

Happiness
is
what you are!

*Universal Encyclopaedia
of Lasting Happiness*



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Translated form the Dutch:
Geluk is wat je bent!
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***Agyasya dukkau ghamyam
Gyasya ananda mayam jagat***

*For the ignorant person
the world is full of suffering.
For the enlightened person
it is full of joy.*

~ Varaha Upanishad 2.22

*Pleasure arises when the
body comes into its natural state;
pain arises when this state is disturbed.*

~ Socrates in Plato's dialogue Philebos

Introduction

*Being happy is the most important thing in life;
everything else is secondary.*

Naturally, everyone sees the truth of this statement. It simply reflects the innate nature of the soul, which is oriented, under all circumstances, toward increasing happiness in our lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, all our actions are aimed at increasing or maintaining our happiness. Everything we do reflects life's natural tendency to manifest itself in ever-higher levels of happiness and fulfilment. By becoming aware of this eternal and invincible tendency of life, we come more into harmony with this cosmic current of evolution, which embraces everything and everyone in its loving care. The knowledge of this all-encompassing evolutionary nature of life forms the essence of all wisdom.

Over the centuries, wise men and women have sought to show us the path to greater happiness and fulfilment, both on an individual and collective level. Wise people have always told us that true happiness in life depends first and foremost on our own subjective state of consciousness. Favourable material circumstances certainly contribute to our happiness, but ultimately it comes down to how we evaluate and appreciate those material circumstances. Ultimately, then, our happiness in life depends on the state of our own consciousness! The greatest treasure seems to lie within our own consciousness!

The ancient Indian sages also came to this conclusion. Their insights were recorded in the world's oldest compendiums of human experience – the *Vedas*. The Vedas and Vedic literature have but one purpose: to make us aware of the splendour that lies within our own consciousness!

According to the insights of the Vedic sages, consciousness exists independently of creation. It is the source and essence of creation! According to Vedic wisdom, we should understand consciousness as the omnipresent Being that is aware of itself. Since Being is omnipresent, consciousness is also the omnipresent and all-pervading essence of everything and everyone. According to the Vedic sages, an inherent

quality of consciousness is *Ananda* – that is, bliss! Strictly speaking, the omnipresent consciousness is thus an eternal and unbounded ocean of bliss. To become and remain happy, we need not look far beyond ourselves... We need only become aware of our own consciousness! All the advice of the Vedic sages therefore boils down to the idea that we should take a closer look at the nature of our own consciousness.

The essential message of the Vedas and Vedic literature can be summed up in one word: *Nivartadhvam*. Translated, it means this much: “Transcend; go beyond all the boundaries of your body-mind-soul system. Explore the unlimited nature of your own consciousness. Discover ever-greater levels of wholeness within your own consciousness. Be aware that your consciousness is omnipresent and eternal. Realise that the entire creation unfolds within your own consciousness. If you wish to experience a lasting state of bliss, then explore the blissful nature of your own unlimited consciousness.”

Every psychologically mature benefactor of humanity reflects this fundamental Vedic principle in some way. Over the centuries, the sages have exhorted us toward self-knowledge:

Gnothi Seauton – Know thyself – is the millennia-old motto of Greek philosophy, carved in marble above the entrance to the Temple of Delphi and chosen by Socrates as his life motto.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is within you” was the metaphor Jesus used to urge us to seek happiness within ourselves.

Today, there are many forms of meditation and yoga through which we can experience the “Kingdom of God” directly within our own consciousness.

Being happy is not a luxury! It is of vital importance. Our health depends on our happiness. The success of our relationships depends largely on how happy we are. Success in our profession depends very much on our happiness. Our social success depends on our happiness. Achieving our life’s purpose depends on our happiness! That is why I believe we would do well to think about happiness, talk about it, read about it, and write about it! For wherever we direct our attention, accelerated development takes place. By focusing our attention on happiness, we manifest it in our daily lives.

About the Content

The first part of this book offers a general yet extremely profound exploration of what happiness is, where we can find it, and how we can stabilize it. It describes the seven states of human consciousness and demonstrates that being happy under all circumstances is one of humanity's natural abilities. As such, it offers a complete and new paradigm for happiness, based on the insights and experiences of the ancient Vedic sages, the so-called *Rishis*, who recorded their insights in the Yoga and Vedanta texts, among others.

