

## The Reflection of Peace

Everybody wants peace, everywhere you go. Not long ago, I was talking to some prisoners, "Do you want peace?" "Of course!" You can speak to people in the Army, "Do you want peace?" "Yes, of course!" So everybody wants peace. And then, you ask, "What is peace?" And here, you get a surprising answer. Everybody has their own version of peace and everybody looks at it from a totally different angle.

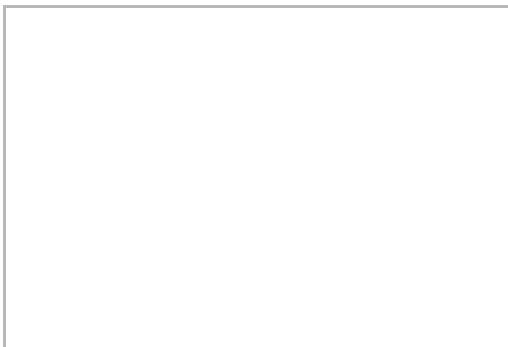
The other day, I was talking to my niece, and she said, "Oh, I love that color." I said, "You love that color? Or you like that color?" She said, "What's the difference?" I said, "There's a very big difference. 'Like' is really what you want to say, and you can emphasize that, 'I like that very much,' but love is a little more interactive than that color can provide you."



And in the same way, when it is quiet, people say, "Oh, it is so peaceful." All it is, is quiet. People think the absence of war is peace. They have their ideas of peace. There are people who think peace is when everybody walks very slowly, wears flowing robes with flowers in their hair, and everybody is greeted by the peace symbol. You don't shake hands anymore. Perhaps you just touch two fingers and say, "Peace." Well there's no limit to it, is there?

Let me tell you a story. Once there was a queen, and she had a very beautiful necklace. One day, after her bath, she was on the balcony drying her hair. She took her necklace off and put it on a hook. A crow was flying by, saw the necklace shining in the sun, and flew off with it. But the crow dropped it in a tree, and it got caught on one of the branches.

Beneath the tree was a filthy dirty river. Now, when the queen reached for her necklace and found it missing, she threw a tantrum. "Who stole it?" She had everybody searching for it. Nobody could find it. She said to the king, "If I don't find my necklace, I'm never going to eat again." The king was very concerned and sent all his army and others looking for it—but nobody could find it. So the king finally made an announcement. "Whoever finds the necklace gets half of my kingdom." Then people started seriously looking.



One day, a general walked by the tree and saw the necklace in the river below it. He immediately jumped into the sewage-filled river because he wanted half the kingdom. The minister saw the general jumping in, and he, too, saw the necklace, and jumped in. The king saw his general *and* his minister looking for it, jumped in, and now all three were fishing for it. By then, more soldiers and the villagers had come, and they all jumped in.

Finally, somebody with a little wisdom said, "What are you doing? The necklace is not down there; it is up there. You're jumping after the reflection." And so the king said, "Since you found it, half of the kingdom is yours." And the wise man said, "I don't need your kingdom. You keep it."

Why did I tell this story? Because that's what we do, too. We just see the reflection of peace. It's nice when there are not wars, but that's a reflection of peace—that's not peace in itself. Peace *begins* with every single human being on the face of this earth. That's the necklace. Everything else is a reflection.

When the heart is full, when the human being is full, then automatically, the person is not in duality, is not in questions, but in answers. Not the complicated, but the simple—that we are. This is what we favor; this is who we need to be. This is our nature. When we are in that equilibrium where our hearts are full, our true nature shines. And the true nature that we have is beautiful. It's real. And *that* is the place of true peace. We look for it far away when it is so close to us.

Even in the most hopeless of situations, there is hope. This is who we are. There is a resilience, there is an understanding, there is a strength to every human being. And that is the strength to march towards the gateways of inner peace.

**Maharaji**