



## A Causeless Happiness: Reflection of the Atman which is Absolute “Bliss”

DR. KAVITA J. PATEL  
HOD,  
Department of English,  
Smt. Sadguna C.U. Arts College for Girls

Ancient Indian seers had studied the mind and consciousness in great detail. They described one state of consciousness or awareness during which no duality was cognised and serenity or bliss alone was experienced. They called this state of consciousness *Ananda*. One of such seers was responsible for an Upanishad called *Taittiriya*. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* belongs to the *Taittiriya* school of *YjurVeda*. It is divided into three sections called *Vallis*. The first is the *SiksaValli*. *Siksa* is the first of the six *Vedangas* (limbs or auxiliaries of the *Veda*). It is the science of the phonetics and pronunciation. The second is *BrahmanandValli* and the third is the *BhriguValli* and they deal with the knowledge of the Supreme Self *Parmatmajnana*.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* presents a very world affirming philosophy, because each level of self is described in a positive way and *Brahman* itself is referred to emphatically as the nature of Bliss (*Ananda*). The statement “*Brahmavida Apanoti Param*” which means “The one who knows Brahman attains the supreme state” is the essence (*sutra vaky*) of this *Valli*. The *BhriguValli* describes how son of Varuna (the Water God) *Bhrigu* obtained realization of *Brahman* through repeated *Tapas* (penance) under his father’s guidance.

In it the pupil approaches his father and asks him to explain the nature of *Brahman*. The father gives the formal definition and asks the son to supply the remaining content by his own reflection. The definition goes like: “That from which these beings are born, that in which when born they live and that into which they enter at their death, is Brahman” OR ‘यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति यं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति तद् ब्रह्म’ (*Yato Va Emani Bhutani Jayante, Yen Jatani Jivanti, Yam Prayantyabhisamvishanti, Tad Brahma*) The pupil’s son then thinks what is the reality which confirms to this account? At first the son, impressed by material phenomena, fixes his mind on matter (*annam*) as the basic principle. He is not satisfied though, because matter cannot account for a form of life. So, he looks upon life (*prana*) as the basis of the world. Life belongs to a different order from the matter. Life, again, cannot be the ultimate answer, for conscious phenomena are not commensurate with merely a living form. There is something more in consciousness than just life. So, he is led to believe that consciousness (*manas*) is the ultimate answer or principle. But consciousness has different grades. The instinctive consciousness of animals is quite different from the intellectual consciousness of human beings. So, the son then affirms from all these reasoning that the intellectual consciousness (*vignanam*) is itself *Brahman*. Humans alone have the capacity to change one’s self by one’s own efforts and transcend one’s limitations. Even this appears incomplete because it is subject to discordant dualities arising from multiple possibilities. Man’s intellect aims at the attainment of truth but succeeds only in making guesses about it; so, there must be a power in humans which sees the real truth unveiled. A deeper principle of consciousness must therefore emerge, if the fundamental purpose of the nature, which has led to the development or evolution of matter, life, mind and intellectual consciousness were to be accomplished.

The son finally arrives at the truth that spiritual freedom or delight (आनन्द, happiness, bliss), the ecstasy of fulfilled existence is the ultimate principle here. Here the search ends, not only because the pupil's doubts are removed by the vision of self-evident reality but also because he comprehends the Supreme Unity that lies behind all the lower forms of life. The Upanishad suggests that at this point he leaves behind the discursive reasoning and contemplates the One and is lost in ecstasy. It concludes that absolute Reality (ब्रह्मन्) is *Satyam*(सत्यम्), *Jnanam*(ज्ञानं), *Anantam*(अनन्तम्).

It ends in this way:

“Finally, he knew that Brahman is Bliss. For truly, beings here are born from Bliss, when born, they live by Bliss and into Bliss, when departing, they enter.

This wisdom of Bhrigu and Varuna, established in the highest heaven, he who knows this, becomes established. He becomes possessor of food and eater of food. He becomes great in offspring and cattle and in the splendour of sacred wisdom; great in fame.” (सैषा भार्गवी आरुणि विद्या, परमे व्योमन् प्रतिष्ठिता, य एवं वेद प्रतितिष्ठति, अन्नवान अन्नादो भवति, महान् भवति, प्रजया पशुभिः ब्रह्मवर्चसेन महान् कीर्त्या..)

