

The Art of Happiness

“Happiness is here and now”

Mmmm... What does that mean? Bearing in mind that this is an ancient Zen Buddhist saying and Zen monks never write anything down unless it is very important. They never speak flippantly or without deep thought, and yet, at first glance, this seems like a sweeping statement. Too general and weak to be of any real help to us in our quest for lasting happiness, and yet there is something hidden that we feel we cannot reach – *on the surface it is simple and yet there seems to be a deep wisdom underneath...*

I’m going to come back to this one line at the end of our study and hopefully we can begin to understand it in the multi-levelled way that it was

intended to be received. There can be a kind of awareness that opens up within us and surfaces from simply understanding what's actually being said here. It's like one of those magic-eye pictures that we cannot see for weeks but then suddenly decode visually when we kind of give up, relax, not try too hard, not care too much; one day we look at it without thinking – *and there it is* – a multi-dimensional picture from a two dimensional surface.

Okay, let's get started. What we are talking about here is a deep sense of joy that can surface in our everyday lives quite spontaneously – in many Eastern philosophies this sudden transition into enlightenment, the profound state of happiness is referred to as “Satori” – or “*to be truly one with all things*”.

But before we look at this together, let's take a look at, and really study, what "*we*" tend to think happiness to be. And when I say "*we*" I am referring to the western world. How do we define happiness? Or, as a thought experiment and put another way, if we had unlimited resources, how might we construct, say, the perfect day? How could we organise things so that we might be completely and utterly happy for at least that one day? Okay, let's focus on this for a while...

When we think about the perfect day, a day that would make us completely happy, we might think about organising events so that we are doing one *nice* thing after the other continually for the entire day, and we might think that this would give us the perfect experience and make us truly happy... We might continue on from this idea and draw the conclusion that if we were to do this indefinitely, if we were to organise one nice event after the other

and only experience what we perceive to be the good things in life *day after day*, then our lives would just become happier and happier and more and more full of joy.

This is an easy trap to fall into but what we are actually talking about here, if we stop to think about it, is the philosophy of “*hedonism*” which is the western world’s enduring and stubborn view that the meaning of life is to experience pleasure; it is also the view that states “nothing uncomfortable in our lives can ever do us any good”. Now, firstly, anyone on a spiritual path would have to disagree with this – anyone who is truly aware of “*this situation of life that we are all in*” knows that we must experience the highs as well as the lows in order to grow spiritual and evolve as spiritual beings. Only having those experiences that we perceive to be nice, from a materialistic point of view, can only make us soft and complacent in the long run. And this is the second reason a more

enlightened person would disagree with the values of hedonism – or – *pleasure for pleasures sake* – for if we were to have everything on a silver platter all of the time this would simply render us completely incapable of appreciating a single thing in our lives. Sometimes, if we are lucky, we come to these conclusions the easy way by having everything we think we want, and having these things all the time. If we are lucky, this state of affairs continues until we realise deep within our souls that “*having things*” will not make us happy and “*materialism*” is not it.

But, however it is we come to turn away from the material world in favour of something that we have not yet experienced, we will always be having the feeling that “*there must be more to life than this*” deep within our sensory awareness and this enduring feeling will trigger spiritual realisation and it will drive positive internal transformation.

So, to recap and clarify so far, in relation to our quest for happiness and from a more holistic point of view, we begin to embrace the highs as well as the lows, we recognise the wisdom of opposites (the yin and the yang) and we learn to ride the waves of creative intelligence vs. destruction. If we can do this then we will connect with “*real*” joy – the energy of joy – *the joy of life* – that is underneath everything – *all things and all situations all of the time*.

Let us stay with this subject of “creative intelligence vs. destruction” because I feel that the understanding of this natural force and process will help us to let go of our previous miss-conceptions of our routes to happiness. There’s a transience here that we must appreciate if we are to appreciate real beauty and find happiness through this appreciation.

Let's consider this one thought before we enter the next part –

“One perceived nice event after another does not bring forward real happiness and joy anymore than a beautiful beach cannot come into existence without tons of shells being destroyed. It takes colossal amounts of destruction to create something as beautiful and as deeply energising as a beach.

The study of this kind of philosophy is the study of *“creative intelligence vs. suffering”*.

Creative Intelligence vs. Suffering

In this part of our study we are going to explore why we may experience a sense of emotional/mental suffering in our day-to-day life but also why this suffering occurs at all.

The fact is Mother Nature needs to destroy to reorder in order to create and recreate but always in the sense of balance or the upholding of the natural cycles. Nature does not create suffering, nor is unnecessary suffering required in order to create. Nature is concerned with regeneration – *always physically moving forward in small increments in a spiritual evolutionary sense.*

***The real internal suffering
that mankind experiences
comes from resistance to natural laws
or resistance to the natural flow.***

When we resist the flow of the Universe, when we splash against the helping forces, we feel suffering of some sort or another, or, we perceive a sense of being uncomfortable in some way. Instead of small increments of destruction balanced against equal amounts of rest, we perceive only off balance – or,

large periods of rest that comes from avoiding small increments of positive destruction, and this is inevitably followed by large periods of perceived suffering. By holding back the flow, through blocking the creative forces of the Universe, we find that the small increments of creative change build up internally on an emotional level. Remember, our emotions and our feelings are like waves on the ocean. They come and they go – they swell, they dissipate. If there is a block of the natural flow, the wave's peaks and troughs become exaggerated and unnatural from the Universe's point of view. If the wave climbs too high too fast it will not accumulate enough water at its base and it will become unstable – our emotions and creative drives can easily become unstable in this way. The creative tendency of the wave, by ignoring the natural laws, will result in the wave over-stretching its reach. Then, instead of small increments of action and inaction – movement and rest – *small*

amounts of necessary suffering balanced by the force of creative change, the wave becomes weak at the top through having no or little foundation at the bottom and the crest breaks and comes crashing down. This event is symbolic of unnecessary prolonged suffering, and this will keep happening as long as natural laws, that we ourselves are an intrinsic part of, are ignored and pushed to one side.

This is the nature and an explanation of the suffering we see in our western technologically-based world. Our desire to create and recreate does not respect natural laws. In other words, we create too much and we reach too high, through our greed and through our quest for more, and so the natural foundation required for sustaining our creative wave is *not* there. The crest of the wave, where society and “*we*” are all sitting, is weak, and it’s weak due to civilisation not appreciating the natural laws of small incremental creation balanced by rest

or inaction. This balance is needed in order to find equilibrium in these creative forces and also in order to lay a foundation in which to base future creative growth.

And so through the ages, societies and civilisations grow and swell like the climbing wave crest, only to come crashing down due to instability. This will continue to happen if we do not appreciate the natural laws and the natural flow of life and continue to believe, as nations and individuals, that we know best, and also if we continue to believe that we can create without even the slightest discomfort.

This momentary “creation success”, followed by that which we perceive as disaster, both occurs collectively, due to mankind’s desire to pursue progress and pleasure for the sake of it, and also it occurs on an individual level, deep within us. When we are referring to the external Universe affecting the internal Universe and vice versa, we

are really referring to something that we call, in magical terms, “*the law of parts*”. This law states that the “*part*” shares in the creation of the “*whole*” – as does the “*whole*” share in the creation of the “*part*”, or, in this case, you and me. This is a very important facet of Universal Consciousness. Just as the collective off-balance of the world is mirrored within us, whether we like it or not – the state or the balance found within our own internal system can be mirrored in the world. In other words – change the world and you will change the individual. Likewise, if an individual changes, and if we change through the force of our own will, then we will begin to change the whole world. The one mirrors the other and it works both ways. As I think about this I also think about the “Michael Jackson” song entitled “*I’m starting with the man in the mirror*” – there is a great wisdom in this one line. If we can change ourselves on a deep soul level, we will then have the capacity to change the

