

The Ultimate Happiness

A Conversation With Robert Adams

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Robert Adams: There is one thing I can tell you for sure. All is well. Everything is unfolding as it should. I can tell you that truly nothing is wrong anywhere. If you think you have a problem, that's the mistake — thinking you have a problem. As soon as you stop thinking, everything will go right.

Questioner: Isn't everything going right while you are thinking?

R: Yes, but you don't know it. Some of us don't think it is, saying, "I've got a problem," or "I'm involved in something I can't handle which is bigger than I am," or "Some-thing hurts me," or "I feel anger." But I can assure you, there is nothing wrong! All that you have to do is watch yourself. As soon as your mind starts thinking past your nose, grab it — not your nose, but your thoughts. You can grab your nose too if you want (laughter). Grasp your thoughts with your mind, and put a stop to them any way you can, either by observing the thoughts or by practicing self-enquiry and asking to whom they occur. Whatever you need to do, do not allow yourself to think. If your mind does not think, you will be exceedingly happy. You will have unalloyed happiness.

Some people ask me, "Robert, why don't you just speak the highest truth all the time?" Some others tell me to speak in such a way that they can understand what I am talking about (laughter). So that is the dilemma. I do whatever I have to do. I plan nothing. Everything is extemporaneous. I have no rehearsals.

A man called me yesterday telling me he had been practicing for two weeks, took a seminar and paid seven hundred dollars, and is still not realized. I get calls like this all the time. What you say determines the answer I give you. But there is a standard answer. Think of the question, "When will I become self-realized?" Before I answer this one, I usually ask, "Please tell me what do you mean by `I'?" Then I further ask, "What do you mean by `Self-realization'?" They usually become silent, so I finally ask, "Who do you think the `I' is? Who wants to become Self-realized?"

If you can't do anything else, surrender to consciousness. By surrender, I mean surrender your ego, your problems, your emotions, your fears, your frustrations and anger. Give it all up. Say, "Take it, consciousness!"

Do not get carried away by your emotions. Stop in the middle and watch. Watch your emotions ruling you. Watch your fears controlling you. Watch your anger arise. Do not try to stop it, just watch and observe. Look intelligently and realize who it is that is getting angry. It is not you. It is not even your ego because there is no ego. It is not your body because there is no body. It is not your mind because there is no mind. Therefore, what is making you angry? Nothing.

I was talking about all the phone calls I've been receiving. People still ask what I think about this or that teacher, this or that person, or why shouldn't they go to see other teachers as well? I really don't know what to say. You have to do what you have to do. I can tell you that the more people you consult, the more confused you'll become. I don't care if you never come back here again because I am not looking for anything.

If you do find a teacher that you seem to have an affinity for, you should stick around for a while. If you run from teacher to teacher, you will become totally confused. Every teacher has his place. You will be attracted to the person you have to be with for as long as necessary. It depends on where your consciousness is.

Q: Robert, throughout the spiritual literature there are distinctions made between a gradual path and instantaneous enlightenment. A lot of this stuff about passing through stages — I can't relate to it. It just doesn't make any sense to me.

R: What can't you relate to?

Q: Just the idea that you pass through one stage to the next stage.

R: This is for the person who is striving. The truth is there is nothing to pass through. It appears that some people, who need to understand these things and research them for themselves, will be helped to see where they are coming from. Perhaps you don't need it.

Q: The state of happiness you talk about I would not call happiness. The state seems far above happiness. Happiness as the opposite of sadness.

R: You are right.

Q: Sadness could even come into that state you are I and it would only be something that was passing through with no identification.

R: You are right. As an example, I can cry at a funeral but I realize who is crying. I can have sadness if I want to but I am never really sad.

Q: The state of non-attached mind, that's really the closest thing to it, isn't it?

R: That's true. I am looking for words to describe things. More importantly, there is always total happiness. It is not human happiness. For most people to be happy, there has to be a person, place, or thing involved in their happiness. In true happiness, there are no things involved. It's a natural state. You will abide in that state forever.

Q: From the standpoint of practice, I have noticed that no matter what state arises, the problem is whether I am willing to let this go. Is it important for me to stay in my emotional state. The answer is that there is nothing you can do anyway as it come and goes.

