

HAPPINESS HERE AND NOW

- Vasant

"Carnal mind is enmity against God." The elimination of the carnal aspect of the mind receives priority in any code of spiritual discipline. each one of us wants to be happy and all of our efforts are orientated towards achieving this state. With our distorted vision of the phenomenal world we try to extract happiness through objects of phenomena. This endeavor lands us into a series of slippery patches. During the journey we get enmeshed in cobwebs of KARMA. The inexorable law of "Reap as you sow" further enfeebles the power of discrimination and the vicious circle tends to perpetuate. Every sense gratification is served with the price tag "pay". Pay now or pay later but pay you must. Our blinded vision refuses to learn from experience and life tends to become a meaningless meandering through the valley of misery and ignorance. Misery and ignorance are not the disease; they are merely the symptoms. The disease is bondage.

If you keep your happiness dependent on some future event it clearly means you refuse to become happy in the present. You postpone happiness although you have all the wherewithal to be happy now. You hear people say, "I'll be happy when I get a bigger apartment; if only I had a bigger color TV!" We have no quarrel with bigger apartments or color TVs. It is your attitude towards them that matters. "If only my son gets free of drugs!" "The girl in my office was so rude today; I felt like slapping her." "I couldn't find a parking place for one hour; I am disgusted. I wonder whether heaven has enough parking lots." See how things have upset the equanimity of the mind and trouble the heart. You become nervous, fidgety, and therefore unhappy. It seems as if anything that turns up has a potential to disturb you and make you unhappy. The mere flicker of a traffic light from yellow to red, or the casual puts you into a rage. You want to rush to the office after breakfast but the little one refuses to move away from the TV cartoons to accompany you to the babysitter's and you are in tantrums. It seems that every action that we have to perform to keep our schedule proves to be a potential trouble shooter. No wonder it is a heyday for psychiatry. The next generation may wonder how civilizations existed all these millenniums without psychiatry. The trouble is we are in a rut and unless we change our attitudes of mind the rut may prove to be a superhighway to destruction. Mere good intentions are not enough. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

If you know the secret of happiness you will not allow yourself to be disturbed either by trivial incidents in the work-a-day world or by the calamities which have come to your lot as a result of past Karma. The Law of

Karma is the doctrine of "Reap as you sow." Once you decide that you want to be happy now, this very moment, it follows that you cannot keep you happiness dependent on any situation that you hope may come about in the future. You have then to grapple with the present.

We try to equate happiness with some future event. If the future event takes shape disregarding your sweet idiosyncrasies, needless to say, you are unhappy. Sometimes it takes shape much to your liking but generally it is punctuated with ifs and buts and hence you are unhappy. If it does come about conforming to your hopes you say "I have made it but I don't know how long it will last," and again you are unhappy. Like the proverbial donkey with a carrot dangling in front of it you are beleaguered to toil from desire to desire. In the process the physical frame exhausts itself.

Let us not forget that happiness is a condition into which we usher ourselves. Once you try to get rid of anger, hatred, jealousy, envy and pride you are well set on the path to happiness. This is only pruning the weeds. Love, humility, goodwill towards all then pervade the totality of the mind. This process forms part of TAPA, the third aspect of the Fivefold Path of the Vedas. The Fivefold Path is sanctified by all saints and prophets all over the world. Resuscitation of the Fivefold Path is the need of the hour. The Fivefold Path of cosmic scriptures is the one common ground in the fast shrinking world. It cuts across sects, denominations and appellations.

It is not the conditions outside nor the objects of phenomena that determine whether I am going to be happy or miserable. The sole criterion is how I react to these conditions, these objects. If my reactions change I become happy. So this is the key to imbibe the secret of happiness. Change your attitudes and happiness dawns.

If happiness were to reside in any object should be capable of granting us happiness all the time. We do not experience this potential in the object. We superimpose happiness on the object and call it the source of happiness. We find that as one grows old he is not able to extract the same pleasure from sense organs as he used to. This is a case where we label pleasure as happiness through ignorance.

Mind is the thief, find out how he functions. Disarm the thief, blunt his weapons, thus you remove the carnal aspect of the mind. This is the beginning of any spiritual discipline.

