

## 3.6 Sorrow

### WISE SAYING

*Joy and sorrow are each part of the other. If it were not for joy, sorrow would not exist; and if it were not for sorrow, joy would not be experienced.*  
(Hazrat Inayat Khan)

### From Discourses of Sai Baba

#### THE SOURCE OF SORROW

What is the sorrow that envelopes man? Sorrow envelopes man in three ways and afflicts him in many ways. One source of sorrow is ‘the unreal’. The second cause is ‘the darkness of ignorance’. The third cause is death. In this context the Vedanta mentions three categories: Prakriti (nature), Jivatma (the individual soul) and Paramatma (the Over Self).

As long as man does not give up what he ought to renounce, he will not experience bliss. As long as he is not aware of what he ought to know he cannot get bliss. Bliss will elude man until he reaches the goal he should aim at.

The world should not be treated as merely physical but should be looked upon as a Divine manifestation. It is only when man is filled with godly thoughts that he will be rid of sorrow. Hence, what should be given up is worldliness. Then alone the Bliss of the Spirit can be got.  
(010192)

Sri Krishna has explained in the Geetha that sorrow is the fruit of Rajo Guna (the quality of passionate activity). He has also shown that only the person who recognizes this truth and removes Thamo Guna (the quality of sloth and inertia) from his heart, can be happy. As man has all the three qualities in his heart, he is bound. The entire world is a manifestation of the three Gunas (qualities). Of these three, Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna are the source of trouble. For all sorrows, grief, troubles and problems, these two qualities are responsible. There are six attributes for Thamo Guna -- sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, laziness and inertia.

A farmer who wants to raise a crop in the field has to remove, at the outset, the weeds from his field. If different types of weeds grow, the crop will be affected adversely. Removing the weeds is an essential precondition for getting a good crop. In the same way, a spiritual aspirant who wants to realise the joy of Atma has to remove from his heart the various manifestations of Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna in the form of malice, desire, greed, anger, hatred and jealousy. These six types of enemies of man are the children of Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna. We won't be able to experience the joy of Atma as long as these weeds are there. Therefore Krishna asked Arjuna to remove Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna from his heart.

Krishna said, “Arjuna, you are taking Me as the charioteer of your chariot. Take Me as the charioteer of your life. The seat on which I am seated in this chariot is very clean and well decorated. Think how clean and grand your heart should be to make it a seat for Me if I become the charioteer of your heart. As long as Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna are there, the heart is not pure. These two qualities will go on polluting and dirtying the heart. Therefore, to begin with, remove the quality of passionate activity (Rajo Guna) and the quality of sloth and inertia( Thamo Guna) . Make every effort to remove the dirt from your heart”.(120984)

Man is subject to sorrow, from birth to death; joy or what he calls happiness is an interval between two sorrows, that is all. The sorrows arise as a result of three reasons : Adhyathmik (spiritual), Adhidhaiwik (deific) and Adhibhouthik (material). The objects that one craves for, endeavours to acquire and laments when lost, are all material (bhouthik); and so, the sorrows that sprout out of them are defined as Adhibhouthik (difficulties caused by the material world). The senses are the instruments of cognition; one sees an object through the eyes; yes, but, not through the material eye, but, with the eye operated by the deity that presides over it, namely, the Sun. You do not see in the dark! The Sun helps you to see; without Him, you're helpless! Each sense and limb, nerve and cell, joint and gland of the human body has a deity that activates it and is resident therein. If these deitics are hostile or displeased, the body suffers and sorrow ensues. This is the second reason for misery, the deific. Then we have the Self -- the witness of both inertia and activity, joy and sorrow, exultation and examination. When you ignore the existence of the Witness, when you divorce your daily life away from the awareness of that seat of peace, you invite sorrow to torment you. That is the Adhyathmic or the spiritual quality, the Cross that each man carries along the trail of life. (210570)

## **BODY CONSCIOUSNESS RESULTS IN SORROW**

The real cause of sorrow is attachment to the body, identifying oneself with the body. All sorrow arises from the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’. It is essential at the outset to reduce attachment to the body.

Desires are a source of pleasure for man, but they are also the cause of his grief. The mind has to be brought under control. Even thousands of men cannot hold back a fast-moving train. But the train comes to a stop the moment the brake is applied. The same applies to the vagaries of the mind. When the mind is controlled, all sorrows will cease. (010495)

Man should also realise his essential nature and not be deluded by identifying his true being with the body-consciousness. For all the sorrows and suffering man experiences, it is the body- consciousness that is responsible. As long as this bodily delusion remains, the fruit of Ananda (bliss) cannot be got. The seed of bodily attachment has to be given up for the tree of life to grow and yield the flower of wisdom and the fruit of Ananda.

