

Unto Bliss.

So long as the craving for worldly enjoyments exists, one cannot be happy. The more we hanker for things, the more unhappy we become; nay, our desires grow as they are fulfilled.

If you are keen to get rid of troubles, give up desire; if you seek to mitigate your sufferings, curtail your desires; and, if you want to curtail your desires, give up the inclination to satisfy them. Do not feed the fire of desire by supplying it with the fuel of gratification; quench it altogether by throwing on it the cold water of contentment.

To despair of sensual pleasures is to advance towards the attainment of real happiness; one cannot think of real happiness without giving up thoughts of sensual enjoyments: they are really fortunate who are devoid of sensual pleasures.

The more worldly objects one possesses, the more remote he is from God. A sensual man creates about himself surroundings that do not allow him to get inclined towards God easily. A longing to attain God arises in one's mind only after one has realized the greatness of God through association with holy men and study of sacred books. Sensually-minded persons neither get an opportunity to enjoy the company of holy men nor do they get time to read really good books.

As an instance in point, take the case of the majority of rulers, officers, well-to-do persons and aristocrats. If you are one of these, look into your inner self and honestly examine your own position. To earn fame, to maintain their influence on others, to indulge in luxuries and sensual pleasures, to be surrounded by flatterers and plagued by those who raise subscriptions, to have

palaces and mansions erected, to enjoy pleasure-trips and joy-rides, to attend theatrical performances and cinema shows, to indulge in merry-making and amusements, to be active in vilifying others, to indulge in idle gossip and listen to the same, to satisfy their carnal desires, to suppress opposition, to outdo rivals,—these and other such seemingly important occupations always keep them busy. From early morning till bedtime the idea of remembering God or studying good books never occurs to their mind. Real saints and holy men never visit the doors of such people, free from avarice as they are. Even if any saint pays a visit to them out of natural compassion, such people do not derive any benefit from his company, suspecting that he might have come with some selfish motive; nay, some even go to the length of insulting him. And it is out of question for them to visit any saint or holy man of their own accord. In the first place, reports of saints and holy men do not reach their ears. Even if they do, they are so much obsessed with a sense of honour, assumed position and status that the fear of losing them does not allow them to approach saints, who look upon the rich and the poor alike and receive everyone kindly.

There have been people who kept their minds occupied with God even though living in affluence, honour and position, and such people are not wanting even at present; but they can be counted on fingers, and it is due to their endeavours made in a previous life that they are able to maintain the level of their spiritual progress and do not lose

sight of their goal, even though living in adverse surroundings.

True happiness consists in God-realization or attainment of His undivided love, and this can be done only when one's life is fully occupied with practices leading to this goal. Such practices stand in direct opposition to love of sensual enjoyments. That is why saints and men of spiritual experiences have exhorted us to give up these pleasures as a deadly poison. One who clings to such pleasures and regards their enjoyment as a source of happiness and at the same time declares himself to be a seeker after God-realization is either labouring under some delusion or deliberately practising dissimulation. So long as one does not renounce everything he does not become eligible for God-realization. Such renunciation, to be real, must be mental; but one who cannot even practise outward renunciation on account of attachment is far away from mental renunciation. One should practise both outer and inner renunciation. Those who claim to possess knowledge of God, even though enjoying worldly pleasures and at the same time calling them trivial, are deceiving themselves; while those who have renounced sensual enjoyments outwardly but do not deem it necessary to relinquish them mentally as well, they, too, are labouring under a delusion.

So far as possible, one should not accumulate objects of worldly enjoyment, should not dwell on such enjoyments mentally, should not live in the company of sensually-minded people, should not witness scenes stimulating one's fondness for pleasures, nor hear such

talk, or read such books. He should avoid as far as possible surroundings which create a passion for wealth, honour and beauty. No harm will accrue to a man if he does not earn honour in this world or increase his wealth. The mission of one's life is fulfilled if one is able to direct the course of his life towards God, even though deprived of all sorts of worldly enjoyments or oppressed by worldly afflictions

and sufferings. The life, on the other hand, of one who has a superabundance of wealth, honour, and fame, as well as of worldly knowledge and intellectual gifts, but who is devoid of Divine love, is really futile, however high or illustrious it may be in the eyes of worldly-minded people. It is not only futile but also proves to be a source of great tribulations in the future life.

'Siva'
