

Welcoming Life, Without Conditions

By **Acharya Prashant** - December 15, 2024



You look at the world, you look at two or twenty things, and an immediate discrimination arises within. You pick one of those things, thinking that one particular element, object, or option is better than the rest. That's how the mind operates- it perceives diversity, and diversity bewitches it.

"Here is one thing, and there is another thing. I like this, I dislike that. I have to go after this and have to drop that. This thing is higher than that. Now, I need to go for the next thing". At the centre of all choices is the assumption that when it comes to healing the discontentment within, one object is better than the other.

One feels continuously incomplete because nothing really satisfies us. There is always something more to be had. Also, there is the threat of the attained objects being lost. One event seems more favourable than the other. One object seems totally different than the other, and hence better or worse. After all, don't different objects have different names, forms, shapes, sizes? All their sensual properties seem different, so they have to be different!

Inspite of their very apparent differences, is it possible to see mental objects as one in some fundamental way? Yes, if you are not repulsed or enamoured by one of them. Take, for example, happiness and sadness. Most of us want happiness too badly and are too repulsed by sadness. However, it is possible to be so contented within that happiness and sadness do not matter too much. Happiness can come as a guest; you do not need to turn it away. Sadness too can come as a guest, there is no need to not welcome it. But you have been desirous of one for long and scared of the other. So, it becomes

difficult to see that neither can happiness give you what you really want, nor can sadness take away anything from your essence. In that sense, both these fleeting experiences – happiness and sadness – are one.

Feelings and experiences are not to be taken so seriously that you start chasing or resisting them. Don't you feel hungry everyday? How special is that? Don't you feel sleepy or thirsty everyday? If happiness is not special, it will be a delight. If sadness is not special, then you'll be able to carry it lightly. Let tears be just tears, they should not hold great meaning. You can cry freely and there is a delight in that, but it is unseemly when tears erupt from a suppressed state. You see the precipitation that comes from the clouds? And then there is the formation of dew drops on the leaves early morning, and then there is the eruption of volcanoes. When volcanoes erupt then too it rains—it rains ash and lava. Why must there be so much suppression of sadness that when it erupts, your entire being shakes like the place around the mountain?

Don't resist tears. Cry gently, without suppression or inhibition, like mild rain from the clouds or the smooth formation of dew on the little leaves—nobody even came to know and the little dew drop found its way into being — that could be the quality of your tears. But sadness makes us go mad. Our tears don't flow, they erupt because we are so scared of sadness that we suppress it forcibly for long and one day it erupts like a volcano. Let it rather flow gracefully.

Similarly, laughter can be organic, unforced, beautiful in its meaningless and purposeless flow. There is the gentle breeze, and then there is the huge gust coming from an industrial fan. We want happiness so much that we construct artificial ways to have it. Have you seen industrial fans? They are really huge. Stand in front of them and you'll be violently blown away. That's how our happiness usually is— a manufactured product desired in large quantity.

There is the sweetness contained in fruits—in a banana, guava, or mango, and then there are these fizzy, aerated drinks containing sugar. Our happiness is like that fizzy drink with so much sugar.

Spirituality is not about abandoning dualities such as happiness and sadness. It is about welcoming them without resistance, expectation, or attachment. You tell me a joke, I'll laugh—it's fine. But I'm not desperate to hear a joke, or am I?

If one of my pets dies, I'll weep; I won't pretend equanimity. Does one have to pretend to be someone who is never hungry? Then why do we have to be someone who is never angry? If you do something mischievous, I'll be angry, but the next moment if you do something funny, I'll laugh—though I'm not dying to laugh. That takes the toxicity out of both laughter and anger.

A note of caution nevertheless: One must keep making the right choice endlessly before coming to choicelessness. So, one must honestly ask, "Have I, if not endlessly then at least for long, made the right choices in life?" Only then can one honestly declare, "Now, I don't need to choose because all appear one to me." Otherwise, in the name of 'Oneness', one would just wickedly fulfill his desires. The grain and the flesh are one, so why should one not consume the flesh of the chicken or the goat? After all, "All is one"! "All is one" is not an objective statement. "All is one" does not refer to the chicken and the goat and the grain being objectively one. "All is one" refers, not to the objects, but to the subject and the relationship that the subject strikes with the various objects. To you,

as long as one thing appears more desirable than the other, how can "All is one" be true for you?

The house and the road, the TV and the radio, or the table and the chair are obviously not materially one. I am rather talking of the mental meaning or subjective significance that these objects hold for you. Are you perceiving them differently in context of your desire, thinking that one of them will fulfil you while the others won't? If yes, then you need to look at everything, including yourself, more carefully.

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