The higher includes the lower and goes beyond it. Brahman is the deep delight of freedom. The Upanishad suggests an analogy between the macrocosm, nature and the microcosm, man, an equation between intelligibility and being. The ascent of reality from matter to God as one of increasing likeness to God is brought out. While man has all these five elements in his being, he may stress one or the other, the material or the vital or the mental or the intellectual or the spiritual. He who harmonises all these is the complete man. For Aristotle the human soul is, in a certain sense, everything. This analysis is accepted by the Buddha who speaks of five kinds of food for the physical, vital, psychological, logical and spiritual elements. The Upanishad suggests an epic of the universe. From out of utter nothingness, *asat*, arises the stellar dance of teeming suns and planets whirling through vast etheric fields. In this immensity of space emerges the mystery of life, vegetations, forests; soon living creatures, crawling, jumping animals, the predecessors of human beings. Human intelligence with its striving for ideals has in it the secret of sciences and philosophies, culture and civilisations. We can make the world wonderful and beautiful or tragic and evil. At the end, the Upanishad concludes: this is a song of joy. The manifold diversity of life is attuned to a single harmony. A lyrical and rapturous embrace of the universe is the result. The liberated soul filled with delight recognises its oneness with the subject and the object, the food eater and food and the principle which unites them. He feels in different poises that he is one with Brahman, with Ishvar and with Hiranya-garbha.

The chant proclaims that the enlightened one has become one with all. The liberated soul passes beyond all limitations and attains to the dignity of God Himself. He is one with God in all His fullness and unity. It is not a mere fellowship with the chasm between the Creator and the created. Here is the exalted experience of one who not merely believes in God, or who is merely convinced of His existence by logical arguments or one who regards Him as an object to be adored and worshipped in thought and feeling but of one for whom God is no more object but personal life. He lives God or rather is lived by Him. He is borne up and impelled by the spirit of God who has become his inward power and life. All distinctions of food and food eater, object and subject are transcended. He goes up and down the worlds as he chooses, eating what food he likes, putting on what forms he likes. Such is the secret doctrine.

Just as trembling of the body on account of fear remains even after the realization that it was the illusion of snake in the rope and not the snake; just as the mirage appears even after the illusory nature of water is understood, so also the world appears for the sage even after he has attained Self-realization, even after he has clearly understood the illusory nature of the world. But just as the man

who has understood the nature of the mirage will not run after the mirage for drinking water, so also the enlightened person (*Jivanmukta*) will not run after sensual objects and the worldly-minded people. In this state there is consciousness of the Absolute. The person beholds *Brahman* everywhere. All dualities, differences have vanished for him *in Toto*. The mind can get entire satisfaction and rest very peacefully only, if this state is attained. There is fullness in this state. All desires are burnt. It is a state of plenum or absolute satisfaction. There is no gain greater than this, no bliss greater than this, no wisdom greater than this. It is the be-all and end-all of existence.

*AnandamayaKosha*(आनन्दमयकोश), bliss-apparent-sheath, is associated with the *Karan-sharira* (कारणशरीर), casual body, a sheath in which *Atma* (आत्मा), the self, experiences the eternal Bliss, a perfect state of peace, comfort, stability and carefree nature. This form is the ultimate foundation of life, intelligence and higher faculties. It is the reflection of the *Atman*, which is absolute Bliss.

Shankar Acharya in his famous sloka said that, in half a sloka, he would express all that could be told in ten million books. “ (श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभिः| ब्रह्म सत्यम् जगत् मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः||) ” Brahman is the only ultimate reality. The phenomenal world is illusory. The *Jiva* or the ‘Essence’ of man is nothing but Brahman”. The upnishad also says: ‘All empirical happiness is but a partial revelation of Brahman.’ (एतस्य एव आनन्दस्य अन्यानि भूतानि मात्राम् उपजीवन्ति |).

The initiative to undertake one’s most important duty in life is often buried beneath the accumulated debris of human habits. Every person aspires for happiness and wants to avoid sorrow. But in this world, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, justice and unjust all pass and change with time. A person should have faith in the ultimate principle out of which both good and evil arise. Everyday a person experiences happiness and sorrow, welcomes affections and aversions and invites worries and misery. How can a person be at peace?

Infact, the purpose of human life is to attain Bliss. Life has no meaning, if one cannot experience Bliss. Bliss is our goal. Disciple carefully guided by the Guru for whom God is the embodiment of eternal Bliss, he is the wisdom absolute, the one without a second, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the mahavakya Tattwmasi, the eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all conditions and beyond the three *gunas* of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in every stage, able to go beyond all.

नित्यानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं द्वन्द्वतीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यं|  
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीसाक्षीभूतं भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितम् सद् गुरुं तं नमामि||

God has given us the power of spiritual inspiration – realization of the pure Bliss of His presence within us. Sacred Bliss is never ending. When the profound ecstasy of God falls over you, the body becomes absolutely still, the breath ceases to flow and the thoughts are quiet, banished, all of them, by the magical command of the soul. Man makes various efforts to experience happiness. But one must understand that happiness can not be acquired from outside. It originates from within the heart. The heart is the source of Bliss. The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resounding of the happiness within. It can neither be bought in the market nor can it be acquired by worldly means. It can only manifest from within. One should derive happiness even from what appear to be troubles. One need not search happiness elsewhere or outside . It is always within one’s self. One is unable to experience it as one may not have understood the true meaning of happiness. One is under an illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts. One, who has tasted true happiness, would not crave for worldly possessions. True happiness springs forth from the depths of one’s heart. Cultivating love helps one to experience Bliss. If one achieves this one will not be disturbed by sorrows and difficulties. The heart is the seat of Bliss. True Bliss flows from pure and loving heart. One must try to experience such bliss. All other forms of happiness are momentary.