Spiritual discipline is for everyone who wants to be happy in this very world. And who doesn't? Let us not worry about post-dated heaven. Follow the Fivefold Path and be happy here and now. Happiness is not a concomitant of

mass production techniques or assembly lines. The addition of an electric fish sitter to the already proliferating gadgetry is not going to increase the quantum of happiness. The yawning gap between the state of national affluence and the quality of human existence is perhaps the most perplexing paradox of modern times. But this gap can be bridged. Intelligence is not lacking. What is required is boldness to throw overboard wrong notions accumulated through centuries. Post Einsteinian scientific discoveries demand a fresh breeze of interiority and hence the Fivefold Path.

Mind may be a cruel tyrant. Let us turn it into an obedient servant. This is the first step to happiness. This is what YOGA is for. One may wave palms or sing psalms but unless he starts practicing "Love thy neighbor" no progress will be recorded. With proper spiritual discipline mind is no longer the master but is transformed into an instrument of Divine service. Thus you achieve happiness. What is the spiritual discipline that transforms mind from an instrument of bondage into an instrument of Divine unfoldment? It is the Fivefold Path of cosmic scriptures.

KRIYA YOGA

- Vasant

TAPA SWADHAYAYA ISHWAR PRANIDHANANI KRIYAYOGAH (Patanjali Yoga Sutra II-1) (Self-discipline, study of Self, resignation to His will implying total surrender is KRIYA YOGA).

YOGA SUTRAS (aphorisms) of Patanjali is a standard book on the science of YOGA. There are 196 aphorisms or concise statements. As stated in the first aphorism Patanjali is not the discoverer but only the codifier in SUTRA form of the ancient science of Yoga which has been handed down from time immemorial.

Yoga has evoked much interest in all parts of the world in recent years. The type of Yoga that caters to Western audiences these days is a presentation of some of the physiological aspects of this science with a mixed salad of a few physical postures, MUDRAS and a dash of rhythmic breathing. A gentleman who poses to be the quintessence of a church minister and a doctor of medicine rolled into one gives the pep-talk on how to be happy. tension-ridden audiences gulp in any fire and brimstone that may pop out of this loud-mouthed teacher. Words like peace, love, universal consciousness fling out with the speed of a skilled archer during the pep talks delivered in tastefully decorated rooms to the accompaniment of tape-recorded music. It is business and one must have all the paraphernalia before you are fleeced of your dollars. Of course, there are some good exceptions to the above routine of a Yoga class but all this Yoga has very little to do with the ancient science of Yoga described by Patanjali.

Thinking people refuse to submit to the dross of superstitions that has dropped up around the true message of Divine Messengers. They want to carry the search inwards. Only Sadguru (Perfect Master) can grant experience. To understand and experience Jesus and Buddha you have to meet a Sadguru. Thus, Sadguru alone can unfold the implications of Yoga. Yoga is union. Yoga is the experience that "I am my Father are one." This state is beyond intellect. By the process of Yoga, intellect is transmuted into PRAJNYA which may be translated as higher intelligence or true intuition. When Prajnya dawns you get glimpses. By discrimination, dispassion and continued practice the glimpses are consolidated and you enter the state of STHITAPRAJNYA or Steadfast Wisdom. All this is Yoga. How do you succeed in this seemingly difficult endeavor? The Fivefold Path of cosmic scriptures i.e. Vedas is the answer. You practice the Fivefold Path, and the Divine Power which works through a physically embodied SADGURU unfolds from

within you. You need not go in search of SADGURU if you follow the Fivefold Path. SADGURU will arrange the meeting through somebody. All this is unfolded from within you and hence there is no scope for deception. SADGURU is beyond time and space and Divine unfoldment takes place in the sanctuary of your home. You need not spend anything for this nor do you have to rely on any outsider to help you. Divine Grace is yours for the asking if you ask with one-pointed attention. Kriya Yoga is implied in the Fivefold Path.

Patanjali describes the scope of Yoga in the first three aphorisms. The first introduces the science of Yoga as it has been handed down from ancient times. The second describes Yoga as the method of inhibiting the outgoing tendencies of the mind. The third explains how the seer becomes stable in his own nature. So in these three SUTRAS the Path is chartered. We have now to do the mapping. What is the method? Kriya Yoga leads to unfoldment of Grace within you.

