

## The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

*This is the seventh part of the serial article, continuation from November 2021 newsletter.*

### **Bringing Down The Voltage Of My Judgments**

Suppose I could lighten the intensity of my likes and dislikes, judgments and fears, prejudices and choose to have more objectivity. I may still have the subjective feelings but they wouldn't 'jerk me around' nearly as much. If I stay alert and aware of my responses to things, I would want to look at the reasons for what makes me helplessly respond the way I do at times. It is all for the purpose of better understanding my life and who I am in it. Wouldn't I be a far better 'captain of my own ship.'? If I can keep making the attempt, to make the effort to enjoy a better understanding of my own 'inner workings', I won't so often slip on my 'inner banana peels' and fall into painful dark spaces. (I always use the word 'dark to mean ignorance and its pain.)

The newly-wed woman in chapter three, without thinking it through objectively, could not get even a small wedge of free space between her subjective interpretation and what was true. The false assumption immediately took over her entire mind and body and it turned into excruciating pain. The mental slip is when I don't have enough objectivity to say to my mind, "Wait a minute, don't jump to conclusions yet, let's find out what's really going on here". This is the 'wedge' of space we need to develop and then keep ready for any time I see something happening which can potentially be an occasion to suffer. This practice is for my own sanity and peace of mind.

Also, far more often than necessary we worry when there is no need to worry. Again, it is only because of being caught in the web of our subjective interpretations and conclusions. Mark Twain, a famous American writer, once said: "I am an old man and I have seen a lot of troubles in my days and most of them never happened." This is exactly why, in the daily business of my life, it behooves me to set up an internal spotlight and be on the look-out for where and how I need to be more neutral and objective. This means that I can face my self-torturing ways of thinking and gain some mastery over it. Otherwise, my mind can get away from me like a run-away train and derail me when I least expect; we all know how that feels.

When we really seriously look at our subjectivity, it reveals to us that so much of our suffering is not really about what's happening to us. The newly-wed wife's pain was 'real' from a feeling standpoint but it was not valid from a truth stand point. So that ultimately

means that her emotional pain was not valid.

Subjectivity always traces back to the spell of self-ignorance that we 'dysfunction' under. We take ourselves wrongly. That is the absolute great dysfunction of them all. All the endless acting out of what we nowadays like to call 'dysfunction' is nothing but the direct fall out of the one overwhelming spell. And all our false subjective assumptions feed our dysfunctional behaviors and make a whole composite of a personality I call 'myself' but a mistaken self.

### **Objectivity Is Sanity**

The more objective I am, means the saner I am. In fact, objectivity equals sanity. Sanity allows me to enjoy far better peace of mind. The reason why we use judges and mediators is that they are supposed to be objective and advise us to make sensible choices when we are stuck in conflicts. Counselors, at their best, are supposed to listen to us with objectivity and help us to see ourselves more objectively so we can become saner.

The only point here, is to again remind us of this spell binding subjectivity by which I am hypnotized. It keeps me from knowing who I am and like the over-drugged boy who is lost to himself and cannot tell what is real from unreal, so too I see everything wrongly, there is no objectivity. To be objective means I see things as they are for what they are, nothing more, nothing less. The sanity of objectivity means freedom. An endless ball of subjective yarn is what usually goes into the fabric of my existence. The tapestry that hangs as a picture of my life is never static, it can be woven into something more beautiful rather than an ongoing sorry soap opera. Through wisdom and some good therapy, I can choose to grow to become more mature, sane, and free. It is doable, there is a way out.

### **Defining Happiness**

When people use the words 'realization', 'liberation' and 'enlightenment' most often they take it to mean 'happiness' or 'bliss'. Yet happiness and bliss are like love, god, good, bad, fine.... all are intangibles and totally relative, none have a definite clear definition. We use the words happiness and bliss as though they carry some kind of quantum value for everyone. But we all have our own different meaning-values for these words. It can be said with all certainty that words for intangible feelings are totally relative. Is it possible to arrive at another perspective, particularly on 'happiness' that can free the word from all the various relative conditionings? Can there be any definite logic about what is 'happiness'? I wish to offer that in this chapter.

