

DEPRESSION

Anything but Emptiness

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is an international spiritual Master, author and authority on yoga, with profound spiritual and cultural insights on health and human values.

Questioner: I've been feeling some space lately between my mind bullshit and something which is ultimate. I find myself just trying to discern that feeling from depression. Sometimes it's a feeling of emptiness in a sense, things that used to be important to me are not anymore and at other times, it's a feeling of emptiness because of depression, I think. How would I know the difference?

Sadhguru: With depression you are never empty. With depression, you are empty of things that you would want to have. You are denied things that you want. You want to be joyful — that is not there, but some other nonsense is going on at a tremendous pace in depressed states. You are not empty; you are trying to drug yourself to emptiness, but still it doesn't happen. Even with drugs, you cannot take away the nonsense that is going on, it is just dampened. The sharpness of the pain is not there; it sort of dulls you a little bit. But depression is not emptiness at all. In moments of depression, are you empty? So much is going on; you are only empty of what you would like to have, that is why you are terming it as emptiness.

So your mood getting depressed is subject to non-fulfillment of your expectations. There is a chemistry to it of course. Everything has a chemical basis, but if you remain in a certain level of mental alertness and awareness, the chemistry will fall into place

When we say emptiness, when we say shoonya, we are not looking at it that way at all. We are talking about you being empty of yourself. Now, if your pockets become empty, you will become depressed. The mind has not become empty, you have not become empty because your pockets are empty; you are only deducting, "Oh, my life is empty; everything is empty for me; there is nothing left for me." But a hell of a lot is happening within you. The word depression is used only with reference to your mood, not to the mind. The activity of the mind has not gone into depression, it is only the mood which has gone into depression, but the activity of the mind has hit the peak. If mental activity found depression, that would be wonderful. It is only the mood which is depressed, but the mental activity is actually going out of control, much more than ever. People can cause depression in your mood in so many ways. If they take away what you think is precious, in your mood you will become depressed. Whatever that may be, it may be just a pebble or lots of money or somebody you think belongs to you or you did not get what you think you must get and you can become depressed.

by itself. But right now, you do not have the capacity to maintain that level of alertness. Right now the stock market is depressed; so the whole nation can get depressed. Depression can be a huge problem in the country right now because the stock markets are

tumbling. May be you and me did not lose money, but so many people must have lost a lot. May be you don't meet them on the street; or even if you meet them, you won't know, but so many people are depressed because a situation like this has happened. Many of

them may never even have touched that money, it's just that everyday they were seeing the graphs rising and their mood was in ascendancy. [Laughs] But now they see the graphs falling, so their mood is falling. It is just that what they expected to happen is not happening.

These kinds of situations have been happening for ages. To put it very simply for somebody who does not understand all these complexities of financial markets — actually nobody does — just like weather, they keep predicting ... [Laugh] It is like one man sold a donkey to somebody else for 100 dollars. The other man paid 100 dollars; the seller was supposed to deliver his donkey. He came in his pickup truck and said, "I'm so sorry, the donkey is dead." Then the other

man said, "That's fine with me' give me back my 100 dollars." The one who was supposed to deliver the donkey said, "I'm so sorry, I've already spent it." Then the buyer insisted, "Okay, then give me the dead donkey." But the first man said, "What are you going to do with a dead donkey?" The other man said, "It doesn't matter. I'm going to raffle it." "Who is going to buy a raffle ticket for a dead donkey?" "No, I won't tell them that it's dead; I'll raffle it." So this man unloaded the dead donkey in the other man's house and went away. Then, a few days later, the guy who sold the dead donkey found the other man happy, spilling money all over the place. So he asked, "What happened?" The other man said, "I raffled it. Two dollars per ticket and 500 people bought it." So he got

1000 dollars. "Why? Didn't you get into trouble? How did you manage? Didn't anybody get angry with you?" "Yeah, only the guy who won the raffle, so I gave him back his two dollars. [All laugh] 100 dollars to you, two dollars to him; so 898 dollars for me — clear profit."

So that is all that happened, [laughs] and now everybody is depressed. That has been happening for a long time in the world. People have been selling dead donkeys to each other for a long time. [All laugh] Just the volume is becoming bigger. Now it's a big, huge donkey. [Laughs]

The tragedy of lots of people especially in the western world is, they have everything and they have nothing. Depression means somewhere, a certain hopelessness has set in. If you go to some very poor village in India, they are really impoverished but you will see joyful faces because they have hope — tomorrow is going to be better, that hope is there. In affluent societies, that hope is gone; depression has set in. Because everything that can be fixed externally has been fixed; there is food, there is housing, there is clothing, there is everything, but still there is something wrong; they just don't know what. A poor man may simply think, "Tomorrow, if I get a new pair of footwear, everything will be fine." If he gets a new pair of footwear, he will walk like a king with great joy on his face because he has hope. There, the outside is not yet fixed. In affluent societies, the outside is fixed, but the inside is not fixed; there is hopelessness and depression. First we must fix the inside, then work on the outside and the world would be beautiful.

What we call as a spiritual process is just that: taking care of the subjectivity of who you are, not just fixing the objective aspects of your life. If that is not taken care of, you will have everything and you will have nothing.

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