

Kill This Little I

It is a truism that human beings seek happiness. But what is happiness? The average person believes that it is in the avoidance of pain and the satisfaction of desires. But this doesn't seem to bring us any permanent happiness, and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī used to say that what we are seeking is total satisfaction. How can we possibly get total satisfaction when there are always unpleasant things occurring and we never seem to be able to satisfy our desires?

Our minds are so constructed that they concentrate on the problem at hand or the desire at hand. The mind feels that if only it can get rid this problem or satisfy this desire it will be happy, but in this ever-changing world it never happens. There is always some other problem or some other desire. Pūjya Swāmījī also said, "Without peace there is no happiness," and the English word heaven comes from the same root word as harmony. Therefore, to find total satisfaction we have to find harmony, seek peace.

But then, is it possible to find harmony and peace in a constantly changing world? We can try, and to a certain extent succeed by cutting our desires or keeping them reasonable and attempting to live in harmony with those around us. But still, something is missing. There is no total satisfaction. The reason, the sages tell us, is that we're looking in the wrong place. We don't realize that we are really suffering from the fundamental error of wrong identification.

Our fundamental problem is that we can never find peace or harmony as long as we are identified with the body and mind, because it is false and it is ever-changing. The only place that harmony is, the only place we can find total satisfaction—which is the equivalent of happiness—is in something that is eternal. Therefore, they say to seek the eternal.

But here we must not make an error. We must not try to find the eternal in addition to our present identification. Rather the eternal is already our true identification. The problem is we have added a false identification to our true identification.

Therefore, the path to happiness, to total satisfaction, is not in finding something new, but in destroying that which is false. Our present false identification has to be dismantled. This is not always a pleasant

process, but one that is absolutely necessary and one that all the saints have gone through. As Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī urged us: “Kill this little I. Die to live. Lead the divine life.”