



True Sannyasa

This being Gurudev's Sannyasa day, let us consider what Sannyasa is. Guru Maharaj said that merely shaving the head and putting on coloured cloth does not make you sannyasin, if you have also not simultaneously kept up a process of constant and a continuous inner renunciation of the false ideas that "I am body, I am mind, I am sentiment, I am thought, I am desire..." All these ideas constitute ignorance. All these falsehood should be renounced. Truth has to be affirmed again and again, and yet again. The essence of renunciation is renunciation of this identification with the human individual personality and all that it constitutes, right from the physical level up to the subtle – memory and imagination, projecting into the future and identifying with the past.

Gurudev was very specific: To lead the spiritual life, it is not necessary to withdraw into the forest. What is needed is the renunciation of ego, *abhimana*, *ahamkara*, renunciation of desire, renunciation of attachment, of *mamta* and *asakti* (mineness and attachment). In all the eighteen chapters of the Bhagwad Gita wisdom teachings, again and again have been stressed *nirmama*, *nirmoha* and *anasakti* (absence of mineness, absence of attachment and dispassion). Thus, true sannyasa constitutes giving up the false idea: "I am a human individual; I am separate from God, apart from all others." All that is ignorance. This is bondage. That Renunciation of ego that is outcome of this false identification is sannyasa. Renunciation of selfishness that springs out of "I"-ness and mineness – is sannyasa. Renunciation of innumerable desires that follow in the train of ego – identification, attachment and selfishness is real *tyaga*, real sannyasa.

Once desire is given up, one no longer has any *sankalpa*, no other *spraha* (desire) other than devotion to the lotus feet of the Supreme, devotion to attain *aparoksha'nubhuti* (direct, actual experience). "I am a mere instrument; Thou doest all" – this idea becomes firmly implanted in the consciousness. The great Mahatmaji who is the father of nation was the ideal sannyasin par excellence, as he lived every moment of his life manifesting dynamism, desirelessness, perfect *tyaga*, and perfect dedication to *vishva-kalyana* (welfare of all in the world). God bless you to ponder these truths that have been shared with you by the prompting of Guru Maharaj. May the grace of the Almighty make you a true *sadhaka*, a real devotee of the Lord, a real renunciate and real walker on the path of spirituality!

God Bless You!

■ Swami Chidananda