The second part is more practical. Here, the philosophical knowledge from the first part is applied in practical life. It demonstrates that abstract philosophical knowledge is genuinely valuable for our daily lives. It presents twelve aspects of growth toward a higher state of consciousness and demonstrates that higher states of consciousness are essentially higher states of happiness. These twelve perspectives on higher levels of fulfilment are discussed in relation to the twelve houses of a horoscope and the twelve signs of the zodiac .

This book aims to highlight a few fundamental and universal mechanisms that underlie the experience of a lasting state of happiness. If reading this book enhances your experiences of happiness, then it has achieved its cosmic purpose.

May this book serve as an antidote to the countless bits of information bombarding us and trying to make us believe that life is no bed of roses. Dear reader, let's not beat around the bush ... appearances are deceiving. All this flawed and negative information is merely an expression of the prevailing ignorance regarding the true nature of life.

As more people come to understand the essence of life – which consists of pure happiness – these manifestations of ignorance will vanish like snow in the Sun. The pure knowledge of Vedic literature guarantees that bliss is the essence of life and that happiness is the birthright of every human being.

*The purpose of creation
is the expansion of happiness,
and we are all here to enjoy
and radiate happiness
everywhere.*



~ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi



*Agnim ile purohitam
yagyasya devam ritvijam
hotaram ratna dhatamam*

*Translated according to its spirit:
I identify with the omnipresent creative
intelligence that inspires and coordinates all
activities in the universe. It is the inner driv-
ing force of all evolutionary processes. It is
simultaneously the doer and the witness of all
activities throughout the cosmos. This intelli-
gence spontaneously leads us to the highest
good – a life of psychological maturity
in a heavenly life on earth.*



*The first verse of the Rig Veda,
according to many, the world's oldest textbook.*

Tarati shokam atmavit



***Whoever knows the Self
overcomes suffering.***

~ Chandogya Upanishad 7.13

Philosophical Thoughts on Happiness



**What is happiness?
Where can we find it?
How can we stabilize it?**

The Vedic perspective

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
Sarve santu niramayah
Sarve bhadrani pashyant
Ma kashchit dukkha bhag bhavet*



*May all be happy
May all be at peace
May all see the good
May no one experience a share of suffering*

This Vedic verse says that we all have the ability to be happy under all circumstances. It is about happiness, peace, and that we should experience only good things. If this wish comes true, we could enjoy heaven right here on Earth.

Where does this verse come from? Is it a kind of *wishful thinking*, or is it nothing more than an expression of *goodwill*? Does it merely seek to comfort our souls as they struggle with harsh reality? Or is it perhaps an expression of a fairy-tale mindset that seeks to make us, as children, believe that life on Earth can take on a heavenly hue as if by magic?

Or could it be that it is based on an understanding of humanity's full potential? Could it be that it is an expression of a deep insight into the true nature of reality? Could it be that it is based on the knowledge of the infinite potential that has so far lain dormant within mankind? Could it be that it describes a situation that we humans ourselves can bring into being by developing our full potential of heart and mind?

The verse is supported by many other passages in Vedic literature. These oldest textbooks of human experience describe a time when all people were happy and enjoyed the best of health. Harmony reigned in society, and there was no poverty, no crime, and no violence.

Ramayana

In *the Ramayana*, an ancient Vedic text describing the life and deeds of a certain king Rama, it is mentioned what society was like back then, how people felt and what they did, how communication worked and how the government was run, what the role of the police and the army was, and so on. Let's hear from the *Ramayana* itself. Among other things, we find the following passage there:

“People did not die young, and there were not even any diseases. Everyone was well-built and physically healthy. No one lived in poverty, grief, or fear. No one was ignorant or unhappy. Both men and women were naturally good and pious, intelligent and wise. Everyone appreciated their neighbour's merits, and all were educated and wise. Everywhere, people were grateful for kindness shown and treated one another with trust and reason.

