the Gītā?

Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī said one day, "It is not enough to just practice *ahimsa*, non-injury. You must not only not injure anyone else, but you must positively do good to others." In other words, the do good of Be good, Do Good, is not just a mild expression of whatever goodness God has given us or we have developed. It is meant to be dynamically active. Lord Kṛṣṇa didn't want Arjuna just to passively take part in the battle. He wanted him to fight with everything that was within him, to totally fulfill his duty.

If it applies on a battlefield, it should also be applied in our normal lives. In other words, by the example of the lives of Gurudev and Pūjya Swāmījī and the teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we are not meant to live passive lives. Rather, their example and teaching is to dynamically do good. That this rises from their spiritual status is a given, but in the case of Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa simply said, Do your duty. Do it dynamically. And so with us. We may not have come anywhere close to where we should be as far as Be good is concerned, but that does not mean that we should not be dynamically doing our duty.

We each have a dharma. That *dharma* is meant to be done dynamically. And, of course, just as doing good stems from being good, so if we dynamically act according to *dharma* which means that we must consciously be trying to do what is right, then automatically doing good will make us be good as well. Therefore Be good, Do good are not just passive instructions to us. Gurudev wanted us to be up and doing in yogic *sādhana*. He wanted us to aggressively reform ourselves and be good—and just as aggressively do good in this world.