

The Good Heart - Swami Omkarananda

The Good Heart

The good heart is the greatest treasure of the human individual. It understands, loves, forgives, and is cheerful. It has nobility, generosity, and embodies in itself faith, devotion, trust, and several other life-enriching and illuminating virtues.

With a good heart, the poor man is a very rich man; without it, a rich man is a very poor man.

With it, a doctor, or a priest, is a saint; without it, a political or religious leader, is a creator of battles, discord and unhappiness.

With a good heart, the mother is a queen. Without it, a queen is the mother of the misfortune of millions of people. With it, a woman is a goddess, and therefore, really beautiful. Without it, life is a vale of gloom and despair.

The good heart can make a Heaven of hell, peace of war, joy of misery. It is the maker of the perpetual sunshine. Just see what one of the world's greatest poets, William Shakespeare, has to say with regard to a good heart, in his work, Henry V, 5,2:

'A good leg will fall, a straight back will stoop, a black beard will turn white, a curled pate will grow a bald, a fair face will wither, a full eye will wax hollow; but a good heart is the sun and the moon; or, rather the sun and not the moon; for, it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly.'

What is Good?

Good is anything that grants you health, strength, peace of mind, happiness and intense God-Consciousness.

All that develops your abilities, capacities, excellences, all that gives you mastery over yourself and your environment, conditions, circumstances, and liberates you from every form of slavery, – slavery to urges and impulses from within you, or to objects and things outside you, – is good.

When something is done, if there ensues as our personal inner experience, joy, exhilaration or satisfaction, we can understand that we are doing a right action; but, if there arises in us a sense of uneasiness, fear, shame, doubt, or pricking of conscience, we must recognize it to be a wrong action.

Ultimately, all actions which contribute to our inner moral and spiritual development and take us closer to our experience of God and our achievement of Divine Perfection, are the best.

Evil Cannot Subsist

Evil cannot subsist, the moment you do not fear it, stop paying attention to it, withdraw your will from it, and refuse to accept it. The moment you are occupied with something absolutely positive and grand, with something that promotes your development, evil loses its power.

With the all-conquering positive attitude, you are able to meet any situation in life, any bad person, any evil condition, or experience, find much peace, joy, power, and gain the capacity to make a true heaven of your life.

The Test of Our Goodness

To anything or any person, there are always more than a dozen views or attitudes that we can take. Select that view or that attitude which is the best. The choice we make bears witness to the stage of our development and evolution. The better the attitude, the quicker would be our progress to the next stage of development. And the attitude we take settles our own greatness or meanness.

The nobler the nature, the nobler the attitude. Nothing tests our goodness so well, or publicizes our nature so ably, as the view or the attitude we adopt from among the many possible views and attitudes to anything or any person.

How to Do the Right Thing

It is not right to do a thing that

- a) troubles your conscience, causes regret and any form of fear in you; or
- b) is disapproved by the voice of that which is best and highest in you; or
- c) disturbs your mental peace; or
- d) weakens your nerves, takes away power from your will, and not contributes to your real and lasting happiness; or
- e) does not serve the interest of your mental, moral, cultural, spiritual growth and development.

Thanks to Your Magnanimity

Moralists must discern more in a magnanimous nature, even as the psychologists of human behaviour should widen their insights into those extra-ethical processes that engender the temper marked by modesty, by a noble restraint, a gracious reticence, a socially pleasing self-restraint. In action, expression and result, modesty is markedly

individualistic, and magnanimity is more distinctly social, and cannot be manifest except as such, and what is more, on a deeper analysis, is seen to be supra-social in resources, nature and aims.

Magnanimity is the largeness of heart and greatness of soul. It is generosity in sentiment and nobility in conduct. A magnanimous person derives the power of his strong and attractive personality from total freedom from all kinds of meanness, selfishness, vindictive nature. Broad in outlook, liberal in views, lofty in character, the magnanimous person is an embodiment of good-will, self-sacrifice, courage, and moral uprightness.

Sympathy

Callousness finds a congenial soil in the heart that lacks, or loses, the capacity for sympathetic sensitiveness. If the spiritual individual, for purposes of a defence, and development, of the humaneness of humanity, is hard on anything, he is hard only on the granite heart. Scholars have always laboured under a tendency that permits the pre-eminence of the economist in Adam Smith, to obscure the importance of the ardent ethical theorist in him. Author of 'The Wealth of Nations', he is also the author of 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments', a work which preceded the former, furnished his name with a firm foundation for reputation, and contributed not unsubstantially to the studies in the science of ethics. In that book, Adam Smith seeks to make sympathy the fundamental fact of moral consciousness.

With the spiritual individual, sympathy is a universal solvent, and his statements, filled with sweetness, on this altruistic quality are always most eloquent.

To the minds that are inclined to perceive, or discover, or to comment upon, the possibilities, or actualities, of the relations in ethics, between theory and practice, it will be significant to note that the spiritual individual is seen, in his own life, to set no limits to his sympathies, and that their power is proved by the fact that they are accompanied by acts of loving kindness which are unnumbered.

Total Conquest of Anger Through Increasing Development of Inner Qualities

Goodness grants a serene mind and a cheerful spirit, which are, – better judgement argues – far more worthy of pursuit than all the pleasures in the world's greatest pleasure resorts. Where anger breaks things and suffers losses, patience bears things and wins victories. Impatience leads to loss of temper. Be patient like the earth, gentle like the breeze, forbearing like the tree, fragrant like the rose, sweet like the honey. Herein lies the road to a rich, grand, compelling and inspiring personality as also to the joy and the perfection of living.

Your Nobility and Royal Blood

The love that looks for a return, is a beggar. The kind act that turns back to see for a reward, is a shop-keeper who gives you nothing unless you pay for it. The person who stops praying because it was not answered, never knows what prayer is. The wife that guards herself in faithfulness, and suspiciously watches the faithfulness of her husband, lacks real love, cannot be faithful for long, and will make of the family a discordant phenomenon. To give, give more, freely, almost blindly, and not expect or ask, – this is real nobility. To take upon oneself suffering, in order to relieve others of suffering, – this is the spirit of the bearer of the real royal blood.

The Religion of Your Heart

That is Religion,
where the hands build,
where the heart loves,
where the life grows,
where the lips smile in goodness,
where the mind thinks noble thoughts,
where truth and honest labour produce a heaven of peace,
where a song is made of home,
where the soul prays,
where faith knows the Omnipresent God,
where man is in communion with the infinite Wisdom, Beauty, Light of God.

Such a religion is the religion of goodness in the heart of everyman made in the image of God.

– Swami Omkarananda