

The Company You Keep



A fifteenth century Indian saint used to talk about how all the trees that grow around a sandalwood tree begin to smell like sandalwood. They aren't sandalwood, but as they grow, they take on that beautiful scent.

So is it possible that if I keep the company of the most beautiful thing in my life, I will begin to take on its characteristics? Yes. That's the significance of the analogy.

If I keep the company of ignorance, I will take on the characteristics of ignorance, but if I keep the company of clarity, I will begin to take on the qualities of clarity. If I want to have the beautiful aroma of understanding, I need to keep the company of understanding.

If this is even remotely possible, what a possibility exists for me in my life!

Kabir, another fifteenth century saint, says, "We are like cloth that is washed with the soap of clarity again and again until it sparkles. You need to sparkle, to shine, because that is your potential." You are not sandalwood, and you won't become sandalwood. But can you take on some of the beautiful, beautiful aroma of sandalwood? Yes. Therein lies your hope.

I hear from people around the world. Many are in difficult situations. Some are in prison, some with life sentences. My message goes to them, and it's an incredible dynamic, because what hope can they have? Even in that situation where there is so little hope, they are looking for hope. They are looking for joy. They are looking for clarity!

We become busy doing so many things that we think are important. But listen to the human being that you are. What is your truest need? Your truest need is to be content.

We go along the highway of life saying, "I need this, I need this, I need this." Some of it is what we think, and some of it comes from other people telling us, "This is what you need this is what you need, this is what you need."

I have heard people rave about Krispy Crème donuts. I hear that the bakeries have a light that goes on when the donuts are fresh out of the oven and that people actually slow down as they pass by the shop in case the light will go on. And if it does, no matter what they are doing, people will stop to get a donut and satisfy that desire for something delicious.



It's tempting. Sometimes the thought comes to me, "Hmm, maybe I should try a Krispy Crème donut." Then I realize, "I don't want to." Does it matter? No.

But everything in this journey of life *does* matter: what is mine and what is not mine; what I *know* and what I believe; my thirst and the thirst that has been superimposed upon me. This is a big subject. The way we talk, the way we think, the way we imagine things is directly influenced by the society around us, not us.

What is our true thirst? Who are *you*? Are you just a puppet, built with the papier-mâché of concepts—one layer of paper over another and another? Or are you something more than that? Pray that the answer is "Yes," because if the answer is "No," we're in trouble.

The good news is that we each have a thirst. We each have a quest to be fulfilled, to be in peace. You may not be aware of it, but deep down you know about it.

Keep the right company, and you will soak in their traits. Keep the company of light, and you will begin to glow. This is the transformation of a human being becoming a true "*be-ing*." Simple, conscious of existence.

There is a beauty within you that you can be in touch with for the rest of your life. It's ageless. Timeless. Beautiful. Simple. There aren't too many things like that in this world. If you want to keep the company of that, I can help.

Prem Rawat