world, or, the damaged soul of humanity. To put this another way – if we learn how to tap into the energy of real joy, we can then become the conduit of this energy, bring joy into the world and make the world a better place. It's in our power to do this but not without a little discomfort. The problem at this stage is the suffering that's required in order to get us back on track. From the point of view relating to creative intelligence, all those increments of destruction have built up and we have let them. They are no longer balanced against their counterpart of positive change for we have blocked this natural flow – the flow of small increments of creation and destruction, and so to get back on track we have to address a lot of, what we perceive as, *suffering*. We have to pay it back, and through following our higher guidance and implementing this wisdom into our lives, we begin to pay it back – we begin to pay back our debt to the Universe and we rejoin the balance, centre, and

the natural Universal flow because of our efforts and our sacrifices. This is what's meant by "*taking on the suffering of the world*" in many spiritual disciplines. The Divine energy of the Universe attempts to balance us and then the entire world through us. This is the scale of the job at hand and this is exactly the kind of miracle of personal and global transformation that higher frequencies perform through us if we are willing to dance and if we are willing to trust. The energy of joy, then, flows to us from the fabric of space/time that we are forever wrapped in – individually, globally, cosmically.

So, having the capacity to feel a deep sense of joy and happiness in our lives does not pivot on wanting things for ourselves, it pivots on being in service to higher powers – it pivots on being in service to the Universe, and then we are blessed back with many gifts of Spirit for our service. It's like the old saying

*“A life lived for others
is a life full of purpose –
a life lived for oneself
is a wasted life”.*

So, in conclusion to the subject of “Creative Intelligence vs. Suffering” if we are to find real joy we must find it in the fabric of the Universe that’s quite literally all around us, and if we are to receive this great gift then we must do it selflessly, and we must think holistically rather than individually. It is the humble selfless act that connects us with this higher frequency of compassion, joy, and love.

Eternal Joy – Eternal Moment

Real lasting happiness does not come about through life going the way we would want it to for these “wants” are always an extension of

materialism and hedonism – the truth is actually far more simpler than this. Real joy is forever present and forever permeating the very fabric of space and time and exists in real life (not the life of illusions that exists within our minds). You could say that we are able to connect with the energy of joy through being connected to the present moment for this is where all life actually exists, and real life is real joy. Through being truly present in the eternal moment we are then born of the Divine, compassion and love flows through us spontaneously and naturally, and this calls us into the service of higher powers and into the service of others. Put simply, our service brings us real purpose and this brings us real joy. You could say that real joy is “*in*” the eternal moment, or, yet again, you could say that –

“Happiness is here and now”.

Connection with ever-present Divine Joy

(a meditation)

Begin by centering your mind around your breathing – allow yourself to breathe in and out quite naturally – try to become the observer of your breathing instead of trying to control every movement – let the automatic side of your existence begin to shine and allow the controlling side of your existence to withdraw or dissolve into the air around you – allow there to be no thoughts about the past or the future – allow the truth of the present moment to come to the surface – the simple truth that there is no past and there is no future – there is only one infinite present moment where all things exist including the past and future. Begin to have a sense of your higher self (the observer) shining out into your surroundings – begin to have a sense of your higher mind connecting with the infinite mind of the Universe. Feel that you are

completely at peace – feel joy and happiness all around you – feel eternal and infinite joy all around you. Now feel that you are becoming one with this eternal and infinite energy field – and this energy field is of pure joy. You feel as though you are a chalice and the energy of joy is filling you up and you are overflowing. Feel that your own sense of higher awareness is merging with an infinite awareness – feel yourself becoming one with the Universal mind and feel the joy and happiness that is infinitely flowing forward towards you and through you – allow yourself to become a channel for Divine peace, and Divine love, and Divine happiness...

And let's simply sit and exist in this healing space...

Enjoy the moment!

Bright Blessings, Johnny David.