



What is the truth about life?

The truth is that the five senses are going outwards. The attraction towards the outside world is more and the attraction towards the inside world is less. This is the first and foremost truth of life. Why do we want to be relieved of this outward attraction is because the more you get in to this outward attraction, you do not get much from it, but you have tremendous difficulty in leaving it. This is the first truth of life.

So what happens when you give in to this attraction? You get sorrow from it. Your desire is for joy and you go after that, but what you end up with is sorrow. Have you experienced this? All our senses are towards the outside world; the desire to see something, hear something, smell something, touch or to taste something.

Now if you go towards these desires do you get contented? For a little while you do get contented but soon you will get restless. This is the second truth - you get some momentary satisfaction but that fades away and you are left with restlessness. Each time you go after fulfilling some desire, you get restlessness which keeps building up and over time, you develop disinterest; a sort of apathy.

A lot of good food is kept in front of you but you don't feel like eating that food. At home there are so many CDs of good music but you are not interested to listen. You are married and your partner is at home but you are not interested in sex. There are beautiful clothes kept in your cupboard but you are not interested to wear them. Disinterest and apathy are born out of the buildup of restlessness which comes when you go after fulfilling one mundane desire after another.

This is a vicious cycle of life.

There is attraction, you went behind the attraction and you got momentary satisfaction and joy, and then you got restless. When you got restless, then the joy went away but the restlessness stays on. The restlessness increases and builds up and then disinterest and apathy are born!

People got to see places; some people went to Mysore to see the Museum. They just went to a restaurant and had food and then said, 'what is there to see in the museum, forget it!' They have come from so far to see the museum, but did not see anything! Some people went all the way to Vaishno Devi from Bangalore, saw the surrounding mountains and the queue leading up to the shrine, and returned without visiting the temple. There is no interest.

When there is restlessness in the mind, it does not allow one to relish anything. This is the biggest trouble of human life - an aversion develops towards everything, yet it is hard to give up. If it were easy to renounce once the disinterest sets in, that would be fine, but with restlessness increasing, still it is hard to leave it.

In this situation, what should one do? One should be Antarmukh; go inward.

How to go inward? That is where everything gets stuck. One is neither able to go inwards nor is there any charm in the external - neither here nor there.

Nothing in this world is appealing, and at the same time one is not able to settle their mind in meditation.

What to do in this condition? How to change this attraction - this is the biggest Question!

I do not have the answer, just this question.

The truth is the answer has to sprout from within. Just as a seed is sown, and from it sprouts a seedling which grows into a tree that blossoms and bears fruit. Sowing this seed is satsang. Satsang means giving attention to 'What is the Truth about Life'.

How to sow this seed? By first becoming aware of what the reality of life is. Realize today that the senses are focused outward and prone to attraction. Having been drawn outward, no fulfillment was experienced. A momentary pleasure was gained, but with it came restlessness which then got accumulated leading into a state of apathy. When we recognize and acknowledge this truth and accept it, half the work is done.

Most people are not willing to see this truth about life. It is necessary to face it. The meaning of satsang is, 'what are the truths about life.' First identify them.

Then next is how to overcome attraction?

In order to overcome attraction, we need an even greater attraction; only then the smaller attractions fall away.

First way is, to be in Meditation, Knowledge, or Seva, one finds pleasure, and then the attraction towards worldly pleasures begins to fade.

Secondly, if there is a deep commitment to a cause or some work then also the attraction in other things fade away.

I used to know a professor of mathematics who while walking on the street would be talking to himself, making hand gestures and solving mathematical problems in his mind. People used to think he is crazy. Sometimes on his way home he would walk past his house until some family member would call out to him.

Household, food and drink, nothing mattered to him, he was so engrossed in mathematics. He came up with a whole new discipline in mathematics and even wrote a book - he had so much love for it. In the same way there are scientists who lack any interest in food or drink. Whenever a major invention was made in this world, the inventors became so deeply consumed in that one invention that the attraction towards all other things in this world faded away. So a deep commitment!

Third is applying the reins through knowledge. Like in a car, the brakes are applied whenever an accident is feared.

So periodically, if the brakes of vairagya (dispassion) are applied, then also, you can become

indifferent to outward attractions.

In spite of all these, if you feel hungry, thirsty, sleepy, or have a desire to see something, then you can say that the senses are behaving according to their inherent nature, but I am separate from them, and I am at peace.

It is natural for the sense faculties to function according to their tendencies. So instead of cursing oneself, one becomes detached, free and rests.

The pleasure of the senses is attained through effort but true happiness lies in the pleasure that is attained through being effortless, the pleasure of meditation. The happiness derived from meditation is many, many times more than the pleasure got from effort.

In order to enjoy anything one needs to put in some effort. In this manner, enjoyment through any one of the five senses dispels energy and tiredness sets in because here effort is involved. The comfort gotten from doing is of a lower grade, whereas the comfort derived from non-doing (meditation) is infinitely superior. The deep rest one gets through meditation raises the alertness in the body, generates energy and the restlessness fades away.

So whenever we accumulate restlessness, we can get rid of it through deep meditation. This is very important.

What is truth? A path on which there is joy that is void of sorrow. This is the inner longing, that we should find such happiness that is not intermixed with sorrow, restlessness and apathy. This pursuit is what spiritual inquiry is and one who is on this pursuit is known as a 'Saadhak'.

It is easy to speak and hear about this but quite difficult to practice, but it is not impossible. For a saadhak in whose heart this desire has awakened, I would not say it is difficult. That is when prayer arises.

When a man is very thirsty, he begs, 'Please give me some water.' In the same way, a longing for this kind of peace should arise intensely - An intense longing to find that one thing in which everything else can be found. One who is consumed with this desire is known as a saadhak.

Now, don't question whether I am a saadhak or not, 'I do not have that intense longing, what am I to do I just came and sat here.'

Just assume that you are a saadhak. Also acknowledge that you do have a little bit of attraction and that attraction is reducing.

Few years ago the amount of attraction and attachment you had, do you still have the same now? No! Through knowledge and with time the attraction reduces.

Knowledge and time, both are needed. As attraction reduces, mind reposes and becomes restful, and when rest is attained, God is attained.

- by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar