

## I Want Peace

THE MANTRA OF TODAY SEEMS TO BE “I WANT PEACE.” “I WANT PEACE.” EVERY DAY PEOPLE TELL me this. They all say, “Swamiji, I want peace. Tell me how to find it.”

The obstacle and the solution are buried in the statement. Listen: I want peace. I want peace. What do we have in that statement? An “I,” a “want,” and a “peace.” If you remove the “I” and the “want,” what is left? Peace. You do not have to look for peace, find peace, or create peace. All you have to do is remove the “I” and remove the “want.” Peace is then unencumbered and unobstructed. It is the “I” and the “want” that obscure this treasure from our view and prevent us from reveling in the truth of our own peaceful natures.

The key to internal peace, then, is not to go out in search of it, not to try to purchase or create it, but rather to quietly, sincerely, and devotedly work to remove the “I” and the “want” so that peace can be unearthed.

There is a beautiful story of an elderly woman who was outside in the evening searching on the ground, under the light of a bright streetlamp. A wise man was walking and saw her. “Mother,” he asked. “Can I help you? What are you searching for?”

The old woman replied, “I have lost my key and I am searching for it.” At this, the man too bent down and began to look in the street for the key alongside the old woman. After many minutes of searching, however, he stopped and asked, “Mother, where exactly did you lose your key? Do you remember?”

“Yes, of course,” she replied. “I lost it in the house.”

“Then why are you searching outside in the street for it?”

The woman looked at him and said, “Because in my house it is dark. There is no light. Here there is a bright streetlamp, so I am looking in the light of the street lamp.”

The wise man gently responded, “Mother, if I may offer you some advice. Go back inside. It may be dark,

but eventually you will find the key. Even if you had an army to help you search, you would never find your key out here because—no matter how light it may be—the key is not here.”

For this old woman the key was, perhaps, the key to a dresser or a safe or a door. For us, it is the key to peace. We search and search outside for that key when really we have lost it inside. We look in the shopping malls, in retreats, in courses, in possessions, in other people. But the key is within us. The answer is simply to remove “I” and “want,” which keep peace elusive.

### REMOVING “I”

“I” is one of the greatest obstacles to peace. I is our ego, our sense of doer-ship and pride.

#### WE ARE ONLY THE TOOLS

Our ego thinks, “Oh, I am so successful at my job. I am so good. No one could do what I do as well as I do it.” But, the truth is that we only go to work; God works. We can do nothing without His grace. One minute we may be at our desks, acting like kings of the world. The next minute, if one nerve, just one microscopic nerve in our brain fails, we will no longer be able to speak, write, or even feed ourselves.

So the truth that we all must realize is that we are merely pawns in His hands. We are clay in the hands of the Divine Sculptor. As long as He wants us to succeed, we will continue succeeding. As long as He wants our hearts to continue beating, they will beat.

Of course this realization does not exempt us from working diligently. It does not release us from responsibility. We must fulfill our duties to the best of our

