

Title: Conversations

Subtitle: JOY

Second Subtitle: JOY

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There is only one religion in the world, and that is to be joyous -- to have joy to do.

The heavenly rewards of the joyous are right here and now before us, as are the sorrows of the sorrowful. Joy is the only virtue in life; and being sorrowful is the only vice. There can be no waiting for a better (or worse) life in any supposed future here, for both heaven and the sting of hell are here and now, or else they do not exist at all. If you are joyful, life will seek you out; but be sorrowful and you will find only suffering, no joy. If you cannot enjoy, then what is this life for? Surely not for struggle and pain, for a demon would have created such a world. And if you believe in a beneficent God, then surely it follows that you must also believe in a world blessed by the presence of the ubiquitous Presence. And if God is everywhere, and everywhere to be found, why are we so sorrowful over?

This sorrow, so common to the hearts and minds of the unenlightened, stems from a lack of understanding of the world for what it is, an incapacity to find meaning in the apparent chaos of life, and an outright failure to truly know themselves for who and what they really are. This is simple-- so simple it is often easily overlooked or outright denied by the assumptions of all of our cultural, religious and personal beliefs. There are so many people who simply cannot enjoy even the most simple and common and direct pleasures of life-- a beautiful sunset or sunrise, a magnificent work of art, intelligent conversation, love. So they look elsewhere for God-- outside of the life of the world. They believe that joy is futile, even wasteful; and so they miss how immediate and abundant Life is in their very own lives. They refuse to believe that life has any meaning, and so they refuse themselves the most apparent proof of life's meaning, and the most direct evidence of the existence of God.

For God enjoys all things-- what else were all these things created for?-- for His own ineffable amusement. God deeply enjoys the play of sun, moon, and earth; the beauty of the handiwork of our hands; the eloquent speech of our mouths; above all, the joy of our hearts and bodies. But God cannot partake in the joy of even these most common pleasures unless we choose to allow ourselves the God-given right to enjoy them. It is through our joy that God enjoys the joys of living, the delights of life, the true blessedness of existence.

So look at life, look at the world as it is; look closely, and you will see God delighting in the very midst of His own created Being. It takes but a single moment to see the nature of Reality -- and by Reality we mean both the spiritual fabric of the universe as well as the enduring Selfhood that remains forever untouched and aloof from the fluctuations of psychologies and physiologies-- to dispel the illusions of the sorrowful materialist worldview. But a single glimpse .. and our hearts and minds are forever transformed.

a single glimpse .. and our entire being is permanently opened to a heaven few know where to look; and it is very difficult to convince most men and 'religious' men and women-- that the vision of God is already so near to

God is Life itself; and to be truly religious is to enjoy life. To be truly religious is to be in the fragrance of life; to look upon even the most common events of our day with deep gratitude and reverence; to take in all the sights and sounds of the world acutely for the hidden pattern and harmony that is sure to present itself. It is the material-spiritual Unity of Life. Divinity is not a static entity existing 'somewhere,' waiting for you to find Him. God is right here and now, enjoying every moment of it deeply. It is not that you have to 'find God' in some places actively seeking you out! But so long as you remain sorrowful, depressed, in pains and sorrows, He cannot find you. You must open up the temple of your soul, have to open up the doors of your senses-- only then can the Spirit truly enliven you, and reveal your own Godhood to you. When the pain has disappeared, and you are yourself dancing -- then God has happened to you. When your tears have dried, and you are yourself singing-- then God has entered you, and become you, and sings with you.

Have joy, and you will be deeply religious-- for joy is the ultimate goal of all religion.