

The need for an unruffled mind

One must always have calm thoughts. Only then can one's mind have equanimity. It is just a question of the discipline of the mind—difficult in the beginning, but once mastered, capable of conquering all troubles and worries. An unruffled mind is very necessary for every aspirant who is marching forward; it is one of the beneficial qualities. Such a mind gives real strength and happiness. Strive to gain it. Though you may fail even in seven attempts, you are sure to succeed in the eighth if you refuse to be dispirited.

The story of Bruce, who drew inspiration from a spider and won the honours of victory at the eighth attempt, is worth remembering. What gave him victory? Peace, the unruffled mind. He did not yield to despair, cowardice, or helplessness; he was calm throughout, and he secured success. Even if calamity befalls, the aspirant should not lose heart. The mind must ever be pure, untarnished, and calm, full of courage. No weeping for the past, no faltering in the performance of the task at hand, that is the mark of an aspirant. Be prepared to face gladly any obstacle in the path. Only such can realize the goal.

Elation at profit, joy, and cheer; dejection at loss and misery—these are natural characteristics common to all mortals. What, then, is the excellence of aspirants? They should not forget the principle: Be vigilant and suffer the inevitable gladly. When difficulties and losses overwhelm you, do not lose heart and precipitate some action, but meditate calmly on how they came to be. Try to discover some simple means of overcoming or avoiding them, in an atmosphere of peace.

When the blow is directed to the head, see that the turban alone gets it—this is the mark of keen intelligence. Peace is essential for this sharpness of intellect. Haste and worry confuse the intelligence. Peace develops all the beneficial characteristics. Even farsightedness grows through peace, and, through that, obstacles and dangers can be anticipated and averted. Aspirants have to pay attention to some subtle points here. They have special problems, viz. their failings, mistakes, drawbacks, etc. The will power can be so purified and strengthened that these failings will never more be recollected. If thoughts run after the failings and begin to dwell on how they came about, when they came about, etc., the aspirants are prone to commit a few more.

Once they have been recognized as failings, why worry about their birth and ancestry? Instead, allow the mind to dwell on good things. Of what profit is it to spend time on things that are no longer necessary? Do not think of them any more. The aspirant will find this attitude useful.

If aspirants are unsuccessful in following one discipline, they have to seek and know the cause of their defeat. This analysis is necessary. They must then see that, in the second stage, the trait is not repeated. They should try their best to guard themselves against it. In such matters, one must be quick and active, like the squirrel. Agility and vigilance must be combined with sharpness of intelligence, too. All this can be earned only through peace.

Steady and undeviating earnestness is very important for avoiding and overcoming conflicts in the mind. One has to be calm and unruffled. Courage, wise counsel, and steadiness—these make the will power (*icchasakthi*) strong and sturdy. Lustre in the face, splendour in the eye, a determined look, a noble voice, large-hearted charity of feeling, unwavering goodness—these are the signposts of a developing and progressing will-force. A mind without agitations, a joyous and unblemished outlook—these are the marks of a person in whom peace has taken root.