

Where Peace Begins

When I travel and speak to people, my message is about the very real thing that peace is and the possibility of feeling that peace in this life every single day. So where does it begin? Let me tell you a little story that might put it in perspective.

One day a tourist arrived in a very remote village where the people were very simple. The next morning he put his mirror on the wall to shave, but forgot to take it down. Later on, an elderly villager with gray hair, bright eyes, and a beautiful shining face came across the mirror on the wall. He had never seen himself before, and so when he saw his reflection in the mirror, he was mesmerized. "Today," he thought, "I have seen the face of God." He left completely happy.

Then came a beautiful young girl. When she saw herself in the mirror, she was taken aback. "I have seen the most beautiful woman on earth, and when I grow up, that's how I want to look!" Next, a man came along who had lost his father. When he looked in the mirror, he said, "Oh, my God, I saw my father again!" And he took the mirror with him.

Now, these three people who had seen themselves in the mirror started to get very upset. They started arguing, and before long, fights broke out throughout the entire village. Soon everybody was unhappy because whoever looked in the mirror saw something they liked, and they all wanted the mirror for themselves.

Finally, a wise man happened to come along and asked, "Why are you fighting?" One said the mirror showed him God, another that it showed him his father, and others told him what they had seen. So he called for this magical thing, and when he saw it, he smiled, "Do you know what this is? This is a mirror."



He called the old man and said, "You did not see the face of God. You saw yourself."

He called the young girl and said, "You did not see the most beautiful woman—you saw yourself." He called the young man and said, "You thought you saw your father because now you look like him. But it was you." One by one, he called everyone and he said, "Look. What you see in this mirror, what you like in this mirror, is not the mirror. It's you!"

How does this story relate to peace? Peace begins with us. Try to understand where the idea of peace came from. Was it somebody's invention? Was there some intelligent person walking along high mountains somewhere who said, "Peace. That's a good idea. Let's have peace." No.

As long as there have been human beings, there has been a desire for peace. The need for peace comes from within. Peace is the desire of the heart. It is as simple as the coming and going of breath. The movie of life begins with the first breath. And we all know how the movie ends.

We are fascinated by the in-between part. This is what we live for: "Who am I? What am I? What have I accomplished?" That's all fine, but never, ever forget the importance of where it began and where it ends.

Within you lies the possibility of peace. Peace does not belong to any nation, any society, or any religion. Peace belongs to people like you and me. Where will peace manifest? It will manifest in the cathedral of the heart. That is the only place where peace is welcomed. It is people like you and me who want peace and welcome it in our lives. It is here in *our* existence that peace resides.

Maharaji