

Meditation On Time



Preface:

Though the poems presented here did not take more than six months to write, they have been with me, in a way, all my life.

In a lonely childhood, filled with longing, fantasy, and wonder, I picked up the thread of an awesome and mystifying question: what is life? Throughout my life I have been inhibited, by my experience and awareness, to discuss it with anyone. Self-inquiry and reasoning in general have not been strong points with mankind. The inquiry has remained persistent and pervasive throughout my life, mushrooming into a religion-like faith, and finally crystallizing into an intellectual meditation.

Poetry is the super-distillation of human experience made to discover and create beauty in life. It is also the expressway to truth. It is the most human and sublime of the written expressions. Man is born with poetry, but it is generally suppressed by the ways of the world and the struggle to survive. It is a man of imagination who keeps it alive, even at the cost of pain, to enrich his existence. Poetry is the hope of settling calm in the midst of a turbulent storm, the courage of conviction when the world is against one's cause, the dance of the imagination when in the lap of nature, rapture at the point near the end of the road to the truth, and the beating of the heart when enwrapped in loneliness. It is the product of human reason but not bound by it.

The industrial-commercial era has squeezed out a good bit of poetry in human life. With the weakening of the family, rise of individualism, cut-throat economic loneliness, gaining of chemically stimulated euphoria, inhuman pace of living, unbridled commercialism, and the spread of nihilism, human life has been rendered desolate and barren, with a lot of creative comforts, but stuffed with hollowness and reeking with selfish cynicism. Man has gained the political and economic bill of rights (though not in every country) but has lost his soul's inner bill of rights. (The two do not have to be mutually exclusive.)

But poetry of human heart can not remain frozen too long. It is the necessary ingredient for the survival of mind, as breath is for body. An age is known for quality of poetry it has created. Beyond the problems of food, disease, and oil, mankind is dependent on the quality of mental life its members live. Poetry is the invisible compass of mankind.

These poems are an excerpt from a longer, unfinished, and an unfinishable poem called Life. Please take them as a crude distillation of a long, hard, and pained life; a life-long quest for the essence of life; an attempt to break through insane barriers and bypass vulgarities of worldly life; to touch the shores of freedom and truth.

A poem is an attempt to reach the essence of the object of its attention; to grasp reality and feel the pulse of eternity.

As a young boy roaming the streets of Srinagar (Kashmir, India), I had dreamt of learning the mystery of universe. I grew up to realize that that quest is unfinishable, but in the process I have learnt the power of dreams and poetry, the nature of human nature, and the meditation on nature.

M. Kaul

Suffern, New York

3.16.97