R: Act as if there is something you can do, even though there is nothing you can do. If you were passing a starving man in the room, don't think there is nothing you can do. Give him a piece of bread.

Q: But in that state of mind arising, emotions arising, perceptions arising, there is nothing you can do.

R: Except watch. Just watch. Just observe. Another thing to consider is this: if you were here as a visitor, having only one meeting with me, and you would never see me again, I would expound the highest truth to you and take off. You would say how great that is. But when I see you twice a week or more, I begin to know you quite well, and everything I say is to help you grow because that is what is needed at that time, since I'm going to be with you again. To people who were with Ramana Maharshi as devotees, he didn't expound absolute truth to them all the time. He would talk to them like an ordinary person. He would inquire about their welfare, their health, about their problems, and he would give them practical advice. He wouldn't say, "Nothing matters because nothing exists." They had problems. So he would talk to them in a practical manner.

Q: If we don't see progress within ourselves and see we are continually getting upset, we shouldn't let that bother us?

R: Keep observing, keep watching, keep focusing on the Self, and there will be nobody to ask who is bothered or who is not bothered. You only ask such a question when your attention is more on the bothering than it is on the Self. If you change your attention to the Self, see what happens.

Q: The question is, is that gradual?

R: For some people. It depends on how much time you give to it.

Q: We can't just turn our emotions off. When I go to work sometimes, I find such an intensity there, with people snapping at each other, I get caught up in it. Of course I become aware, usually after the fact, asking myself, "will this disappear gradually by abiding in myself, or will I someday suddenly awaken?"

R: In the morning, when you first open your eyes, that's the time to work on yourself. Ask yourself, "Who am I?"

How did I get here?" Reconcile yourself with yourself. If you do that upon first waking up, the whole day will be good, without these problems. Just don't go straight to work. Get up an hour early if you have to. See yourself for what you are, and realize the truth. Focus on the self. Ask yourself, "Who Am I?" and wait. Concentrate on the source of "I Am," or say to your-self, "I Am, I Am," and then go to work. Then you will see changes. You will build up a power that you will carry with yourself all day long.

Q: To follow that "I" to its source, to find the "I" by self-enquiry and abide in it seems to mean non-existence, statelessness.

R: Don't worry about being non-existent. Simply observe the "I," and watch it going into the heart.

Q: It is not so much a following then, but that it happens by itself?

R: It happens by itself.

Q: When I contemplate "I Am," does it mean that already I am the Self?

R: Yes it does.

Q: Robert, it's because we have the concept we are not the Self that we miss the fact that we are abiding in the Self all the time. As Ramesh Balsekar has said, we only have the doubt we are not the Self, but the truth is we have always been it.

R: Exactly. When we don't see that, we go through all these troubles and play all these games, until we realize we are the Self. Then that is it.

Q: If we don't have the Self and are saying, "I am it," what is to keep that from becoming a parrot-like repetition?

R: It doesn't become a parrot-like repetition if you do it with your breath. When you inhale, say "I." When you exhale, say "Am." A subtle change of energy takes place within the Self, and you will become more peaceful, calm, and soon you will lose all identification with your body and mind. You will remain as "I Am."

Q: Robert, when we do self-enquiry, actually that is the beginning step to find the "I." When we develop a sense of abiding in the "I," there isn't much need of enquiry because we go straight to the abidance.

R: Self-enquiry has no beginning. If you practice "Who Am I," it sounds simple, but is very powerful. Only say, "Who Am I?" then pause, then say it again, "Who Am I?" Never answer the question. Just keep repeating "Who Am I?" Eventually, something will happen.

Q: I'm asking, if you develop a sense of self-abidance, you can watch states come and go, watch identification with the ego, and then self-enquiry is not necessary if you can go directly to that.

R: If you are abiding in the Self, there is no ego to watch — there is only the Self. You watch the ego with the mind, not with the Self. If you abide in the Self, there is nothing else. You are finished. You're cooked. Everything else is of the mind. When I say abide in the Self, I mean for-get everything and be yourself. There is nothing else to know at that point.