

Die to Live

It is a peculiarity of human life on this planet Earth, that no matter how successful an individual has been—no matter how much they have, what honours they have received—still, something seems to be missing. And yet Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī speak of total satisfaction. How is it possible to have total satisfaction in a world where no one seems to be totally happy, not totally satisfied? What is the secret?

Fundamentally we live in a world that is constantly changing. Most of us do not feel integrated with that change. We feel as if we are observing it, standing apart from it, in some way isolated from it. To a large extent, we resist it. Resistance means dissatisfaction.

What then could be the solution? It would seem to be obvious that we have to stop standing apart from the universe that we are actually a part of and assume our proper role as an integral part of the universe rather than being apart from the universe—thinking, in fact, that we are the center of the universe. Indeed, Gurudev was quite plain. He said that this feeling ourselves to apart from the universe has to go. Indeed if we want total satisfaction, if we want to feel truly alive, truly ourselves, then Gurudev said, “Kill this little I. Die to live. Lead the divine life.”

The Divine is all there is. We are part of That. Indeed, we are That. If through our foolishness, our ego, we stand apart from It, we cannot possibly find the happiness that our hearts seek. Therefore, we must recognize that the secret is in letting go. We must move towards an ever greater feeling of universality, of impersonality rather than thinking we are an individual separate from everyone else. Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna that the secret is in dispassion and practice.

We must recognize the error that we are making and want to move away from it. We must practise the presence of God through selfless service of our fellow human beings, through devotion to God, through meditation, through enquiry into who we are. In other words, through living a divine life. Then gradually our dissatisfaction will begin to fade as our true universal Self – that has always been who we are – begins to emerge.