

Two Blisses

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Sam: Please explain the difference between experiential and non-experiential bliss.

Sundari: Blissful implies bliss-less. The bliss of knowledge is very different from bliss as most people understand the meaning of that word. The bliss of the self is not a feeling. It is just knowledge. The problem lies in the misunderstanding of the word "bliss." There are two kinds of bliss: *ananda*, which is experiential bliss, and *anantum*, which is the bliss of the self. The bliss of the self, that which is always present, unlimited and non-changing, is not an experience, because it is your true nature, *anantum*.

The bliss of self-knowledge can be experienced as a feeling though, such as the bliss of deep sleep, which is inferred when you wake up, or as *parabhakti*, where love is known to be you, your true nature, meaning consciousness, the self. *Parabhakti* is having all you could ever want and knowing that it will never leave you. It is love loving itself. It is limitless satisfaction, *parama sukka* or *tripti* are words used in the texts.

When I know I am awareness, I am *prema*, limitless love. **This love is knowledge because awareness is intelligent.** *Prema* is only known when self-knowledge has negated the doer. That is not to say that the bliss disappears when self-knowledge is firm. It is just does not matter whether the experience of bliss is present or not, because the bliss of self-knowledge is always present because the bliss of self-knowledge is the bliss of the self.

Below is what Swami Paramarthananda says about the two kinds of blisses.

Anantum versus Ananda

Paramarthananda, on the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, takes up this question of *anantum* versus *ananda*, the "two kinds of blisses":

"In the scriptures both *ananda* and *anantum* are used to describe the indescribable *Brahman*. '*Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*' is one of these definitions, '*Sat Cit Ananda*,' referring to *Atma*, another one."

Paramarthanda now gives the following explanation: "*Sathyam* means 'time-wise limitlessness,' *Anantam* means 'space-wise limitlessness,'" so he translates "*Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*" into "*Brahman* is the eternal, all-pervading consciousness." *Anantam* as a term to describe limitlessness is not sufficient, as it does not include time.

Ananda in "*Sat Cit Ananda*" again means limitlessness. There are two kinds of *ananda*: *bimbaananda* and *pratibimbaananda*. *Bimbaananda* is the original *ananda*, also called *atmaananda*. It is my nature, always present but not experienceable. It cannot be gained; it is to be claimed and owned.

Pratibimbaananda is reflected *ananda*; it can be experienced in a *sattvic* mind.

Translating *ananda* into “bliss” is reducing *ananda* to *pratibimbananda*, experiential bliss. In the spiritual world, you find this mistranslation and misunderstanding all over, especially in Yoga.

~ *Om*, Sundari