

Self-knowledge: The Only Antidote to Grief by Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati

Continuation from the previous month (June 2020)

Self-acceptance is crucial to the pursuit of self-knowledge

We cannot explain why certain things happen to us or why we are what we are. Each of us is born with a unique set of talents. Let us be happy with our talents, with what we can contribute. Let us respect ourselves and respect our place in the scheme of things. Every individual's contribution is important. If we do not judge ourselves by *karma-phala*, we can develop inner harmony. For that we must learn to enjoy what we are doing.

We must also learn to seek approval from ourselves, not from someone else. Our non-acceptance of ourselves is a very big problem. It is the reason that we seek the approval of others. Within reasonable limits, this is alright. However, others have their own agenda and we may not get the appreciation we seek from them. Therefore, we must learn to accept ourselves and acknowledge our place in the scheme of things. We may feel that our contributions are insignificant, but the scheme is indeed incomplete without us. This is not a matter of pride but a matter of recognition. Recognize your role in the scheme of things. Recognize your opportunity to contribute. Your duty is to become as good a contributor as you can be. You have to put your best effort into what you are doing and learn to enjoy what you are doing.

We may not be as important as someone else in the scheme of things. But we are important, nevertheless. We are all created by *Īśvara*. We are given this body-mind complex and the power to know, the power to will, and the power to act. Then why not accept the judgment of *Īśvara* who has placed us in this scheme of things? Accept it gracefully. Our disposition of mind, attitude towards ourselves, and acceptance of ourselves is far more important than the *karma* we perform. We have to consciously evolve to adopt that vision.

We have to become simple or undemanding and live in harmony with ourselves without inner conflict and without any kind of angularities, twists, or turns in the mind. *Dharma* is the means to gain the pleased self, and the goal must be to achieve a tranquil mind. We have to let go of the benefits that appear to come by compromising the values. Some self-sacrifice is initially involved when we decide never to compromise the values.

Self-knowledge is the only antidote to grief

There is only one source of consistent happiness, and it is the knowledge of the

self. Inert objects cannot give us happiness. Whenever we are enjoying something, we imagine that we are enjoying an object. However, that object is only serving to facilitate the manifestation of the happiness which is our own nature. The satisfaction that we derive upon doing something good out of free will is the real happiness of the self.

Don't judge an action by its outcome. Judge it by the nature of the action itself. This will make every action an occasion for us to entertain the right attitude and act in accordance with *dharma*. Every action is an opportunity for us to contribute. Every action is an opportunity for us to recognize our place in the scheme of things.

It is not that outcome is unimportant to us. That is also important, but we should not allow the outcome to dictate or compromise our attitudes or values. It is the spirit of *karma-yoga* and our attitude that should dictate how we act, not the outcome. We gracefully accept the outcome for what it is. We have trust in the law of *karma*, in the scheme of things, in *Īśvara*.

As you sow, so you reap. Any *karma* always gives rise to *karma-phala*. We may even have to confront failure. The *karma-phala* may be different than what we expected, but our reward may come in a different form or come later. Wealth, fame, power, and pleasure are not the only things that matter in our lives. There are many other sources of happiness, such as family, friends, or relationships. We should aspire to do the best that we can do on all these fronts. Trust in *Īśvara* and in the fairness of things, and the reward will come in many different ways.

Performing one's duty is the first step to become free from grief or ignorance. The first phase in acquiring knowledge or giving up ignorance lies in performing one's *karma* and living life appropriately in the spirit of *karma-yoga*. Emotional maturity has to be cultivated. It does not happen automatically. We have to have the necessary attitude and deliberately practice the right values, such as compassion and forgiveness, to gain emotional maturity and leisure of mind. This alone will help us grow to be in harmony with our true nature.

Freewill, when used properly, is a great blessing. It is important to begin the process of gaining emotional maturity, self-purification, and greater self-comfort; the more comfortable you are with yourself, the less misery and grief there will be in your life. Even the present corona virus lockdown can be a blessing for such a person. When sufficient comfort is developed within oneself, the mind is objective enough to see the nature of the self. Such a mind becomes cooperative and contemplative.

What happens when the problem of grief is addressed? The Bhagavad Gītā speaks of one who has crossed over grief through self-knowledge in several

places. He is described as *svasthaḥ*, composed and self-abiding¹⁷; he abides in goodness, or love. He gains satisfaction in himself and even when alone by himself¹⁸. Such a one as he is totally free from misery. When all desires have left him, as they must also leave us, the wise person lives out the rest of his lifetime as an enlightened being. He moves about doing whatever he needs to do without any longing and enjoys peace, happiness, and total freedom¹⁹.

The knower of the self indeed crosses over or transcends grief.

¹⁷ Bhagavad Gītā, 14-24

¹⁸ *ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ*, Bhagavad Gītā, 2-55

¹⁹ Bhagavad Gītā, 2-71

Om tat sat



Swami Sarvabhutananda Saraswati alias C Venkataraman founded GASCO in 1971. He was fondly called as Swamiji after he took sannyasa in 2002. He was guide and philosopher for many around the globe in the pursuit of happiness. He was humble and jovial person with noble qualities. He attained maha-samadhi at his home on 28th June at 7:30 am.

Swamiji attended courses in Anaikatti and Rishikesh.

SMT. MEERABAI SHANMUGAM

D.O.B - 19.09.1930 D.O.D - 30.06.2020

Meeting H H. Pujya swami Dayananda Saraswati was life changing and dominated her life entirely. Swamiji guided her into the depths of the rich lore of universal proportions of Sanathana Dharma.



After completion of the course she followed her guru's advice and took regular classes in Hyderabad and Chengelpet. She celebrated Gurupoornima with Great Devotion every year. She and her husband had always been an ardent contributor for the needy people.

She was taking care of two temples, one in Hyderabad and one in Padalam in Tamilnadu.

To show her devotion and gratefulness to her guru she has written a book about Pujya swamiji in Tamil titled Engurunathar and another book illarathil aanandam.

She was one lady who was always on the move and kept herself busy. She believed in holistic approach to life.

She met all Swamiji's and Swamini's and knew most of Pujya Swamiji's devotees who have fond memories of her and she was known as Meera Amma among one and all.