

HAPPINESS

In this world there are many individuals who will say, "we are happy already so why should we search for happiness?" And although it is true that almost every individual experiences happiness at one time or another, for different periods of time, few realise that this feeling of happiness, no matter how temporary it may be, is actually a reflection of the True Self. Indeed, if it was not for that Power from the True Self reflecting itself into our material and worldly life, our existence would be quite painful and intolerable.

Some of us may have observed that our present happiness comes to us under "happy" circumstances and realise that these conditions can change in a moment to sorrow and pain.

In all ages, and even in present times, Saints and Sages have reminded us that no material thing in this world can give us constant joy or permanent bliss. Even the personality, charm, beauty or whatever else we may admire in an individual can give them no lasting or continuous happiness.

For example, just suppose that you are enjoying listening to a particular devotional song when suddenly you are informed that your vehicle has been broken into and your spare tyre or jack is missing. In a moment you will no longer be experiencing joy or happiness. Circumstances have changed. Your mind has been distracted. Now, no matter how softly or loudly that same song is played, you can no longer experience the same level of joy you were experiencing only a few moments ago.

In the same way it can be observed that although an individual may be a prominent figure in the community, or may have a beautiful complexion, or a charming personality, or be held in high esteem, a sudden change in circumstances can utterly destroy the happiness or feeling of self-satisfaction derived from these conditions.

The change could come in the form of an unfavourable rumour or, through illness or accident or an allergy, the person may lose their beauty and complexion or, through a misunderstanding or misrepresentation may "lose" their charm and personality.

Once again the happiness has been fleeting and sorrowful circumstances have arisen, sorrowful not only for the victim but also for those who once held him in high esteem.

Now, having realised the temporary nature of worldly happiness, the question may arise: "Is there anything or anyone in this world that can give me constant and everlasting peace, joy or happiness?"

The answer to this question is a definite **YES**. There is a Power whom we call God, Allah, or Parameshwar, and that Power is all-beautiful. It is all-shining. It is the eternal Truth of God.

It is also the source of this creation and, therefore, it is that Power alone which can

grant us ceaseless joy; a joy that nobody or thing or circumstance can destroy. What a tremendous Power this is!

Unfortunately, the vast majority of mankind is ignorant of It and does not know how to tap into It. There are even some who have had a glimpse of this Reality and have chosen to ignore it.

Some of the latter may have read about It or heard about It but did not wish or feel inclined to make further inquiries. Then there are those who did make some enquiries but lacked the faith to pursue the Truth.

Whatever our reason may be for ignoring that Power **IT ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE**. It has not changed in any way, though some of us remain blinded by illusion and are ignorant of this wonderful reality.

Let us take the example of "man's best friend", the dog. He finds a dry bone, bites and chews on it and really enjoys it, does he not? In reality, in truth, what is happening is that the edges of the bone have actually damaged the soft, tender, inner part of the dog's gums and have caused some bleeding. Now, what the dog is tasting and really enjoying is its own blood mixed with its saliva, and not the dry bone.

Can any liquid come from a dry bone? No! But the dog does not know this. He truly believes that joy and happiness is coming from the dry bone. Therefore he will continue to search for dry bones to chew on. He will also get involved in fights with other dogs to get this happiness from the bone - even if it means getting hurt in the process.

The dog cannot or is not able to see through this illusion that happiness comes from dry bones; and maybe he never will know the truth of it. But we human beings see through these illusions. It is possible for us **to know**, to experience the truth. Let us not be mistaken like the dog.

But somehow we seem to believe or want to believe that happiness and joy are found in possessions. But, if that was the case, if happiness really came from the things and objects we possess, then surely more and more happiness would come from having more and more possessions. And less and less happiness would come with less and less possessions.

Deep within our minds we continue to believe that happiness comes from possessions and we continue to strive so hard, we expend so much energy and time, adding to our possessions.

Common-sense or intelligent observation soon shows us that those who have accumulated the most are really not the happiest of people, while there are others who have very little and yet are happy.

This is a very confusing situation, is it not? It is like this. We have a desire and somehow, by some means, we satisfy that desire. Then for a time we experience

peace in the mind. The reason for this peace is that the power of the Self, that Bliss, is being reflected in the circumstance or object or thing being experienced.

But in a short time a new desire comes up. The mind then becomes disturbed. It becomes distracted, agitated, restless. Then the bliss or joy or happiness that was being experienced is covered over. Like a blanket thrown over a small fire, the joy is smothered.

Now a question which may arise here is "How can this ever-present, eternal and most beautiful Power be covered by the mind?"

You yourself will have observed in your own lifetime - it is a common experience - that even something small can disturb or hide the truth either partially or wholly in the same way that a passing cloud can hide even the sun for a time. Similarly, even a small lie can convince some people that the false is true.

I have seen this sort of thing happen time and time again, and I am sure you have had this experience also.

For example, on the TV or in the cinema, we might be watching a scene where a person is on the tenth floor window ledge of a building. We are all holding our breath in suspense. Suddenly the person slips and falls. We are then shown his body falling and crashing on to the pavement below.

In horror we cover our faces, eyes or ears to shut out this scene because it is so frightening to watch. We also imagine the pain and agony the falling person may have experienced and the thoughts which may have gone through his mind just before he hit the pavement.

But, you see, all this was not true. The person, the actor, was not on the tenth floor window ledge at all. He was on the ground floor ledge. Nor did he slip by accident. It was a planned fall. Furthermore, he did not crash to the ground as we apparently witnessed. He planned his fall so that he landed comfortably on a thick foam mattress.

What we saw crashing to the ground was a dummy dressed to look like the actor; but we were not **AWARE** of the **TRUTH** of the matter. The whole scene was a lie to convince us that the untrue was true.

Nothing happened to the actor but a lot of things happened to us who were watching the movie. We became emotional. Our blood pressure probably shot up. Our hearts may have missed a few beats. Maybe we were sweating and gritting our teeth. Why? - simply because for a moment we fully believed that what we were seeing was TRUE.

So, in the same way, in our lives, we feel temporary happiness while we believe the illusion that happiness comes from possessing material things and, therefore, we continue to accumulate them.

If, somehow, we are made aware of or can appreciate that the link between happiness and the amount of material possessions is nothing but an illusion, then we will stop for a moment and think about what we are doing and what will be the result of this false belief.

In fact, what we are doing by accepting this illusion as real is definitely to ensure that we remain bound to the cycle of birth and death, to coming and going, and to the continuation of the anxiety and limitations associated with this bondage.

Maybe some of us are not actually experiencing pain, sorrow, misery, anxiety or even limitations of any kind - at the moment. But just look around you and observe the lives of others. You will soon see that we depend on good sensations to feel good or happy, and that this kind of dependence is **ATTACHMENT**; and that **ATTACHMENT** brings fear, anxiety and misery in its wake.

We need to break the chain that binds us, and there **IS** a way to break that chain. Try it yourself, within your own body. It is called **SELF-INQUIRY**.

The Saints and Sages of all times have pointed the way.

Sathya Sai Baba, in one of his discourses, says very clearly that all our pleasures and pains arise from contact of the senses with pleasure-giving or pain-producing **OBJECTS**, causing us to **DESIRE** one thing and to **HATE** the other. But if we feel neither attraction nor repulsion for sense objects and allow them to come and go as a matter of course, they **CANNOT** produce pleasant or painful sensations.

In other words, if we **REALISE** that it is the **CARING** for objects and nothing else that brings misery then we become happy. **IT IS NOT THE SENSE OBJECTS THEMSELVES THAT BRING MISERY BUT OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH THEM AND OUR ATTACHMENT TO THEM.** Once we are free from identification and attachment there is no need to shun this world.

Divine bliss is found only in **OUR INNER NATURE**, not in the things or circumstances of this outer world.

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