

# The Simplicity of Love

Text from Think on These Things

*A man in sannyasi robes used to come every morning to gather flowers from the trees in a nearby garden. His hands and his eyes were greedy for the flowers, and he picked every flower within reach. He was evidently going to offer them to some dead image, a thing made of stone. The flowers were lovely, tender things just opening to the morning sun, and he did not pick them gently, but tore them off, viciously stripping the garden of whatever it held. His god demanded lots of flowers - lots of living things for a dead stone image.*

*Another day I watched some young boys picking flowers. They were not going to offer the flowers to any god; they were talking and thoughtlessly tearing off the flowers, and throwing them away. Have you ever observed yourself doing this? I wonder why you do it? As you walk along you will break off a twig, strip away the leaves and drop it. Have you not noticed this thoughtless action on your part? The grown-up people do it too; they have their own way of expressing their inner brutality, this appalling disrespect for living things. They talk about harmlessness, yet everything they do is destructive.*

*One can understand your picking a flower or two to put in your hair, or to give to somebody with love; but why do you just tear at the flowers? The grown-ups are ugly in their ambition; they butcher each other in their wars and corrupt each other with money. They have their own forms of hideous action; and apparently the young people here as elsewhere are following in their footsteps. The other day I was out walking with one of the boys and we came upon a stone lying on the road. When I removed it, he asked, "Why did you do that?" What does this indicate? Is it not a lack of consideration, respect? You show respect out of fear, do you not? You promptly jump up when an elder comes into the room, but that is not respect, it is fear; because if you really felt respect you would not destroy the flowers, you would remove a stone from the road, you would tend the trees and help to take care of the garden. But, whether we are old or young, we have no real feeling of consideration. Why? Is it that we don't know what love is?*

*Do you understand what simple love is? Not the complexity of sexual love or the love of God, but just love, being tender, really gentle in one's whole approach to all things. At home you don't always get this simple love, your parents are too busy; at home there may be no real affection, no tenderness, so you come here with that background of insensitivity and you behave like everybody else. And how is one to bring about sensitivity? Not that you must have regulations against picking the flowers, for when you are merely restrained by regulations, there is fear. But how is there to come into being this sensitivity which makes you alert not to do any harm to people, to animals, to flowers?*

*Are you interested in all this? You should be. If you are not interested in being sensitive, you might as well be dead - and most people are. Though they eat three meals a day, have jobs, procreate children, drive cars, wear fine clothes, most people are as good as dead.*

*Do you know what it means to be sensitive? It means, surely, to have a tender feeling for things: to see an animal suffering and do something about it, to remove a stone from the path because so many bare feet walk there, to pick up a nail on the road because somebody's car might get a puncture. To be sensitive is to feel for people, for birds, for flowers, for trees - not because they are yours, but just because you are awake to the extraordinary beauty of things. And how is this sensitivity to be brought about?*

*The moment you are deeply sensitive you naturally do not pluck the flowers; there is a spontaneous desire not to destroy things, not to hurt people, which means having real respect, love. To love is*

*the most important thing in life. But what do I mean by love? When you love someone because that person loves you in return, surely that is not love. To love is to have this extraordinary feeling of affection without asking anything in return. You may be very clever, you may pass all your examinations, get a doctorate and achieve a high position, but if you have not this sensitivity, this feeling of simple love, your heart will be empty and you will be miserable for the rest of your life. So it is very important for the heart to be filled with this sense of affection, for then you won't destroy, you won't be ruthless, and there won't be wars any more. Then you will be happy human beings; and because you are happy you won't pray, you won't seek God, for that happiness itself is God.*

*Now, how is this love to come into being? Surely, love must begin with the educator, the teacher. If, besides giving you information about mathematics, geography, or history, the teacher has this feeling of love in his heart and talks about it, if he spontaneously removes the stone from the road and does not allow the servant to do all the dirty jobs; if in his conversation, in his work, in his play, when he eats, when he is with you or by himself, he feels this strange thing and points it out to you often, then you also will know what it is to love.*

*You may have a clear skin, a nice face, you may wear a lovely sari or be a great athlete, but without love in your heart you are an ugly human being, ugly beyond measure; and when you love, whether your face is homely or beautiful, it has a radiance. To love is the greatest thing in life; and it is very important to talk about love, to feel it, to nourish it, to treasure it, otherwise it is soon dissipated, for the world is very brutal. If while you are young you don't feel love, if you don't look with love at people, at animals, at flowers, when you grow up you will find that your life is empty; you will be very lonely, and the dark shadows of fear will follow you always. But the moment you have in your heart this extraordinary thing called love and feel the depth, the delight, the ecstasy of it, you will discover that for you the world is transformed.*