

- To attain happiness one should set aside envy and vanity and should rather improve his own talents without comparing himself with others.

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

Ambition is not wrong. Success is not undesirable. Possessions are not evil in themselves. But the idolatry of these things transforms them into poison for the soul.

What is wrong today is that men and women are so consumed with the idols of power and money that there is a vacuum left in their souls — no room for ideas and ideals, for the things that really make us human. We have come to compete in a marathon race which brings with it neither peace nor poise but ragged nerves, elevated blood pressures, ulcerated stomachs, insecurity-haunted spirits.

To treat this problem, we must understand it. Why is it that so many men and women seem never satisfied with what they have, even though they have enough for lifetime comfort and luxury?

The answer is to be found in two places — in some un-

conscious childhood compulsion or some very conscious competitive comparativeness which ruins inner serenity.

Some people think they are competing with their next-door neighbor or their business rival, but that is just an illusion. They are really going through life trying to get even with an older or a stronger brother or some relative to whom they felt inferior in childhood.

There are many actually successful people always eaten away by a vague envy, or an insecure restlessness, driving them on with insatiable ambition. Why? They do not realize it, but their turbulent and anxious competitiveness proves, on analysis, to be merely a battle with the long-forgotten ghosts of childhood. They are all the time trying to catch up with an older brother or a seemingly omnipotent father.

These people sometimes kill themselves to achieve

money and success, not for their own sake, but as weapons of vengeance against those who made them feel weak once upon a time. Money more often than we suspect is the sword and the weapon with which to pay off old scores.

The first sense of perspective that can come will come if we learn that the excessive ambition, with which we make ourselves unhappy, oftentimes is a needless remnant from childhood. We no longer have to prove ourselves, as we once did, in competition with members of our family circle in childhood. We can come to realize that many of our goals are merely borrowed goals — then the hectic pursuit for financial dominance can give way to a wise quest for economic security as one of the valid aims of life.

We must also rid ourselves of that competitive comparison which is present in every community in America today. How many torment themselves and their families because they constantly measure themselves by the yardsticks of others!

A man may have a home, possessions, a charming family, and yet find all these things ashy to his taste because he has been outstripped in the marathon race by some other runners to the golden tape line. It isn't that he does not possess enough for his wants, but that others possess more. It is the "more" that haunts him, makes him deprecate himself and devalue his real achievements. This is the cancer eating away both at Jewish and Christian serenity and human perspective.

What, then, should we do in order to gain a new perspective in this materialistic era? We should define success in wiser terms.

Everyone needs status. Everyone requires security. The fulfillment of ambition is good if it is an ambition that does not destroy us or our neighbors. There has to come a time when a man or a woman says: "I am no longer going to be interested in how much power or wealth another man or woman possesses so long as I can attain sufficient for the dignity and security of my

family and myself. I am going to break through this vicious circle which always asks the question of life in a comparative degree: "who is bigger", "who is richer", "who has the most?"

"I am going to set my goals for myself rather than borrow them from others. I will strive to achieve a mature attitude to success which is ambition for growth and accomplishment — real accomplishment rather than spurious, decorative, and vanity-filled acquisition.

"I refuse any longer to destroy my peace of mind by striving after wind, and I will judge myself in the scale of goodness and culture as well as in the balance of silver and gold."

Such a man is on the road to true success. He is like

the poet who does not eat himself to pieces because his sonnet is not equal to that of Shakespeare. He is like the musician who does not always despise his little fugue because it lacks the filigree magic of Mozart.

He is like the poet or musician who learns to accept himself and to be happy with his own growth from year to year rather than paralyze his talented ear or his gifted pen by numbing contrast with the giants and the immortals.

The man or woman who declares his declaration of independence from servitude to his neighbors' standards and his society's false values is on the road to inner peace and character. — *By Dr. Joshua Loth Liebman* from an address in CBS.*

MONEY GAB

Some candidates have the gift of gab — but they know money talks, better.