The four pillars of *Dharma* (purity, moderation, generosity, and truthfulness) were firmly established throughout the world. The very thought of sin did not even cross people's minds. Both men and women were rooted in self-referral consciousness, and all enjoyed the blessings of the highest heaven.” (Ram. 20.1–4)

Such passages from Vedic literature show that there was once a heavenly life on Earth and that it is therefore possible in the future as well.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda also describes the possibility of a harmonious and peaceful world. **The Rig Veda states that harmony in society is possible as soon as we humans experience our common source.**

The last three verses of the Rig Veda speak of *samiti samani*, which points to an ideal society in which all people enjoy the highest form of consciousness (see page xxx).

Samiti samani stands for an omnipresent harmony that permeates the infinite diversity of relative life. Wherever we might be on this beautiful planet, we would encounter people who have an eye for the common element that permeates us all and that is our shared essence. In this civilization based on true insight, pure consciousness is experienced by everyone at the source of their thoughts, words, and deeds,

while being aware that everyone else is also acting from this shared, universal, and quantum-mechanical field of pure consciousness.

Namaste

We find a remnant of such a Vedic civilization on Earth in the way people in India greet one another even to this day. At every encounter and every farewell, they say to one another: *Namaste*. I heard the most complete description of the meaning of this expression from the mouth of Maharishi:

*I know the place within you
where the whole universe dwells,
I know the place in you of love, truth, and peace.
I know the place within you where,
when you are in that place within you,
and I am in that place within me,
we are both one.*

If this experience of unity could be revived in the hearts of people, then we can easily imagine that a harmonious society and a peaceful world would be among the possibilities.

The cyclical movement of time

We are now speaking of a future possibility, but Vedic literature mentions a specific cycle in time that encompasses the entire world population and is responsible for the rise and fall of knowledge regarding the universal unity of being. These ages are called *Yugas*. A complete cycle of time consists of four pairs of *Yugas* and is called *Chaturyuga* (*chatur* = four).

The time when all people live in unity consciousness is called Satyuga – the age of truth. In this time, there would not even be an organized religion, as every person spontaneously experiences the divinity within themselves. In *Satyuga*, people have access to their full innate capacity to know, to create, and to enjoy. The average person utilizes 75% to 100% of their innate abilities and lives in a state of consciousness best described as “psychological maturity.”

When this experience of unity begins to wane, a period known as *Tretayuga* begins. People now focus more on external developments

and utilize Vedic rituals – *yagyas* – for this purpose. In *Tretayuga*, the average person has access to about 50% to 75% of their inborn capabilities.

When people’s intuition diminishes even further and they become less able to recognize the transcendental essence of everything and everyone (*Satyuga*) and also become less able to harness the subtle laws of nature for their benefit (*Tretayuga*), a period known as *Dwaparayuga* begins. People then manifest, on average, only 25% to 50% of their innate potential. Differences and disputes begin to play a significant role in people’s daily lives.

When people’s intuitive abilities decline even further and the average person can utilize at most 25% of their innate abilities, external differences gain the upper hand. This era is called *Kaliyuga*, the dark age of ignorance. The likelihood of clashes and conflicts at all levels of existence has then increased enormously. The individual becomes internally divided, leading to discord and tension in their relationships and family, in their cities, in their countries, and even on a global scale. All these conflicts are the spontaneous and automatic consequence of the fact that, in *Kaliyuga*, the average person lives only a fraction of their total potential and has lost sight of the common origin of all phenomena.

But just as night cannot last forever, morning breaks again on the level of human intuition. After the lowest point of *Kaliyuga*, people gradually begin to understand once more the all-encompassing and universal unity that permeates existence. The descending arc from *Satyuga* to *Kaliyuga* then spontaneously turns around into an ascending arc from *Kaliyuga* to *Satyuga*. During the ascending *Kaliyuga*, people gradually become more intelligent, more creative, and thereby happier and healthier.

The ascending *Kaliyuga* gradually transitions into an ascending *Dwaparayuga*. Inner and outer harmony increase again in people’s lives, and on average, one develops about 50% of one’s talents.

Following this dawn of knowledge, the intensity of human understanding of the mystery of creation increases even further, giving rise to an ascending *Tretayuga*, in which people develop on average about 50% to 75% of their abilities.

