

# Sorrow How to get Rid of it

*Swami Akhandanand Saraswati*

( 1 )

I was six year old and was in class B. One day I took my penknife from my satchel and kept it in my girdle. I forgot all about it and started crying "My knife is lost". The teacher made all the boys stand up, Scolded them and threatened to use cane, but with no result. In the meantime a student exclaimed, "See the knife is fastened in his girdle." To my surprise it was there. It was a small incident of my childhood, but when I grew up I pondered and realized that my own mistake was the main cause of my and others predicament.

( 2 )

When I was about nine year old I visited the house of distant relation. There I met a young man of about eighteen. Within hours he was so affectionate as to convince me that he loved me most. My parents, dear relations and instruction of the teachers were an impediment in my freedom of play and association which made their affection look small. I became enamoured of the intense love of the young man. But it so happened that there after for about nine years I could not meet him. However upto the age of eighteen, I continued to remember him and his affection. I sometimes uttered his name as a devotee utters the name of God. As logicians reach their conclusions by syllogistic reasoning and discussion, in the same way I too thought about his activities. I was impatient for him as the lovers are for their beloved. I however had no opportunity to meet him and when I met him he had joined government service after doing his M. A. I tried my best to recall the old memories, but he could not recognise me right upto end. A question arose in my mind, whether the affections and attachments are only the mutation of the mind, for it is only the mind which is attached to the object, the latter has no independent existence. May be so, I do not want



to discuss its psychological aspect. He however was not the cause of all the anxiety that I had for years for meeting him. The anxiety disappeared the moment I realized that it was due to my mistaken attitude.

( 3 )

Contemporaneously I ran away from my home for Ayodhayaji and by God's grace I met Panditji of Janaki Ghat. When he came to know that I had despaired of the world, I have forsaken the household responsibilities and wanted to become a sadhu, he asked me if my house was kacha or Pucca. I replied kacha, then he asked how many members were in my family? I said, "four". He again asked, "what is it that you get in your meals?" I said, "bread, pulse, and rice." Panditji retorted, your house is kacha, while my Math is pucca. You are four in the house. I have hundred chelas, you take bread, pulse and rice, here we eat laddoo, puri, halwa and malpua. Is this renunciation ( Vairagya )? If you are not able to face God-sent adversities with love and courage you will be bereft of all fortitude and power. Forbearance is a key to man's evolution. The love and affection in the home have a soothing effect. Are you under the impression that you will have no adversities by becoming Sadhu? Home is the best teacher of patience. Panditji made endearing arrangements for return to my home.

( 4 )

A few days after I again left home with a Mahatma for Karanwas. He was swami Yoganandpuri, a disciple of Ramkrishan Paramhans. He initiated me ceremoniously to Krishna-Mantra, which I was practising. I regularly recited it in the upper story of Shri Krishna Mandir situated at Pucca Ghat. In the midst of recitation I was haunted with the idea of my Mother, wife, and others in a forlorn state entreating me with tears in their eyes for home return. This thought frequented me for a month whenever I sat for Japa during my stay at Karanwas. At last with the permission of Swamiji I returned home. There I found a different atmosphere. No one was warned about me. They thought that I had



gone to the southern districts of Bihar, where we have large number of followers from the time of our ancestors and from where we had an adequate yearly income and that I would return with sufficient cash and clothes. They thus remained unconcerned about me. On my return they were unhappy when they found that I was in the grip of a Sadhu and had returned empty handed, and there was chance of the story being repeated. This incident had deep impact on me. I was convinced that it was ones own attachments which brought sorrow. My people were never Sorrowful. I only imagined them to be so. They were happy in the thought that money was coming. Its unfulfillment made them unhappy. The roots of sorrow lie in attachments and hopes and have to be uprooted from there.

[ 5 ]

At a distance of about seven miles from Benaras, there lived a Mahatma. He was firm in his faith, knower of Brahma, emancipated but highly outspoken. He used to abuse those who went to him. Whenever I went to him, at times he offered a seat and showered flowers and at times abused me. One day finding him in a happy mood, I asked him "Why was he abusive?" Enraged he began to abuse and said whether his abuses hurt him? In this world there is nothing but abuses. If you are not able to bear my abuses how will you live in this world. He alone is firm in faith who is able to stand these abuses Sorrow is to be borne, not to be defeated, it is to be loved not to be tought out. By loving sorrow it is so metamorphosed that the person loving it gets glimpses of God. For the first time I then realized why devotees ask for the boon of Sorrow.