## **Anything Logical About Happiness?**

Think about the time-line of your life and you will be looking at your own history of happiness because that's all we have ever struggled for. As a toddler, colorful balloons made you happy; as a preschooler a tricycle, in elementary school, games and friends to play with; as a teen, a boyfriend or girlfriend, in college, a good car, good grades with time to party; after college, a good job that will hopefully lead to a lucrative career, and when that looks possible the next thing is to find a suitable spouse, then house and family; ceaselessly on it goes. So, what makes me happy throughout my life keeps changing according to the age and stages in my life.

All the possible things I can desire for to make me happy are endlessly varied throughout my life. And so too from person to person. Desires always have relative levels of intensity and most of our desires are cultivated in the society and home environment in which we grow up. Yet there is one desire that is universal to all - regardless of what time, age and place or culture; in fact, it is the mother desire of all. It is the root cause of all our desires and that is simply the desire to be happy. And it is not merely a desire to be happy, what we really want is lasting happiness, without interruption, without it being conditional. Many of us got conditioned by this childish belief: "And they lived happily ever after". Everyone wants limitless happiness. If we could control everything that affects us, we would have it so that we could be happy all the time. It might eventually bore us and that would make us as powerful as God.

Hopefully we eventually come to see that every time I fulfill a desire, it makes me happy but that same original level of happiness never lasts. It is always limited by something, it is never 'ever after'. Simply because of the time that goes by, the object of happiness, is usually taken for granted i.e. boring or it can even turn sour on me. I may want to get rid of it, to be comfortable again. And this is just the nature of the mind, to get bored and regularly go looking for something new to want. It seems like, unfortunately, my happiness is always dependent on things and situations outside myself over which I can never have total control. Since all forms of happiness are conditional and relative to something else, I always enjoy 'happiness because'. I become happy because I've earned something or something has been given to me, or some favorable situation has occurred. It's almost always 'happiness-because' which translates into, there will always be a lot of variables that need to come together 'just right' for me to get a 'happy-fix'.

## **Happiness Is Not A Product**

A lot of people have a notion that happiness is like a commodity, like money, that it can

be earned and won, managed and manipulated, stored and even stolen. Certainly not! We know from our experience that it is something that always fades or changes in one way or another, I am not the master over it. Happiness wanes, changes and leaves in its own time of its own accord, no matter how well I may fool myself into thinking that I can do something about it. And therefore, we are consistently off and running to find the next thing. There are endless other new things, situations and people to enjoy. We have given the advertising business a good leash and they have us well trained.

It is said that every dark cloud has a silver lining and we can say there's a flip side to that; every bright, fluffy cloud of happiness has a dark lining. Say X decides to buy his dream car, a Benz; the sale is made, he drives the car off the lot and he feels like a king, he's on top of the world, this is a peak experience. He drives next day to his office and when he reaches the parking lot he looks around with great concern, " Let's see, where can I park far enough away from all the other cars to make sure nobody gives me a dent. "But such spots are not always available, and even if they are there's no guarantee that some sneaky vandals won't do him a dent anyway. In the office he gets the 'ooh and aahs' of congratulations. Then three months and one dent away from the dealership floor, his feeling of being on top of the world, has lost a bit of its luster. How long can the novelty-joy last especially when X is faced with the oppressive monthly payments. He also has to regularly tolerate his wife's subtle reminders that this wasn't the smartest thing he's ever done even if he did need to soothe his mid-life crisis; they are well enough in debt already. Then the 'prestige factor ' of his car takes a hit when a competitive co-worker buys an ultra-model Jaguar that cost substantially more than his Benz. And if that isn't enough to rain on his parade, it's some bad luck that his Benz turns out to be a lemon. This list of unforeseen variables can go on as the reasons that continue to dampen the original 'top-of-the- world- quantum-of- happiness'. Every fluffy new cloud of happiness has a dark lining whether we want to acknowledge it or not.

*To be continued...*

“Maturity is nothing but the appreciation of what is. To be objective, to be alive to reality is maturity. These are all simple facts. We are not believing in anything. We just appreciate the facts and do not take things for granted. We are talking about what is, so there is no question of belief.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati