



June 2000 Contemplation Theme

## Finding Happiness

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

“Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” is an unalienable right declared by our founding fathers. Pursuing happiness is certainly a theme of modern life, like the little pink bunny that “just keeps going, and going, and going...” What would America look like today if they had declared our right to “happiness” instead of the “pursuit of happiness?”

Yoga says that happiness is not enough. Happiness is a fleeting taste of something much greater – bliss. You have experienced it in those incredible moments, truly fulfilling experiences of complete happiness at various times in your life. Remember the best of them. Look into that moment where you won the race, or you stood overlooking the incredible view, or you held that new baby for the first time. In that moment, time does not exist. You experience that vastness and incredible joy again every time you recall that experience. You can bring it up in its fullness again by using your memory. It's incredible! It is truly called “bliss” – the bliss of your own Being.

If you do not experience this bliss, you do not feel alive. This bliss is your own Being. It is the source of life within you. You must experience this again and again, or life has no meaning. So, yes, you must pursue happiness. But you will find it inside, not outside.

The problem with pursuing happiness is that you must postpone it. In order to pursue happiness, you have to attach it to some future event or some object you currently do not have. It has to be in your future. The new home or the vacation trip will make you happy later – not now. And you have to work hard for it, or it depends on another person, but you can't be happy now because you don't have the thing you need in order to be happy. You're ignoring your own bliss-essence in order to wait for a future moment when you can be happy.

Where is it that you look for happiness these days? Wherever you look, you actually expect that the happiness you get will be temporary. When you get that something you are pursuing, it will make you happy for a while, only until there is another something to be pursued. I remember a friend in the ashram when I was studying in India. Every time she wanted something that she couldn't get, she put it on her list. She listed everything she wanted and planned to get it at some point in the future. A year after returning to the U.S., she told me, “I got everything on my list.” I asked, “Are you happy?” She said, “No. I have another list.”

I recently asked the students in a meditation class if anyone had ever gotten all their ducks in a row. Did you ever get everything in your life set up perfectly? One lady answered yes. I asked, “How long did it last?” To my amazement she said, “Four months.” Then she added, “But I wasn't happy. I thought I was going to be, but I wasn't.” Happiness is not outside of you. Happiness is not inside of you. Happiness IS you! The science of yoga is for the purpose of finding your Self, which is the bliss of your won Being. When you feel happy, you're experiencing a taste of your Self.

Finding happiness is a matter of finding your Self. Stop looking outside. Do more yoga.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rama'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a heart shape above the letter 'a'.

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