“Bliss” is the “Essential Nature”. It is very much immanent in human beings. Whatever we are, whoever we may be our essential nature is Bliss.

There is a difference between happiness and bliss. In common parlance, “happiness” is momentary. It comes and goes.” Bliss” is something that fountains up from within. It emerges from the heart, as a result of one’s union with God. If one feels separate from God, one cannot experience bliss. Nothing material in this physical environment can bring about such bliss. It is only a pure and loving heart that is the source of bliss. Bliss due to objects (objects obtained for eating, drinking, wearing etc.), is termed happiness. Happiness in absence of objects is bliss. Bliss is spiritual. It is called “eternal happiness”. Each one of us has experienced happiness at some time or other. Since the experience is obtained through the media of the five senses, mind and intellect one can comprehend its definition. Contrary to this, since most of us have not experienced Bliss and since many are not even aware that there may be something to experience beyond the five senses, mind and intellect, most people find it difficult to understand the definition of Bliss. Just as one blind since birth will find it difficult to accept the fact that the world is visible, so it is difficult to explain the meaning of Bliss. It cannot be expressed in words but has to be experienced.

Bliss is the utmost feeling of union with supreme when the functions of the five senses, mind and intellect have ceased. After acquisition of that happiness which does not arise from the organs and which the pure intellect can realise to some extent, one does not desire to obtain any other type of happiness. This it is known as the Bliss or Self-realisation. Eternal Bliss would be something an enlightened person would experience. A person who experiences eternal Bliss can still be completely aware of the world around one, the good as well as the bad, yet that person’s perspective, as well as the state of mind would remain unaffected by external events. It is not that such a person does not care, he/she simply does not allow things to alter his/her level of consciousness or awareness. Enlightened individuals are highly compassionate and focussed on the positive aspect of life. They are highly intelligent and charismatic, but do not seek attention and are therefore difficult to recognise unless you are paying close attention and know what to look for. A Blissful state of mind gives a feeling of real happiness and joy, when one doesn’t need or depend on anything to feel so good.

It has been narrated in *PrasthanTrayee* that when one absolutely desires less, when all of one’s senses are withdrawn, when one’s *Buddhi* is centered in the inner self, then one is *Jivanmukta*. When one goes beyond *Raga* and *Dvesha*, when one is unmoved by heavy sorrow and not elated by great pleasure, then one is rooted in the self. WHEN ONE IS EGOLESS, I-LESS, MINE-LESS, one has attained the UNION WITH GOD. When cosmic love dwells in one’s heart, when one is automatically engaged in untiring selfless service, when one is afraid of none, none is afraid of one, than has one realised God and attained the Supreme. When one enjoys the tranquillity of the mind, born of that Supreme wisdom, one has crossed the formidable ocean of Samsara, not to return to this world of pain and sorrow.

Feeling love and great openness, close to God, is just a state of being who we really are, our true perfect self. Joy is beyond happiness and Bliss exceeds the combine energies of both Happiness and Joy. Bliss can only be experienced. Happiness is “one’s craving fulfilled”, Bliss is “nothing else to crave for”. The juice that contained in the fruit is not enjoyed by the tree which bears the fruit. The honey that is contained in the flowers is not enjoyed by the plants which bear the flowers. Beautiful sayings contained in books and scriptures are not enjoyed by the books and scriptures themselves. The beauty that is contained in the nature is not enjoyed by the nature itself. How can the writer who deals with the material world enjoy the spiritual bliss that is contained therein? The answer is: it is by living totally and entirely in unconditional ecstatic happiness in everyday ordinary life – in Bliss.

Thus, “Causeless Happiness is Bliss”. Bliss is something that should be beyond the “cause” and “effect”. Any happiness that has a “cause” cannot be a lasting one, it cannot be Bliss. Whenever we are happy, we just have to ask ourselves “why am I happy?” If we are able to answer that question, know for sure that the happiness is not of the permanent variety. This further means that to be “causelessly” happy, one has to “BE” happy-experience the joy in just “being”. For that, one also needs to be constantly “AWARE” of one’s “BEING”. “Being” AND “Awareness” leads to Bliss. That is what is called *Sat* (Being), *Chit* (Awareness), *Ananda* (Bliss). When one is in this *SATCHIDANANDA* always, one is in union with God. Happiness is temporary, Bliss sustains and grows. That is why it is BLISS: A CAUSELESS HAPPINESS, EVER GROWING AND NEVER DECLINING.

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