

The Real Need for Integral Yoga

There are any number of different yogas, but generally speaking it is accepted that most yogas can be classified as either a yoga of the head or a yoga of the heart. Either they are predominantly concerned with our understanding or with our emotions. However, Gurudev said that as human beings we are head, heart and hand. Being all of these three—thinking, feeling and actions—all should be employed in our *sādhana*. None should be left out, or it may be a drag on the others.

We can have a very good intellectual understanding of the truth, but if our heart and emotions don't really want to believe it, then it remains head knowledge. On the other hand, we may be very devotional, but if our intellect hasn't understood the truth, then we will not interpret what we feel in the correct way. And we can have a very good intellectual understanding and be very devotional, but if it doesn't manifest in our actions in this world, then it doesn't really represent what we truly think and feel. Because in the final analysis what we are and who we are is defined by what we do. We can say one thing, feel another, but it is what we do that really defines us.

Why is this important to remember? Because yoga is not a game. It is the most fundamental thing we can possibly be involved with, because its goal is to define us in a new way. It means that we not only think differently and feel differently, but we become a different person. It means that we have to renounce who we think we now are, so that the truth becomes real to us.

We can be intellectually convinced of the truth of the statements of the guru and the scriptures that Brahman alone is without a second, we can have devotional experiences of that oneness, we can even change our behavior in this world to a large extent, yet at the same time, at our root, we cling to the conviction that we are outside that truth. Brahman alone is without a second, but somehow that doesn't include me. I am separate from that truth.

Therefore, the final reason for integral yoga and why we have to involve head, heart and hand, is that we will not even approach that final truth unless everything within us is willing and determined for it. Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī once said, "The only purpose of the guru is to destroy

the ego of the disciple.” Not just the gross ego, although that is included, but that part of ourselves that continues to stand apart from the truth at the deepest level. Swāmījī continued, “If the disciple is willing and determined for that destruction, then the relationship with the guru clicks. Otherwise, it does not.”

So that we can be willing and determined for that blessing, Gurudev wanted us to employ our head, heart and hand in an integral approach to our life and *sādhana*.