Modern psychology describes mind as thinking, feeling and willing or thought, feeling and volition. Tapa, Swadhyaya and Ishwar Pranidhan, the three words mentioned by Patanjali in the above SUTRA, relate to the three aspects of mind defined by modern psychology. Hence Kriya Yoga is the process of culturing these three aspects.

Tapa relates to will. Swadhyaya relates to intellect. Ishwar Pranidhan relates to feeling.

Thus, the discipline of Kriya Yoga has the triple aspect which covers the totality of mind. Practice of Kriya Yoga leads to the balanced growth of body and mind and the Spirit unfolds. Higher knowledge is not a process of accretion; it is illumination. When intellect is transformed into Prajnya you see things as they are and not as they appear.

TAPA in the above Sutra is the third aspect of the Fivefold Path. It connotes austerity, purification. The word comes from the Sanskrit Tapa meaning to heat. The dross of desires is to be burnt in Tapa. Tapa is a process of building character. Practice of Tapa takes various forms to suit each individual mould. The initial aim is to subjugate the physical vehicle and bid good riddance to the swaying of desires that drive us into indulge in untoward actions. Tapa fortifies our capacity to harmonize actions according to the judgment pronounced by the innate power of discrimination. The power of discrimination to choose between right and not right is the greatest asset granted to the human frame. This innate capacity is a privilege granted to the human species. It distinguishes man from the animal kingdom. Judicious employment of this function can lead man to the

pinnacle of glory, the highest experience which Jesus describes, "It is one, the wise call it by many names."

Let us first establish that I am the master and not my body. When you say "this is my house" you imply that you decide where the sofa, chairs, stereo, refrigerator, TV, pool table, or trash can are going to be kept. These things you move at your command. How far is this true when you say "this is my body"? It is the body which dictates what you are to do. The body commands, "you must have dope." You say, "O.K." and the ubiquitous pusher is not difficult to find. The body dictates a series of physical appetites and your intellect engages itself in finding the means for gratification of these demands. All this must change.

The pull of desires affects the attitudes of the mind. If your conscious mind does not check their propriety on the touchstone of discrimination the attitudes tend to become propensities that trouble the heart. At this stage you have to assert your power of discrimination and if you feel things are not right, then you have to cry stop. Some effort is required on your part to curb the attitudes and to see that at least the thought is not translated into action. If you do not hold the reins tight the propensities launch a severe attack on your emotions and signal is sent to the intellect to find out means for the gratification of these desires. This is the final point when you may avert indulging in wrong action. If the desires get the upper hand over discrimination the intellect engages itself in searching for means, wise or otherwise, to bring to fruition the act of gratification. Every action we commit is subject to the law of "Reap as you sow." Evil action vitiates intellect and dampens the power of discrimination. Good words fortify discrimination and give you added strength to implement the judgment pronounced by discrimination. Hence the Sermon on the Mount.

If you try forcibly to withdraw the senses from the sense objects they dive deep in the subconscious. The harassment does not end there. They subtly fasten on to your thoughts. Much against your will indulgence takes place. This is sometimes mental indulgence. On other occasions you throw discrimination to the winds and indulge in the physical act on the spur of the moment, later to repent at leisure. Sense control is thus difficult. The desires lie submerged like a cocked gun. Only a slight change in circumstances and the cocked gun triggers in spite of yourself. All your resolutions are blown to smithereens. Man, who is "made in His image", has landed himself into this abysmal pit. How can he get out of it?

Even for a Yoga practitioner the subtle senses do not bend easily. Occasionally they color totality of his thought, feelings, and volition and lead him astray.

A conscientious traveller on the Divine Path uses his strength of intellect and exercises patience with much humility. Still, he is not out of the woods. "Oh, my senses still excite me. I am not yet the master. I am the occasional slave. They may wax strong, unawares, against my discrimination." Is sense mastery so difficult that one can never achieve it? Is it going to elude us all the time? Do all our efforts end up in a bottomless pit? What next?

