

What is Happiness?

It is an agreed fact that all the creatures want happiness and are afraid of pain and grief. The question, however, is 'what is real happiness?'. The desire for happiness has no meaning without understanding the real nature of happiness.

Generally, ordinary beings consider sensual pleasures as happiness and their attempts are also directed towards it. According to them, search for happiness means to search for pleasures of the senses. The question 'what is happiness' does not arise in their hearts, because they treat life full of sensory joys as a happy life.

It is on account of this that whenever we think of happiness and welfare, it is considered desirable to lead a life of attachments, work hard, grow more food and develop industries and science. The country will prosper by all these and all will be happy. Ideals are talked of and it is said that a day will come when everyone will have nutritious food to eat, clothes to put on according to variations of seasons and modern residence with all scientific facilities and then all will be happy.

We do not want to discuss whether such conditions will prevail or not. Our question is if after having all these comforts, life will be happy. If yes, people having all these comforts should be happy even now. The countries touching the limitations of all these comforts must, then, have all happy and quiet people. We, however, find that all on this earth are disturbed, impatient, unhappy, afraid and worried. It is, therefore necessary to consider seriously what happiness really is. We cannot make true efforts in this direction and achieve happiness without once for all deciding what real happiness is.

Some thinkers go ahead and say "Happiness does not lie in objects of enjoyment; happiness or unhappiness lies in imagination". To prove their belief they give examples like the one following: A man has a two storey house; on the right is a five storey building and on the left a cottage. When he sees right, he feels unhappy and when he sees left he feels happy. As such happiness does not lie in possession of sensory objects, but in imagination. They advise people to look towards those, who have fewer possessions and be happy. If you look towards people having more wealth and possessions, you will always be unhappy.

It is unreasonable to hold that happiness lies in imagination. "If you want to be happy look towards the poor". Those poor people cannot satisfy even their needs. Seeing at such poverty-stricken people even worldly-minded people develop pity. It is unkind to regard one happy by imagining that one is better than the poor and the unhappy. This attitude also satisfies the sense of pride of possessions. This can never be called happiness. Does happiness lie in the cottage, looking at which one can get happiness? Unless we really find where happiness lies, we cannot really be happy.

This meaning of happiness is also not correct, because here also it has not been attempted to know what happiness is; pleasures arising out of sensual joys have been treated as happiness. It has been held that happiness lies in imagination. Shall we, therefore, believe the real happiness does not exactly exist? But this would not be acceptable to anybody. It is, therefore, clear that sensual pleasures are imaginary and real happiness is quite different from these. The original question 'What is real happiness' stands.

Some ask people to do various things and say, "This way your desires would be satisfied. You would get the desired objects and become happy". People holding these views regard happiness as a satisfaction of desires and unhappiness as denial thereof.

First of all, it is not possible to satisfy one's desires because there are countless desires of countless people and the material things are limited. Then new desires arise as soon as the previous ones are satisfied. Thus the eternal current of desires continues forever. It is, therefore, definite that ever changing desires can never be satisfied. Conceptions like those of satisfaction of desires and achieving consequent happiness are merely a mirage in the ocean of the great desert of life. All the desires are never going to be satisfied and this creature is never going to be happy in the satisfaction of desires.

In reality, happiness does not lie in the satisfaction of desires. This is like being happy by transferring the burden of the head to the shoulder. It is also not correct to say that we will be happy proportionately with the desires satisfied because real happiness lies in the absence of desires, not in their satisfaction. Because we reduce our restlessness in the partial absence of desires, it can, therefore, naturally be understood that complete absence of desires will lead us to complete happiness. It

is wrong to say that desire dies out after its fulfillment and that should be regarded as happiness, because the absence of desires does not mean their satisfaction, but their absolute absence.

Pleasures arising out of several joys are not happiness. They are, in fact, unhappiness because they have the restlessness, which makes one unhappy. Happiness means ease and complete lack of restlessness and pleasures of senses do not have that mental ease. Whatever we enjoy with the help of the senses is sensual pleasure only. It is a kind of unhappiness. It is happiness in name only. Psychic bliss is above senses and cannot be had from their objects. Just as the soul, being psychic, cannot be achieved with the help of the senses; non-sensory happiness, being in the nature of the soul, cannot be obtained with the help of the senses.

We have to find a thing, where it is. How can we find it where it is not possible to have it at all. For example, consciousness is an attribute of the soul and can be found in the sentient soul only, not in inanimate entities. Likewise, happiness is also an attribute of the soul, not of inanimate beings. Happiness can, therefore, be had in the soul only, not in inanimate objects like human bodies. This soul does not know itself and is, therefore, wandering with wrong faith; in the same manner, this being attempts to find happiness in non-self-objects and that is the root cause of his unhappiness. The direction of the search for happiness itself is wrong. When the direction is wrong, the present state will also be full of unhappiness. For getting real happiness, we have to see within, to know our own being, for our happiness lies in ourselves. The soul is a depository of eternal bliss, full of everlasting joy. Therefore, those, in pursuit of happiness should turn their efforts towards their inner beings. Those looking for happiness elsewhere will never get it.

Real happiness is a matter of experience, not of speech, not of demonstration. It can be had only by being introvert, cutting ourselves from all the non-self-entities and being one with our soul itself. Since the soul is full of happiness, the experience of the soul is the experience of happiness. Just as one cannot achieve the soul without experience, in the same manner, one cannot get real happiness without the experience of the soul.

If we ponder deeply over the question, we realize that happiness is not to be had from somewhere else, for the soul is itself made of this happiness, is nothing but

happiness alone. That which is happiness incarnate has not to find happiness anywhere else. Happiness is not to be possessed, it is to be enjoyed, to be experienced. It is not necessary to torment ourselves for getting happiness. There is no trouble whatsoever in happiness; restlessness has no happiness. Restlessness is itself unhappiness and its absence is happiness. As such there should be no desire for happiness, for desires themselves make us unhappy. The absence of desires is real happiness.

To all questions like, what is happiness? Where does it lie? How shall we get it? there is only one answer, only one solution and that is the experience of the soul itself. The first and the foremost means of achieving it is the pondering over the fundamentals of life. However, we should remember that the real experience of the soul is born of the absence of this pondering over the fundamentals of life. Separate treatment is desirable for questions like 'Who am I?' 'What is a soul?' and 'How is self-experience achieved?'.