

## World peace and individual peace

Everywhere now, one can hear the cry “world peace”, “world peace”, but the number of people who can tell how it can be attained is very small! No one can even picture correctly what exactly peace means. For, if one has acquired true peace and experienced it, the turmoils and confusions of the world will not be cognized at all. You cannot be aware of its absence if you have it. Peace (*santhi*) means, “the giving up of the activities of the senses”. How can such peace be spread and “promoted” by anyone who has gained it? It can be experienced, but it is incapable of being exchanged from person to person. The best that can be done is to show the way to others, to inform others of its sweetness. How can another’s hunger be appeased by your eating your food? The diner alone derives satisfaction from the dinner. Peace is also of such a nature. Each has to earn and experience it for themselves, so that all may have it. Love and fortitude are enough to confer peace. But don’t concentrate on mere outward show; let these virtues saturate your thought, word, and deed. That is also the way to establish world peace.

Certain others declare that prayer can bring about world peace and ask people to pray. Of course, it is good to pray; but peace can never be gained by that alone. Prayer must be united with practice. You should not pray for one thing and practise another. Such prayer is only a means of deception. The words you utter, the deeds you do, the prayers you make must all be directed along the same path. While repeating prayers for world peace, if you cannot patiently put up with others, if you slander others and look down upon them, you yourself will have no peace, you will have turmoil instead! And, with the turmoil, you will have all the attendant sorrow and pain!

Through world peace, individual peace can be cultivated. When food is taken by the hand to the mouth, chewed, and swallowed, the essence spreads to every part of the body; so also, if the hands are engaged in acts promoting peace and the tongue is engaged in prayers for peace, by these two means, the essence of peace will spread into parts of the world, which is but the body of the Lord. The peace of the world is the basis for genuine peace.

Many do not know the meaning of the statement, “The body is the temple (*dehodevalayam*)”. Why did the temple arise? For the Lord worshipped within. If there is no such Lord, it cannot be called a temple. But people’s actions are now all against this plain fact. Now, all worship is being done to the temple, forgetting that the temple is not God. The temple is to be preserved, cleaned, and decorated for the sake of God therein; it should be made a good means of realizing Him. That is all.

Similarly, the body is the temple of the Lord, the form of the *Atma* (*Atma-swarupa*). Forgetting the need for faith in the *Atma*, for the bliss derived from the *Atma*, for the worship of the *Atma*, and for dedication to the *Atma*, people are now immersed in faith in the body, bliss of the body, decoration of the body, and dedication to the body. In spite of everything, the body is evanescent; but through the temple, the Lord can be seen. Through the body, the *Atma* that is within can be realized. That is your main task. Conscious of this, try always to keep watch over the body and protect it. Do not neglect the Lord within; do not hold fast to the unreal, temporary, outer building. Of course, you should not ruin the temple, either; its maintenance is also essential. But never forget that what gives value and purpose to it is the *Atma* within.

Similarly, with world peace (*loka-santhi*) and individual peace (*Atma-santhi*). The temple is world peace; the Lord within is individual peace. World peace is a means to subserve the peace of the individual. The world is the Lord’s mansion. Know it as such. He is moving about in that mansion, in its many rooms. God’s worship can be done well only if the temple is clean and pure. So, engage yourselves in winning the two, peace for the world and

peace for yourselves. Do not ignore the Lord, whose mansion is the world. Without Him, it is a tomb (*savam*), not a temple (*sivam*). If you always remember Him, that is joy and victory.

World peace is the life breath of all beings, so strive ever for that. The Lord can be won only when the sacred motherland is immersed in peace. When nature (*prakriti*) merges in God (*Paramatma*), it is called liberation (*moksha*). So seekers of liberation must yearn for the peace and love of the world as much as they yearn for the love and grace of the highest *Atma*. Without the grace of both the world and the highest *Atma*, the strong and subtle evil of the senses cannot be conquered. That is, the destruction of the mind, the stilling of the agitations of the mind, cannot be done. Therefore, everyone's chief duty is to achieve peace.

Many argue that self-respect is peace. But they confuse self-respect with the respect given to the inferior vehicle, the body, or to one's status. That is respect for the person, not respect for the self (*Atma*). Respect given to the Lord within, the *Atma*, is real self-respect; nothing else is. Truth is *Atma*; pure love is *Atma*; the Lord is *Atma*; selfless service is *Atma*. Respect for these is self-respect. Of course, peace is of this type and not of the other types. Keeping the all-merciful Lord, the personification of truth, the Lord whose very nature is love, always in memory, that is real Self-respect. To earn this self-respect, one has to cast aside as worthless the respect that the world accords to wealth and status, to ignore praise and blame, derision and flattery, and to engage in spiritual practice with full faith in truth and the Lord. That is real peace, pure peace, eternal peace.

There is no status higher than that of the Lord; no embodiment of His higher than truth; no beauty of His higher than peace. No, not even in all the fourteen worlds (*lokas*) and in the entire Creation. Now, in the past, and for ever and ever. This is the truth, and I repeat it. Truth enveloped in the darkest illusion (*maya*) will still shine brilliantly; however strongly you may imprison it in darkness, its effulgence cannot be suppressed.

Truth can never die; untruth can never live. You must all get firmly established in this belief.

Of what can one say, "This is permanent"? How can one ever believe that anything is permanent? Truly, when one sees from birth all things changing, one's experience itself undergoing various transformations and the atmosphere in which one grows constantly being transformed, when one grows up in an environment that has no permanency, how can that belief arise? Observing all this, it can be declared without any fear of contradiction that this is an unreal world. For if this is real, how can it change? All that suffers change is unreal; reality alone is changeless, stable, permanent. The changeless, stable, permanent entity is the *Atma* alone; that alone is real, that alone is permanent. The *Atma* is the form of the Lord; it is the power of the Lord.