You have to separate yourself from the impulses that make you run after the "mad, mad world." Try to catch the moment when the attitudes of mind harass the heart. Do not cooperate with them; do not encourage them. Needless to say, do not surrender before their full throttled thrust. A way has to be found. This is part of your SWADHAYA, study of Self. This is the fifth aspect of the Fivefold Path. Let the necessity of sense-mastery dawn on you. Let the urgency seep through your thinking mechanism. Then you come to the conclusion that your mastery over the senses is not really secure unless some other element is introduced. You will readily agree that your strength is certainly not commensurate with the effort needed. Then you realize that you need the help of living embodiment, SADGURU, who has achieved that SAT state. His Grace enables you to put at least one foot on firm ground. The sting in your efforts is reduced. The journey is made easy and comfortable. SADGURU alone can lead you into the state of Ishwar Pranidhan stated by Patanjali in his Sutra on Kriya Yoga. Total resignation is the hallmark of Jesus and Buddha. "Not, mine, but Thine" is the secret. Total surrender is a condition but it is also an action. It runs like the latent thread that characterizes the stages that express "I am the way, the Truth."

What is the material aid that cleanses the mental frame? Which is the process that lifts you up from the quagmire of desires? What is the incumbent duty that will purify the mind? The first aspect of the Fivefold Path gives you the answer. Practice Agnihotra. It takes only a short time out of your busy daily routine. These few moments will bring you a harvest of joy. By daily performance of Agnihotra you purify the atmosphere. Purification of atmospheric content has a direct bearing on the mind. What you fail to achieve by years of effort may come about unawares. This is no puerile philosophy nor metaphysics. It is something which you can experience in the sanctuary of your home.

When attitudes of mind undergo change the whole world is different. so to summarize, Kriya Yoga is the technique. The Fivefold Path of the Vedas ushers you into Kriya Yoga. Grace unfolds within you. You are established into the state "Thy will be done." In practice, you start Agnihotra and you reach the stage of Ishwara Pranidhan, i.e. surrender to His will. In fact, the Agnihotra Mantra 'Na Mama' means 'Not mine (but Thine).' Thus, you fulfill the dictum,

"Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all they heart and wit all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- Matthew 23:37-40

SAPTA SHLOKI (The Seven Verses)

Verse 1

YADA SRUSHTAM JAGAT SARVAM TADA LOKAPITAMAHAH
CHATURVEDA SAMAYUKTAM SHASHWATAM DHARMAMADISHAT

Purport:

Along with creation the Almighty Father revealed the eternal principles of religion (Law) embodied in four Vedas.

Commentary on Verse 1 Vasant

SAPTA SHLOKI (The Seven Verses) is a gift to mankind from Parama Sadguru Shree Gajanan Maharaj of Akkalkot, India. Sadguru means Perfect Master and Parama means the highest. Shree Gajanan Maharaj is known as Parama Sadguru meaning the highest among the Perfect Masters. The Seven Verses unfold in a succinct form the message of the Vedas is the most ancient composition known to man. It is also called Shruti meaning that which was heard. The word comes from the Sanskrit root "Shru" to hear. The word Vedas comes from the Sanskrit verb "Vid" primarily meaning to know. Hence Vedas means treasure-house of knowledge. The Vedas are the first revelation given to mankind. The seers merely heard it and hence the word Shruti. The seers faithfully transmitted by word of mouth that which they heard in Almighty's own words.

The language employed to transmit this knowledge through the seers was Sanskrit. Sanskrit was never the mother tongue of any group of inhabitants of the globe. European scholars call Sanskrit the mother of Indo-European group of languages and state that Sanskrit underlies all the languages. Actually, all language of the world have words which trace their origin to Sanskrit. There are no words in Sanskrit language which are derived from other languages of the world.

Sanskrit word Adi means the first or the beginning. The English word "man" is derived from Sanskrit MANU. ADIMANU therefore means the first man. This became Adam in English. In some oriental languages ADAMI means man which is the progeny of Adam.

No group of people, no country can lay exclusive claim to the inheritance of Vedic wisdom not to the Sanskrit language. Sanskrit was the language employed for the first revelation and it has percolated all over the globe.

