

The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

This is the ninth part of the serial article, continuation from January 2022 newsletter.

Happiness Is My Essential Nature

What this tells us is that unhappiness is opposed to our true nature. Sorrow is opposed to our natural inborn state of being thus we feel consistently, uncomfortable in pain and always want to get back to a harmonious status quo of happy. This looks simplistic at first but it is not an ordinary piece of logic. It indicates that there is a happiness that is not caused by anything, it just IS my nature which just 'wants' to be itself as it is. It is not a happiness because of my doing and attaining, it is a happiness in just BEING. Who doesn't want to feel at home just being ourselves? It is to be comfortable in my own skin without having to struggle for that and looking to someone or something outside myself to be there. (The unsavory dependency.)

Think about this; when we are with someone who is comfortable with themselves, un-self-conscious, simple without pretenses, they are the easiest kind of person to be with. They have no need to impress others with what they have, what they do or how they look; they have no need to compete, and play games to manipulate for positioning in order to be one up on others. They have nothing to get from me or anyone else. Self-unacceptability is not an issue for them. Because they are full and happy on their own they don't need to look to others and the world around them to make them happy. They are just fully present, relaxed into their own happy being, being it. We sense something lovable and are naturally attracted to them. When we feel comfortable around such a person since they need nothing from us, then I get a glimpse that I too can just be myself. They show us that it is possible to be comfortable just being who we are and we are inspired in their presence. They are happy from the inside out, not because of anything else. They offer us a big clue as to a 'novel' reality about happiness being my own true nature.

As we grow in our psychological maturity, we've gained enough experience and intuition to deduce that happiness does not really have anything to do with appearances nor accomplishments, nothing to do with externals. But what we continue to do as a society is spend shamefully wasteful billions of dollars on appearances rather than on 'being real' with ourselves or others. Look at all the things and schemes to appear as though we are

not aging when aging is not optional. We don't have to look far to see how miserable the lives of the rich and famous can be; movie stars and politicians, how laden with insecurities they are just due to the avoiding the aging process alone. If only we could see behind the scenes.

All of us have had chances to experience the serene joy of just feeling at home with and acceptable to ourselves without having fulfilled any desire. It doesn't matter how rare or short those moments are, they are still glimpses of something so real, giving us an insight that I can be happy with myself alone. Maybe I can come to discover that happiness is really to be found within myself. In fact, the wise seers say, not just 'inside' me, it is me. All the traditions of spiritual wisdom, the mystics in all cultures, teach that you are your own true source of joy. Instead of living for 'happiness-because', we have a choice to look with in, about what they teach.

A Dog And His Bone

An example: Here is a dog who has dug up an old dry bone. He starts gnawing on it and it has some sharp edges. The harder he bites down he starts to draw a little blood from his own gums. This blood makes him chew even more vigorously on this dry useless bone. He's tasting his own blood thinking it's the bone. The ancient wisdom teachings tell us that I am like this dog when I experience 'happiness-because.'

If I am my own source of happiness then I need not live a life expecting other people and the world around me to give me happiness. When I can enjoy a fullness of happiness as my very nature, saintliness would be a "side effect." Because only when I am Full and secure in that Fullness, I can never be a threat to anyone else. If Wholeness in Fullness is my Self, then that is the only 'thing' that will never need anything added to it and nor can anything be subtracted from it. This Fullness and my wisdom in knowing it as the truth of myself, is the only thing that no one can ever take away from me.

In my body, mind and soul I don't need to be overhauled, fixed, purified or salvaged in order to be able to discover and embrace the truth of who I am: happiness which is unconditional love. Just knowing Fullness and Wholeness as my true nature, without my having achieved anything to get it, is the only real happiness. In this state of being which can be said to be an Infinite Oneness, is where I come to understand that I am not separate from God. It can only be due to the original ignorance of this truth that all suffer. It is possible to be free of that ignorance. Only then can I know that in my essence I am free from sorrow.

What Happiness Is Not

For the sake of better clarity to 'prove' how all this logic thus far holds water, what happiness is not deserves a fair part of this discussion also. It's an exposition which is very 'radical' and crucial in order to understand the happiness afore mentioned. Even though we have always thought of happiness as an experience because it feels that way, happiness is not 'an experience' where I enjoy something like having a cup of tea. (This is like what was earlier cited about the Sun, how we thought that it moved across the sky until we discovered differently.) The enjoyment of happiness is not an experiential amount of something that is attached to or held in the object itself. If it were so, that every pleasurable object holds a certain quantum of happiness then everyone would get the same pleasure from a cigarette or octopus stew. Pleasure from anything is always relative. All of advertising would like us to believe that everyone can get happiness out of just about anything. They never sell the product: "Buy this drink which is a brown carbonated liquid full of sugar and chemicals that will make it taste something like caramel if you drink it cold enough and has enough caffeine to keep you awake for a whole night and in time, enough of it will cause damage to your stomach lining.

'This would be truth in advertising. Instead they are selling you their product by enticing you with some 'silly sizzle' around the product. The cola brings fun, vibrancy and popularity, there will be more sexual excitement in your life amongst other things; they are selling silly unrealistic projected intangibles. And even if the pleasure is somewhat tangible, like from chocolate, umm...sweet and stimulating, still it is a fleeting pleasure. And it won't be enjoyable for totally everyone (maybe Eskimos don't care for it).

Now in comparison think about this. Whenever you hear a good joke and you are into a real belly laugh...at those moments, the moments of laughter, where is there any sense of desiring, sorrow or emptiness and limitations. Is the laughing, happy you and the happiness experienced in that moment two different things? They are not, it is just one wholeness of a 'Happy-Be.'

In any moment of happiness, it can be explained as a moment when the wanting, desiring ego is not there. The ego is not presenting itself and so all feeling of lack, comparison and self-judgment is not there; all of that is transcended, as it were. Ego has been, for a few precious moments, knocked off. The joke is the experience that your ears hear but the laughing happiness of it is just yourself, your Being, being what it is, 'shining through.' These occasions, no matter how momentary, is where I have tasted and get a clue to my real nature. I get a very real glimpse, and even if it is only registered unconsciously, still it

becomes a silent standard for how I want to be and live, because that's ME.

I once had the chance to pick a warm ripe peach off of a tree and eat it standing in the sunshine; ever since then I have never tasted a 'real' peach like that again, no other peach compares. We all have tasted our heights of happiness but we keep habitually and ignorantly taking it as though the happiness and pleasure comes from the object. (Not everyone laughs at a joke so it doesn't come from the joke.) You may be thinking, " ..of course the peach was exactly that. "Not so because maybe someone maybe allergic to peaches and has learned not to like it. Or if on that day I picked that peach I had a cold and an upset stomach, that peach would not have been at all delectable. So, the pleasure is not inherently there contained in the thing. It has everything to do with me. It is a wrong conclusion that any amount of happiness is due to an object or the incident that 'ushered' it in. It's just a natural habit that my attention gets 'hooked' onto the tangible external object of the moment and this is why trying for repeat experiences of the same happiness doesn't always work. Yet with this mistake we run our lives. This is no different than thinking that the sun moves across the sky, or the dry bone is giving blood. It's all I know how to ignorantly do.

Thus, I never get a chance to understand that 'I'- happiness as it manifests, it reveals itself, is shining of its own accord in each and every happy experience. In such a moment this is what happens: the itch and agitation of desire and wanting is quelled momentarily by coming in contact with a desired object. My itching mind is diverted and calmed by the attained desirable object; so then now my mind becomes a 'calmed, pleased mind', the itching and agitation is gone for a while and like in a still, clear lake how perfectly I can see the reflection of the sun and sky and clouds above; in my pleased, peaceful, still mind the happiness that I am shines and reflects there. And this is even a better example, like a clear mirror being held still we can catch the reflection of the sun in it and that reflected sunlight can shine so powerfully, enough to burn paper. It manifests there, reflects there, not enters there. The sunlight shines there because a condition is granted, the clear mirror, that lets it reveal itself as it always is. The sun, the 'I' is simply there being what it is. And because there is a condition (for the sun, a mirror) provided for that reflection to happen there in my mind, (like a joke) I enjoy the happiness that I am. The object only affected my distracted, restless mind and made it still. Therefore, the object is not the happiness, nor is the calmed condition - the happiness is simply what shines there by 'default' as it were, in that in that calmed, pleased mind.

To be continued...