

PODCAST 226, THE ART OF BLISS

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Om Sri Sai Ram!

Poverty Within

In the great journey of life, we acquire many things—wealth, knowledge, power and influence. We are always busy attaining and achieving something and often we do get what we aspire for. But after comes a void and a sort of emptiness. After all these achievements and the fulfillment of our desires, we still don't live in peace. In fact, we also lose the peace that was already within us. It is a paradox of life that when we get power, we become weak. Here Bhagawan's teachings lead us to the right conclusions.

We need to reflect and ponder upon the critical question of why do we want to be rich and amass wealth and property? The answer is that inner poverty is responsible for our desire for outer property. Poverty within is responsible for our desire for property outside. Because man is poor within, he wants to be rich outside. If we analyze who wants to be rich and powerful and who is ambitious for position and recognition, we see that such persons are weak within. Who craves for company? The one who is lonely within and who feels isolated wants the company of others.

Life is full of polarities and opposites. We fail to understand this. We struggle for just the opposite. The inner poverty makes us want more and more because we are wanting inside. Bhagawan gives an example in which He says that a rich man is one with satisfaction and the one who wants more and more is a beggar even if he is prosperous. We should understand that the inside is reflected outside just as the opposite.

It is an established principle of life that all the trappings of wealth and fame that are wished for and do come, are bound to go away. After a five-year term, a Member of Parliament ceases to be a Parliamentarian. Nothing is permanent. But that which is our own true nature, that which we really are, is eternal.

Bliss is Our True Nature

We cannot be free from our true nature, our own Self. This is called *Dharma* or True Nature. It is the nature of fire to burn and it cannot be free from it. Similarly, ice cannot be free from its nature of being cold. It is the nature of the wind to blow freely. Similarly, one must be true to one's nature and be conscious of it, which is the secret of happiness.

Unfortunately, we do not know our true nature and instead run after worldly possessions and become unhappy. We must remember the fundamental law: “That which is acquired will one day go.” But our Self-nature remains because it is the inner Truth.

What is our true nature? Bliss is our true disposition. Bliss is God. God is bliss. Indeed, we are bliss and bliss are we. Unfortunately, neither we do realize this nor do we experience it. What is sin? Really speaking, sin is an attitude of unhappiness. If we are unhappy, we make others unhappy. Hence, we become the worst of sinners. So, let us not commit that sin.

When Bhagawan walks amidst us, we become blissful. When Bhagavan comes and stands in front of us, our bliss grows in geometrical proportions. Bliss is infinite and it is our true character. Real virtue is to feel and experience bliss. To be unhappy is a sin, which is alien to our nature. Sin is what we are *not*. Instead we should tune into our attribute of bliss.

What is the experience of bliss? Once it is felt and realized, it can then be experienced. When we are joyful, whatever we do becomes blissful – our talk, our actions, our looks, gestures, indeed, our very presence imparts joy. Whatever we do creates happiness.

This experience of blessedness is felt in a state of silence when its subtlety is strongly felt. It is a void and pristine peace. It is vastly different from the temporary sensation and euphoria that one gets by drinking liquor or in any other sensation-producing activity like gambling or racing. Bliss is a by-product of non-sensation and non-excitement activity. Excitement is temporary, whereas bliss is sustaining and lasting, in stillness, in peace and in void.

So, let us reiterate that the fountain of ecstasy is our inherent nature, and our birthright. We are born with bliss, and we do not have to pay anything for it.

Bliss Is Covered

How do we experience bliss? According to Bhagawan, in a glass full of water, if you want to fill it with milk, we have to first throw the water away and then fill the glass with milk. Similarly, the bliss within can be experienced only after we remove all the negativities. It's like digging deeply for gold in the earth. We obtain this gold after removing the pebbles, stones and the earth, and only then collect the precious metal lying underneath.

Like gold, bliss is present similarly underneath. But, it is covered by all the negativities of jealousy, anger, avarice, comparison, ambition, worry, anxiety and desires. All this much and such filth has covered the most valuable asset of bliss that is in the depth of our hearts.

We have got to unearth this fountain lying underneath by making ourselves free from all weaknesses and negativities like meaningless desire, possessiveness, lust for power, etc. Once these are removed from the top, divine happiness is ours.

In this respect children are the best example. If a child is playing and we beckon it by praising it, the child will continue to play regardless. Praise or blame does not matter to children because they are always in playful joy. Similarly, we should become like small children and remain joyful. We are covered with layers of dirty impressions and unwanted stuff that conceals our bliss.

I Am Not Affected

In this situation, how does one find one's bearing? What is to be done? We have to realize that all that causes pain and suffering is just a shadow. All that happens around us does not really affect us in the true sense. All the agony, anguish, misery and sadness are mere shadows. Truly speaking, we remain unaffected by all this.

Bhagawan gives us the simple example of our own shadow that follows us. As we walk, our shadow falls on the gutters, dirty waters, the grass and on all the useless stuff on the roadside. But this does not affect us through any pain, suffering, blame or unhappiness because it is just a shadow and it is not our true nature. Unhappiness is not our true nature nor so pain, sadness, sorrow and misery. Really, our true nature is happiness.

Bhagawan gives another example. If someone is smiling, nobody will ask why he or she is smiling. On the other hand, if one has a serious look, people will ask the reason such as, "What is wrong?" Why so? It is because cheerfulness is an inherent trait, while seriousness is abnormal. A smile is natural, whereas misery is unnatural.

To reiterate, the basic fact is that we are not just a shadow and are not affected by our shadow. This understanding helps us to feel our inherent joy.

We hope you enjoyed this podcast on the 'Art of Bliss'. We plan to continue along similar lines in next week's podcast. Do join us then.

Jai Sai Ram