Vedic wisdom penetrated through all civilizations. Ages have passed since creation. Continents have been uprooted in the upheavals; continents have taken different shapes in the process. Humanity split in sections and scattered throughout the globe. Sanskrit and the Vedas are the common inheritance of all humanity. Let us awaken to this glorious heritage especially when we claim that we are guided by scientific spirit of inquiry. Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and other prophets speak the same eternal message first given through the Vedas. They lay stress on certain aspects of this eternal message which are more pertinent to the occasion. They use the language which would be readily understood by the people they move amongst. There is no conflict among the Messengers. People who come after the prophets create a vested interest and exploit the ignorance of the masses and thus split humanity into further compartments. Let us direct our spirit of inquiry to this organic link of Divine messengers originating with the Vedic seers and continuing till this day. Let us repeat in the footsteps of Buddha,

"Do not believe in traditions merely because they have been sanctified by generations nor because many people say so. Observe, analyze, reason it out. If you think it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good of all, accept it and live up to it."

-Kalma Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya

Let us search for the truth for "Truth shall make you free."

Vedas shed light on all aspects of creation. They describe the various tiers of energy. They also enunciate a path for harmonious functioning of this energy manifestation which results in peace and prosperity. If we wish to seek light regarding Time, Space, Infinity, One Supreme Godhead, the numberless universes of which our solar system is but a tiny speck and other such matters we should refer to the Vedas. We find therein revealed knowledge embracing the totality of creation. The Vedas are the most authentic source of knowledge and if the scientist re-orientates his search in the light of this knowledge he stands to benefit much in his endeavor. Science, as it is commonly understood, means the investigation of laws in the physical world. Applied science means utilizing the knowledge of one law to overcome another. To guide the scientist in his research is the least part of Vedic wisdom. The Vedas show us the path of liberation, Self realization. The aim of Vedic knowledge is to grant you the experience of the words uttered by Jesus,

"Be thou perfect as thy Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

- Matthew 5:48

Perfection is the goal set before mankind. What is this perfection so loudly proclaimed by all Messengers of Almighty, all saints in all parts of the globe? The study of the Vedas enlightens us regarding this state of perfection and the means to be adopted to achieve this state. Vedas point out the Fivefold Path which ushers us into the state described by the Bible,

"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you

- Luke 17:21

The Vedas assert that you can get this experience in this very life. Did not Jesus say,

"There be some standing here who will see the Kingdom of Heaven before they taste of death"?

- Luke 9:27

Almighty is One. In the true sense of the term, religion is also One. All Messengers of Almighty, all Divine incarnations, all Paigambars reiterate this message to suit the conditions in which they manifest. They modulate the language according to the capacity of the listener. According to Divine Messenger Muhammad, people were originally of one religion which he named ISLAM and when differences arose among them, Almighty raised prophets among them to explain the truth. People differed only due to jealousy. This, according to the prophet, was the Mother religion.

"Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Hanif, a Moslem."

-Holy Quran 3-67

Abraham was before Muhammad or Jesus, and yet the Prophet calls him a Moslem. This is in tune with his message that men were originally of one religion. The Eternal Principles of religion were given in the Vedas which is the first revelation. This is the Mother religion which Muhammad spoke of; this is the Law which Jesus came to fulfill.

"In course of time as the wave of propagation flowed in distant age and clime and humanity split in sections and scattered throughout the world, to every people, in their own tongue, was conveyed in every age, this same Divine message of wisdom and of truth through an endless succession of prophets and seers."

Jesus says,

"Before Abraham was I am."

-John 8:58

He does not say "I was." The true import of this sentence comes from beyond the intellect.

"The senses are powerful, beyond the senses is the mind; beyond the mind is intellect, but THAT is beyond intellect."

- Bhagavad-Gita

Almighty cannot be described in words as words always limit the meaning. Hence the word THAT. The state of 'likeness to God (*sadharma*)' is described by the Vedas and the means for achieving it are also explicitly stated. This is the "*brahma sthiti*" of Gita. This is *nirvana* of Buddha. This is "I and my Father are one" of Jesus. This is *kaivalya* of the science of Yoga which is the culmination of a tremendously long evolutionary process.