

All the good things in life is Free

“The sun shines and warms and lights us and we have no curiosity to know why this is so; but we ask the reason of all evil, of pain, and hunger, and mosquitoes and silly people.” This is a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, the famous American thinker.

What does Emerson mean?

Well, we never ask: “Why there is happiness, goodness, peace and joy in this world?” We take these good things in life for granted. We never wonder “Why am I healthy? Why do I have a nice family?” etc.

But we often ask: “Why is there sorrow, evil, unrest and misery in this world?” We consider these negative things as proof that the world is evil per se, that there is no good God!. We never think that there are also so many nice things in this world.

And Henry David Thoreau, Emerson’s friend, said “All good things are wild and free!” Indeed, the nicest things in life are all for free! The air we breathe, the water we drink, the sunlight we bask in, the cool breeze carrying the scent of many a flower, the laughter of a child, the beauty of sunrises and sunsets, the glorious sight of the stars.... these are all more or less free for all of us. We do not have to pay for these great luxuries that life and nature offer us. But we rarely appreciate these gifts consciously.

We have become insensitive as a breed of men. We complain of every small inconvenience. We complain when the food served with love is a bit less tasty than usual, when it rains for the third day unabated, when the postman delivers a letter to you a day late, when an unexpected traffic jam causes delay in your reaching office, and so on, for all the silly things in the world.

Indeed, as William Wordsworth sang, “The world is too much with us”.

We have lost the innocence which enables us to see “a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower”, as lamented by another poet, William Blake.

We have to learn to appreciate the good things in life.

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