—Translated by 'Urmila Bahal'



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[ Cont—12-2 ]

( 6 )

I was going from Kashi to Haridwar for some reason I broke my Journey at Bareilly. When I boarded the next train at night, I found an Afghan tribesman lying on the entire berth. In the first instance he abused me to drive me away, but I didnt go. I sat near his feet. He then started hitting me with his feet I didnt react. Irritatingly he remarked "I have surpassed Gardhiji" I felt agitated and hurt. Somhow I reached Haridwar. There I asked a Mahatma 'Why an insult leads to sorrow?' The Mahatma said, 'If somebody sleeps on a garbage and a sewer, can any one throwing dirt and dirty water on him be blamed?' I asked what did it mean? He said 'Is this body any the less than garbage and sewer?' It consists of bone, flesh, blood Saliva, refuge and urine. You are proud of this body and think this to be all in all. There by you can not attain either Salvation or eternal Bliss.'

In truth an egoist attracts to himself scattered pain like a magnet.

He encircles and imprisons himself he thus get suffocated by a solid bondage of sorrow. Most of our sorrows have substratum in the body consciousness. The only way out is to dismantle the Pillars on which egoistic superstructure stands.

( 7 )

My friend has a daughter. She was ten years old then. Once she began to weep inexcusably. The members of the family and neighbours consoled her and made enquiries about the



cause. She went on weeping and would not disclose the reason. I told her to let us know what she wanted and she would get it. When so assured she said, 'I have ninety eight rupees and want two more.' She got two rupees and stopped weeping. But is the weeping over by these two rupees? She may get thousands and lacs the thirst for money will ever increase. She is alive today. This is not the story of an individual. It speaks of the worldly man. Are the old free from this? While the fulfilment of desires is the cause of bondage, the very thought of enjoyment of object and their accumulation is the source of that bondage.

( 8 )

A seth used to visit Shri Uriyababaji Maharaj. He always complained that he was short of money. Maharaj, he may be blessed with increased income. One day Shri Maharajji said, listen to a case in point. A beggar was lying in open on a wintery night wrapped in a small rug. He was in agony. A Mahatma passed by that way. He asked 'what is the trouble with you?' The beggar said Baba my rug is very small. If I cover the head the feet get exposed and vice versa. I am trembling with cold. The Mahatma said, Good man there are poorer than yourself who, rug apart, have not even lattered piece of cotton cloth to cover themselves. Consider, how they pass their night. Oh fool ! while the rug cannot be extended, you can contract yourself by a twist and rug will then cover the whole body.

Shri Maharajji said to the seth 'you have several. Cars and horse carriages unnesssrily large number of servants and a big house. why do you not curtail your expenses? why are you causing pain to your univerself by a falsa outward glamour and



a false sense of prestige ? Year off this false veil of ignorance. You have property worth lacs and income of thousands. There is no cause for grief.' What frontal and meaningful attack on the present day mentality of People.

( 9 )

Once we were on pilgrimage of Badrinath. A Brahamchari was also with us. A devotee had given a precious watch to him. On the way off Rudraprayer he dropped the watch. He came to know of it when he had covered about three miles, He ran back about five miles searched for hours and by hoove returned to us disappointed. I rebuked him so that he may shake off his sorrow but to no effect. By God's grace he found a ring at a fountain near a huge mound. He was convinced by the shine of the ring and at other's suggestion that it was costlier than the watch and that Bihariji in response to his prayers has given it in exchange. His depression disappeared and his face was all of a glow. A few days after reaching Badrinath he came to know that the ring had an ordinary glass stone and was not worth more than a few annas. But in between he had forgotten the watch and the sorrow had lost its edge.

I pondered over the incident. As a matter of fact the sorrow did not originate with the loss of the watch or when he came to know of the loss. Its origin lay when he treated the watch given to him as his. It was not with the Brahamchari before. He credited his personal account when it came to him, and with its disappearance the account showed a loss. That was the germinating point of sorrow. We treat Gods and natures things as our own and are grieved when by Gods will they disappear in the natural cause. In spiritual parlance this sorrow is dew to ignorance. Sorrow is denied cutrance in an awakened and vigilant mind.



A friend of mine was on an editorial board of a paper. He was very able and man of character. He was healthy too. While he was working in the office, a civil surgeon of local Hospital came to see him. He examined my friend in a routine way and said his lungs were affected and there were symptoms of T. B. As the Doctor left he lay in the bed. He was examined and treated by doctors and vaidis, but to no avail. At last a more eminent physician than the previous civil surgeon was called who after carrying out various examinations said that if any once could establish any indication of T. B. he would give up medical practice. He put his whole case in a way that my friend was completely convinced that there was no trace of T. B. It is needless to say that from that day on wards he began to discharge all his duties at the office.

Now a days there is more illness at the mental than at the body level. The reason is people are more concerned with embellishment of the body and neglect the mind, which is allowed to roam about starvingly in distress as if in madness. It is devoid of Principle and Consequent lack of patience, strength and vitality. It gets confused in small matters. If there is any injury to the body the idea of Tetanus begins to loom large. Any boil leads to a suspicion of becoming septic, which magnifies the pain hundred times. What is needed is the treatment of the mind and not of body alone. If our mind is absorbed in the real-self and in the thought of God and further has an unshaken faith in Him, the worlds sorrows will disappear.

—Translated by 'Urmila Bahal'