

## Quest for HAPPINESS : The root of all activities

*(Excerpts from Satsang of Pujya Sant Shri Asaramji Babu)*

All beings strive for happiness.

There are four kinds of happiness: The first one is experienced in idleness, the second one through the senses, the third one from devotion, while the fourth one is derived through discrimination leading to Enlightenment.

The happiness derived from idleness is the most frivolous one. One sits idly, inebriated or sleeps off in an air-conditioned room or lies idly on the bed. The pleasure derived from such laziness and stupor may of course give some apparent comfort but in effect, is nothing but a sheer wastage of time. This is the happiness of idleness.

The penchant for deriving happiness from smell, taste, sight, hearing and touch is the second kind of happiness. 'May I become a king' 'have a son' 'become very strong' 'go to such and such a place' 'I will be very happy then.' Let us imagine for a while that you have a son, become very strong and even go to your desired place, but then what? We do not think of the end result. That is why we are drawn towards sense objects. Whoever wants to be happy by fulfilling his worldly desires is enslaved by them, and thus wastes his life hankering after transient sense objects.

The third type of happiness emanates from devotion. 'Whatever my Lord does is always for the best' 'O My Lord! Let my love for You be eternal' 'Bless me with an unwavering devotion' The happiness emanating from such bhava is called devotional happiness.

Once it so happened that Doctors told a patient, 'You have Tuberculosis.' Consequently the patient was continuously haunted by the thoughts of Tuberculosis. He then developed symptoms of third stage Tuberculosis. He spent lakhs of rupees in treatment but in vain. Eventually he lost all hopes and could not think of a solution.

A group of Saints was passing through that way. He paid obeisance to the Saints and entreated, 'Your Holiness! Kindly bless me.'

One Saint said, 'Why do you worry' Sita is Nature and Rama is God. All this is the play of the Lord and His consort, Nature. Chant 'Sita Rama' Sita Rama.'

Sound is Brahman-personified and the Lord's name is very powerful. In chanting 'Sita Rama' Sita Rama', the man forgot his illness. The constant thought of Sita Rama induced inner bliss. This happiness improved his immunity and he was soon on his way to recovery. Finally his Tuberculosis was gone, and subsequently he renounced the world to join the Saints.

His family members met him. 'You have gone mad', they complained.

He said, 'I would have remained sick, bedridden and ended up dying a miserable death. Isn't it better to die in the company of Saints chanting 'Sita Rama' Here I am quite happy and feel good. Now I will live in the ashram only. My untimely death has been averted by the Saints' blessings. I will spend the rest of my life in their pious company.'

What this man attained was the happiness of bhava. This is not the bliss of God-realization, yet it is better than the happiness derived from sense pleasures.

The fourth type is the happiness of Self-knowledge. You are praised' you are insulted' you get favourable and unfavourable circumstances' Be a witness to them all, considering them to be transient. Be a witness to anger, anxiety and fear. This attitude of remaining a witness gives the happiness of Self-knowledge.

The happiness derived through idleness destroys one's virtues and multiplies one's sins. The happiness resulting from sense pleasures reduces one's virtues. The happiness of devotion increases one's virtues. The happiness of Self-knowledge does actually establish one in the knowledge that virtues and sins belong to samsara, and that our True Self is the eternal Consciousness. Once one is established in this knowledge, one begins to get blessed with an ever-new joy and an ever-new bliss.

Material objects are drawn towards one who knows God, the source of the ever-new bliss. But one is no more attracted towards them, for then one is completely devoid of all desires. Neither does one enjoy these objects by taking them for real, nor does one abandon them just out of fear.

The Enlightening knowledge of Brahman is simply extraordinary. Outwardly, a Self-realized person may look distressed, angry or even pleased, but actually he is established in such a high state of spiritual existence that can hardly be expressed through words.

Just as in a theatre, the lamp remains lit throughout the entire proceedings. First come the cleaners, followed by the decorators when the lamp is alight. The orchestra comes; the lamp is alight. The dancing troupe comes; the lamp is alight. The main dancer comes; the lamp is alight. People applaud her; the lamp is alight. Somebody plays his instrument out of tune, the singer's song is spoiled, people throw rotten tomatoes, stones and shoes and leave the theatre booing the artists; the lamp is still alight. The entire theatre is empty; the lamp is still alight. Similarly, Enlightened Saints, though they appear to be engaged in worldly activities, are in fact merely a witness to them.

What is the cause of sorrow? It is the very desire to attain pleasure from the world that gives rise to sorrow. On the other hand, the aspiration for Self-bliss brings virtues. Worldly pleasures and comforts merely suppress the sorrow. Suppressing the sorrow is no worthwhile achievement. To attain Supreme Bliss one has to root out the sorrow rather than merely suppress it.

Those who think that they owe their happiness to others will remain under obligation to others. But those who know and accept that happiness and sorrow are caused by ignorance of their minds, attachment and their respective prarabdha, are freed from the bondage of happiness and sorrow.

The great Saint Tulsidas has aptly declared,

**'Nobody is responsible for another's happiness and sorrow. Everybody suffers or enjoys the fruits of his own actions.'** (Shri Rama Charita Manas, Ayodhya Kand : 91.2)

Nobody is responsible for the favourable and adverse circumstances in one's life. It is our feelings, assumptions and beliefs that make us assume that so and so has given us happiness or so and so has inflicted sorrows on us. As long as we ourselves do not develop a mode of grief in our mind, who has the power to make us sorrowful? Similarly, if we don't develop a mental mode of happiness then all objects of happiness are meaningless too. It is entirely in our own hands to develop a mental mode of happiness or grief.

Let us firmly resolve to attain the pure Supreme Bliss. A firm resolve to attain higher happiness, higher peace and higher knowledge is known as vrata. To endure the difficulties faced on way to accomplishment of this resolve, is termed tapa. To avoid repeating past mistakes is known as prayashchitta. A fervent entreaty to the Lord out of a deep yearning for God-realization is prarthana.

Life is like a musical instrument. Learn to play it well. Life is like a song, sing it in tune. Life is a gift bestowed by the Lord, make good use of it. Cut down on the worldly enjoyments and curtail your personal needs. Become established in the bliss of your True Self. Engage yourself in japa and meditation; enhance your Self-bliss.

Pay due consideration to what you know. Appreciate true worth of what you have. We always have the Lord with us, but we do not appreciate the importance of this fact. We know about Supreme Lord but we do not respect this knowledge and foolishly indulge in futile thoughts that ruin us.

Those who catch parrots, set up a trap. (The trap is made by inserting a stick into a hollow pipe so that when the parrot perches on it the pipe moves around the stick leaving the parrot hanging with its feet clenching the pipe.) The parrot sits on the trap. The trap moves, but even then the parrot holds onto the pipe under the false impression that it has been tied down to the trap. It hangs but still does not lose its grip on the trap. Similarly, one labours under the belief, 'I will be happy when I get this or do that'. While trying to acquire these objects, one faces all kinds of hardships but still does not relinquish his attachment or desire.

If the parrot realises that it is not trapped but has mistakenly assumed itself to have been trapped, it can set itself free immediately. Similarly the jiva, out of sheer ignorance, considers the body as 'I'. In fact, the source of 'I' is the Truth, the Supreme Self. The Enlightened One who has attained that Supreme Lord and realised the world to be a mere dream, does achieve the True goal of life. Only the company of such Self-realized one makes our life fruitful.