

Bliss
a talk by Krishna Menon

Shri Krishna Menon – Shri Atmananda – visited Europe (Switzerland) twice in the early nineteen fifties. During his second visit, by request he allowed a tape recording of a short summary of his approach to be made. A retranslation into English from the Dutch translation follows below. The material between parentheses is from the original translator.

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If you don't know what your standpoint is you can never hope to know the reality of things. I say, you don't know what your standpoint is, you say: 'I am fat, I am thin, I walk, I sit, I move,' and so forth. In this way you identify yourself with the physical body. If you say: 'I feel, I see, I touch something,' and such, you identify yourself with your senses. And, when you say: 'I think, I feel' and so on, you identify yourself with the (constantly changing) mind. For that reason you are never conscious of what your (actual) standpoint (and that this constantly changes) is.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to know what you are and what your standpoint is, if you want to arrive at the right knowing, or to put it another way, to see the right perspective. It is not enough to only investigate the waking state for that purpose, because your experience extends also into the dream and into deep (dreamless) sleep states. Let us then initiate an investigation into these three states. You will discover that the I-principle (the true unchanging Self) is continuously present in each of the three states. The body, the senses and the mind are present in one state, but they are not there in the others. From that it follows that the I-principle is unjustly coupled with the body, the senses and the mind and that in reality it is independent of these three. That can be seen in the deep (dreamless) sleep, where it shines in all its bliss. You can see there that the pure Consciousness is a deep Peace. When you awaken out of the deep sleep you then say that you were happy (that you slept deeply and peacefully).

How would it be possible to claim this if you had not been aware of that happiness (the deep peace), that you experienced during deep sleep? It follows therefore that Consciousness and Peace were present in the deep sleep – and that this Consciousness, this Peace is your true nature. Why do I say that this is what you actually are?

Because only this I-principle is present, remains, when it is stripped of body, senses and mind. There you find Consciousness and Peace. That is why I say that this I-principle is Peace or Bliss.

This (never changing) Consciousness can never be separated from the I-principle, in any of the three states that we have investigated.

Consciousness is present in the I-principle, in deep sleep as has already been demonstrated. It is also present with the I-principle in the dream state, and also it is not less present in the waking state. Although the I-principle is coupled to different things in the dream and waking states it is nonetheless present. Not only that: if you subject your own experiences to a deep investigation, you will discover that it allows itself often to be seen as pure (not coupled to anything) Consciousness, for example in the short moments between two states, between two thoughts, feelings or sensory observations.

You have to admit that there is a pause between two thoughts. If not, there would be a thought that is continuous without interruption. A thought has to come to an end before another can begin. Therefore it can not be denied that even though you may call it a miniscule fragment of a second, the pause between two thoughts exists. What were you then during this pause? Were you in the waking state? No. Were you in the dream state? No. Did you sleep? No. What were you actually then (during this miniscule interruption)? In that moment you were in your real nature.

You see thus that even in the waking state you have to repeatedly go into your real nature – and then come out again. But that escapes you, you take no notice of it. It would be impossible to live a life in this world if you did not go repeatedly to your deepest being, in this way, repeatedly every moment. Try to put the emphasis there (by directing your attention to it again and again). And when the consciousness is again coupled to (perceived) things, lay the emphasis there (on the consciousness that is uninterruptedly present, either when things appear, or between their appearances), instead of putting your attention on the (observed) physical things.

When you have done that for some time, you will discover that you, perhaps without having noticed it, have been following your (own) track, directly towards your center which you want to make your 'permanent residence'. That center is the real I-principle that is Consciousness and Bliss. You are searching for happiness – why? That urge comes from the deepest level that is your true being. But, because your senses repeatedly have the inclination to direct themselves to the outside world, you seek for happiness there; you long for something, you obtain it, and you find a moment of the happiness that you were searching for. But, what you have not done is to investigate where that happiness comes from. I am certain that if you set your mind to investigate it you will discover that this happiness does not come from the desired object, but that it is your deepest nature. I will show you why that is.

If happiness were a part of the objects perceived by the senses (including thoughts and feelings which are as it were perceived by subtler senses), then they should always give you happiness, from the cradle to the grave. But, that is contradicted by your experience. Things that made you happy when you were a baby, no longer made you happy when you were a few years older; and so there were other things that made you happy as you grew to be an adolescent. But, the things that made you happy when you were a baby or an adolescent don't do it any more when you are old – again something new comes to take their place. So, you can see that happiness is not part of the things that are perceived by the senses.

Also, happiness is not seated in the mind (in thinking and feeling). If that were so you would be able to call it up at any moment, but that is also not the case, and therefore happiness does not originate in the mind. If it were housed in the mind, you could repeatedly find it, even without calling in the help of the (bodily) senses – but that is not the way it goes. Therefore, it is clear that the mind is not the permanent residence of happiness.

Now, if happiness does not live in the mind, and does not come from the things perceived by the senses, where does it come from, again and again, when longed for things are obtained? What I want to indicate is that the mind is restless when you are longing for something, and that it remains restless exactly until that desire has been fulfilled. As soon as that has happened the mind comes to rest for a bit, and then you find Happiness. And that Happiness is, as I have already said, your true being, your real self.

That Bliss is there all the time, but you only notice it when your mind has come to rest. So, it is your own deepest being that shines when you obtain a desired object. If you pursue a self investigation along these lines, you will discover that it is an important aid for coming to (the realization of) your real center.

[Shri Atmananda (Krishna Menon)]