The full radiance of the spiritual Sun is gradually breaking through, ushering in an ascending *Satyuga* – the full radiance of a Vedic civilization on Earth, in which people are able to manifest 75% to 100% of their innate abilities and thereby enjoy heaven on Earth.

This cycle of time is mentioned in various aspects of Vedic literature. We find it in Jyotish (Vedic astrology), in the Puranas (Indian historical texts), and also in Ayurveda. *Charaka*, for example, mentions that in *Satyuga*, people enjoy perfect health and live up to four hundred years.

The Current World Period

Yogananda's spiritual teacher, *Swami Shri Yukteshwar*, described these Yugas in his book *The Holy Science*. In this book, Shri Yukteshwar shows where humanity currently stands in this cycle. In doing so, he corrects the widely held belief in India that the *Kaliyuga* began about 3,000 years ago and will last a total of 432,000 years. Shri Yukteshwar convincingly demonstrates that this belief is untenable, and he also explains how this misconception arose. Without going into further detail, I agree with Shri Yukteshwar's explanation, as it is logical and convincing. The duration of the *Kaliyuga* is in reality only 1200 years, and the other Yugas last 2400, 3600, and 4800 years respectively. A complete cycle of four pairs then spans approximately 24000 years. *Yuga* literally means *pair*, suggesting that the Yugas occur in pairs. This is indeed the case; each *Yuga* has a descending and an ascending phase.

According to this view, the descending *Kaliyuga* would have begun around 700 BCE, and since it lasts 1200 years, it would have lasted until around 500 CE. This was followed by the ascending *Kaliyuga*, which also lasted 1200 years. This would thus have lasted from 500 CE to the year 1700 CE, after which humanity entered an ascending *Dwaparayuga*. In my book *The four Yugas – Stages of Human Development* I discuss this Yuga question in greater detail. Here, perhaps the following will suffice:

This perspective sheds an interesting light on the history of humanity. According to it, the most recent ascending *Kaliyuga* (from 500 to 1700 CE) would coincide with the so-called Middle Ages (in English also

known as the *Dark Ages*). This is a perfect fit, since *Kali* means “night.” The *Puranas* (Indian history books) state that *Krishna* lived at the end of the last *Dwaparayuga*. That would have been around 700 BCE. The *Puranas* also state that the aforementioned king *Rama* lived during the descending *Tretayuga*. That must have been the period from about 6700 BCE to 3100 BCE. This dating is far more plausible than the common Indian view, which places *Krishna’s* time on Earth around 3000 BCE. According to this common Indian view, the *Treta-yuga* – and thus *Rama’s* life – would be situated between 2,163,000 BCE and 867,000 BCE. In my opinion, this is impossible, since human memory does not extend that far back!

According to Yogananda’s spiritual teacher, Shri Yukteshwar, humanity is currently in the *Dwapara Yuga*, which began around the year 1700 CE and extends until approximately 4100 CE. This would explain why the average human life expectancy has been rising slowly but surely over the past few centuries. During the last two hundred years the life expectancy has practically doubled! The formation of national states and developments in science and technology can also be explained in light of this *Yuga* model.

Knowledge of the various characteristics of the *yugas*, or ages, and their cyclical sequence is an important part of the Vedic worldview. If you’d like to learn more about this, I recommend the aforementioned book *The four Yugas – Stages of Human Development*, in which I discuss Shri Yukteshwar’s *yuga* model in detail. (Available through my publisher: www.bookmundo.com) Each of the *Yugas* is characterized by a specific stage of humanity’s mental and spiritual development. In the *Kaliyuga*, humanity’s consciousness is at its lowest: ignorance and materialism prevail everywhere. In the *Satyuga*, human consciousness is at its highest: *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is spontaneously experienced and lived by all. The “ABC of Life” – Absolute Bliss Consciousness – is known to everyone!

Everything and everyone is forever subject to this ebb and flow of time. Relative existence is, after all, the expression of eternity. If eternity wishes to express itself on relative planes of existence, it must inevitably move in circles. Infinity can only express itself in circles. **If something is to continue forever and ever, it must move in circles.**