The Upanishads have declared that immortality can be achieved only through renunciation and not through rituals, progeny or wealth. *(231187)*

The joys and sorrows man experiences in daily life, his attachments and aversions, his pursuit of sensory pleasures, are all due to the vagaries of the mind. As long as man is subjected to the feeling of duality, he cannot be free from attachment and hatred. There can be no escape from dualism as long as man does not recognize his inherent Divinity. *(121294)*

### **DO NOT BE AFRAID OF SORROW**

Embodiments of the Divine Atma as you are, do not be afraid of sorrows and losses that might come in your way. An orange is enveloped in bitter skin. You have to remove the skin and eat the sweet fruit that it has protected so long. The sweet fruit - that is, your life - is enveloped in the bitter skin of lust, anger, greed, arrogance, attachment and jealousy. Remove the skin and throw it away, so that the sweetness can be tasted. *(170373)*

Sorrows and disasters are as the clouds that flit across the sky; they cannot injure the blue depths of space. Your duty is to strive on, from this very moment. Do not vacillate or postpone. Who knows when death will knock? Maybe he may knock this very night, this very moment! Therefore, do not delay. Do not postpone for tomorrow the dinner of this day. Feed the spirit as scrupulously as you now feed the body. *(290165)*

Happiness and sorrow have to be experienced in the worldly life as they are inevitable like the sunset and sunrise. You think New Year will give better experiences. It is not correct. It is the mind that is responsible for pleasure and pain. If your mind is good you'll find anything good. You are embodiments of the Divine which is nothing but bliss. While being so, is it not a folly on your part to say that you are suffering from pain and grieve over this?

Life is a mixture of sorrow and joy just as day and night. If there is no night one cannot take the well-deserved rest after the day's hard toil. There is sweet juice inside the orange fruit. But it is covered by the bitter outer rind. It is the bitter rind that protects the juice inside. So we should put up with the bitter difficulties in order to enjoy real pleasure. Man is the embodiment of the quality of Kshama (fortitude, patience, or forgiveness. There is nothing in this world that you cannot achieve with this quality. *(010194)*

### **DO NOT BLAME OTHERS FOR YOUR SORROW**

If the heart is pure, all that you think and do will be pure, just as water from a tank filled with pure water will be pure in any tap. If your thoughts and actions are impure, you are the cause of their impurity because you have polluted your heart. You are the cause of your joy and sorrow. Do not blame others for your troubles. It is a sin to do so. Blame yourself for your condition. Self-punishment is as important as Self-realisation. Through self-punishment you

get self-satisfaction, which promotes self-sacrifice. That is the prelude to Self-realisation. *(150293)*

Thoughts lead to action. There can be no action without thoughts. Hence, it is essential to entertain sacred thoughts. Everyone should realise that all the sorrows and miseries of modern man are due to his bad thoughts. Every man thinks that someone else is responsible for his troubles. This is not so. You alone are responsible for the good and evil that befall you. You blame others because of your weakness. *(120295)*

Weighed down by sorrow, Arjuna one day laid all the blame on his eldest brother Dharmaraja. He said, "On account of you our dear mother is separated from us, our wife is disgraced in the open court, my only son is slaughtered by wolfish cousins, our dynasty is forced into exile and our heritage is stolen before our very eyes." Dharmaraja replied, "When you blame me, remember you are blaming Dharma (Righteousness) ; no one can ever suffer through Dharma. Dharma fosters those who foster it. The pain which Dharma inflicts is a blessing, it is a shower of joy. Since we have stuck to Dharma, God will fight our battle and win victory for us."

God is the embodiment of compassion. He watches for a grain of goodness or humility so that He can reward it with tons of grace. *(SSS Vol.7 1973 81)*

### **TREAT JOY AND SORROW ALIKE**

For all the experiences of the world relating to pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, the cause is one. All the troubles one experiences are stepping-stones to happiness. This is the essence of Vedanta. Hence, for man, the proper spiritual Sadhana (spiritual practice) consists in cultivating equal-mindedness, without succumbing to grief or getting elated over a happy event. In daily life, people experience all kinds of happiness and distress. The Scripture declares: "Treat joy and sorrow, profit and loss alike." *(210793)*

In the world, every living being aspires for happiness and seeks to banish grief. Although man hankers after pleasure, peace and bliss, what is the inner meaning of the fact that he is haunted by worry and sorrow? Sorrow, peacelessness and fear are the reflected images of happiness, peace and security. If there is no grief, there is no value for happiness. If peace is not absent, no one will seek peace. Therefore, these opposites are associated with each other and constantly follow each other. *(290591)*

### **CONTROL THE SENSES**

All the sorrows and troubles man experiences are the result of abuse of the sense organs. It is for this reason that in the spiritual journey one is enjoined to cultivate control of the senses as the very first discipline.

However wealthy, powerful or knowledgeable one may be, if he fails to bring his senses under control he will not be able to make purposeful and worthy use of his power or position. One who is a slave of the senses is displaying his animal qualities. One who controls his senses demonstrates the sacredness of the human birth. **(111083)**

As long as the mind is active, there can be no escape from sorrow. To the extent that the mind is under control, you can experience happiness. One way to reduce desires is to get absorbed in activity. Idleness encourages the mind to indulge in all kinds of thoughts. If you are intensely engaged in reading, singing, playing or any other activity, the mind will have no chance to wander hither and thither. **(130388)**