

## **“You find peace not by looking, but by giving.”**

-Debasish Mridha

There are numerous books, quotes and pieces of advice floating across the internet about peace. During the pandemic, while facing unforeseen hardships, many of us have latched on to this word. What is peace, really? Is it the feeling of contentment? Is it relief? Or is it merely a short respite? ‘Peace’ may mean differently to different people, but we all are looking for it just the same.

It is wonderous how we all search for peace in different ways. While some of us look for it within our own minds and souls, others look for it in their surroundings. Humans have found various methods to do this. Exercise, meditation, yoga, intellectual hobbies, or even daydreaming have proved to be a way of connecting with ourselves. Whether these have scientific basis or not, these activities bring people joy, or at least hope, that they are working towards a peaceful life. They feel that they are creating a bond between themselves and their surroundings, that they are in control. This bond is supposed to bring balance to their lives and, further down the road, they hope it will bring them peace.

This makes me wonder, there are so many people looking for peace, who have been doing so for a long time, but have not found it. Why is it so? Is looking for peace futile? Certainly not; why would the world pursue something so passionately if it is fruitless? There are people who do lead peaceful lives. They may or may not have used the same methods as us. How come they found peace, and we haven’t?

I have come across such people in my life- teachers, family members and friends- who seem to have found this harmony, and continue to radiate it to everyone in their lives. When asked about it,

they gave me different answers as to how they found peace, what it means to them, and what changes it brought in their life. One of them informed me that peace is something we create, within ourselves as well as in the society. Another one told me that they found peace by following a schedule that helps them maintain a calm life- reading a chapter of a book every day, going to the park twice a week, helping out at an orphanage every weekend, visiting family or friends once a month, etc. All of them put forward varying views, suggestions and even offered to help me create peace in my life.

Being the organizer that I am, I grouped all their thoughts and opinions together in an attempt to understand and single out a perfect method to find peace. But amidst the chaos, I found only one aspect of their lives that united these people. It was the fact that they all tried to help me. Instead of boasting about the calm and quiet of their lives, or asking me to stop bothering them, they helped. That's when I realized, maybe peace isn't something we have to 'look' for. Maybe, if we keep being good and serving others, peace will find us.

There's a Chinese proverb that says, "If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody." This means that we find happiness by making others happy. And isn't happiness proportional to peace? By serving others, by giving, by committing, we can help improve others' lives, and in the process, improve our own life as well.

At first, I believed that this will be tough. Always helping others, constantly being selfless, might cause more disquiet in my mind. There's a limit to everything, similarly there must be a limit to giving. We cannot expect to live a life of service with no time for ourselves. But once I put this into practise, I realized that being selfless is not the burden I believed

it to be. Helping others is more satisfying than I had expected. More importantly, I understood that serving does not mean living for others, rather it means that you have so much love and goodness inside of you that you can share it. When you see a person smile because of something you did, when someone thanks you for your help, you find the balance in your life you had been looking for. By helping and being helped, we create a society filled with peace, love and tranquillity.

Serving others is not an easy feat. Being a teenager still in school, I can't expect to perform huge acts of charity. But there is joy to be found in the little aspects of life. My mother's smile when I help her out in the kitchen without her asking me to, the relief on my friend's face when I explain an academic concept they didn't understand, these small events bring me joy. Oceans are formed of individual drops. Similarly, a peaceful life is formed of these small moments, isn't it?

Helping someone is rewarding in itself, but going out of our way to make things easier for others is even more fulfilling. It might not always be possible to make everything good for our fellow humans. Sometimes the most we can do is extend a hand for them to hold on, provide a shoulder to cry on or offer words of consolation, and that is enough. In other words, give all you can, even if it is just moral support. The knowledge that you did your best, the fact that someone found support in you, will be enough to bring you peace. It will also ensure that when you have a tough time, you will not have to face it alone.

Adam Grant, an American psychologist, says that selfless giving in the absence of self-preservation motives can become overwhelming. He suggests that while we should be more willing to give than we are to receive, we should not forget about our own needs and hopes. Always prioritizing others over yourself will lead to resentment. And peace cannot coexist in a heart filled with bitterness. So, it is essential that we

remember ourselves and our limits. We can help others only if we are in a good state of mind, which is not possible if we do not practise self-care.

So, it can be concluded that if your daily activities are failing in bringing you peace, it is time to switch over to a new method- not chasing peace, but waiting for it to find you. Help others, give what you can, and take care, of others as well as of yourself. As we learn to give, we can expect the warm entrance of peace into our lives and hope that we can spread this calmness to others as well. Thus, I can agree that Sir Debasish Mridha has aptly said “You find peace not by looking, but by giving.”