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Finding Happiness

Since the earliest of recollections, is not happiness the most sought after thing in our lives? Where do we find “true” happiness? Most of us can relate to the childhood experience of our parents telling us not to give money to the raggedy looking street begger because, 'They'll only use it to buy alochol'. These days we could substitute drugs for alcohol, in some cases, but the point is the same. We may naturally feel the inclination to do good for someone, but doing good for them doesn't necessarily mean that we should give them whatever they want.

We need to know what is actually good for them and ourselves, and what it is that they and we actually need in order to be truly happy and satisfied. Yes, the person wanting alcohol or drugs may experience a temporary and superficial type of happiness. But, most of us know that it is not the real deal. If it were, we would not only be giving them money so that they could purchase lots of alcohol or drugs and be so-called “happy”. We would also be drinking and drugging ourselves without restraint so we could also be 'happy’. Yes, there are many who do this but they are not generally considered to be very intelligent and any happiness they do experience is artificial, inferior and short-lived.

In this way, it is not difficult to appreciate that there are all kinds of varieties of happiness available to us, and that some are higher and some are lower. One teaching that often masquerades as a spiritual one, is that we should just pick whatever turns us on and just “go for it”. This approach may sound like the liberal and enlightened way to go, but if we consider it for a moment, especially in light of the alcohol and drug examples, we can easily see that it is not the enlightened way to go at all. The real solution? Knowledge! We need knowledge so that we may choose our path and our approach to life wisely.

Yoga or spiritual knowledge informs us that there are many levels and kinds of happiness, but spiritual knowledge is the greatest. We may not be fully aware of this, but it is what we all secretly long for and what we really need. This simple message has spanned all kinds of cultures and has been taught by all kinds of great saints since time immemorial. It is the one ever fresh constant, in a world which is changing so quickly that we can hardly keep up.

Many of us don't even bother to try and keep up – not seriously at least, because we have firsthand experience of an old cliché. That being, that for all the great technological advances of the modern age and all the previously unimagined material opulence which is now available to us as a result of those advances, people ingeneral are not actually happier, satisfied, peaceful, and more relaxed and at ease with themselves and their place in the world, than they previously were. They sense that perhaps a serious dose of simple living and high thinking is the real answer to the chaos, quarrel and confusion which seems to be everywhere, both within and without all of us. Once a person can learn of his true essence, true position and true function, in the spiritual sense, then and only then can he experience true inner peace and we relatively unaffected by the world around him.

Namaste!