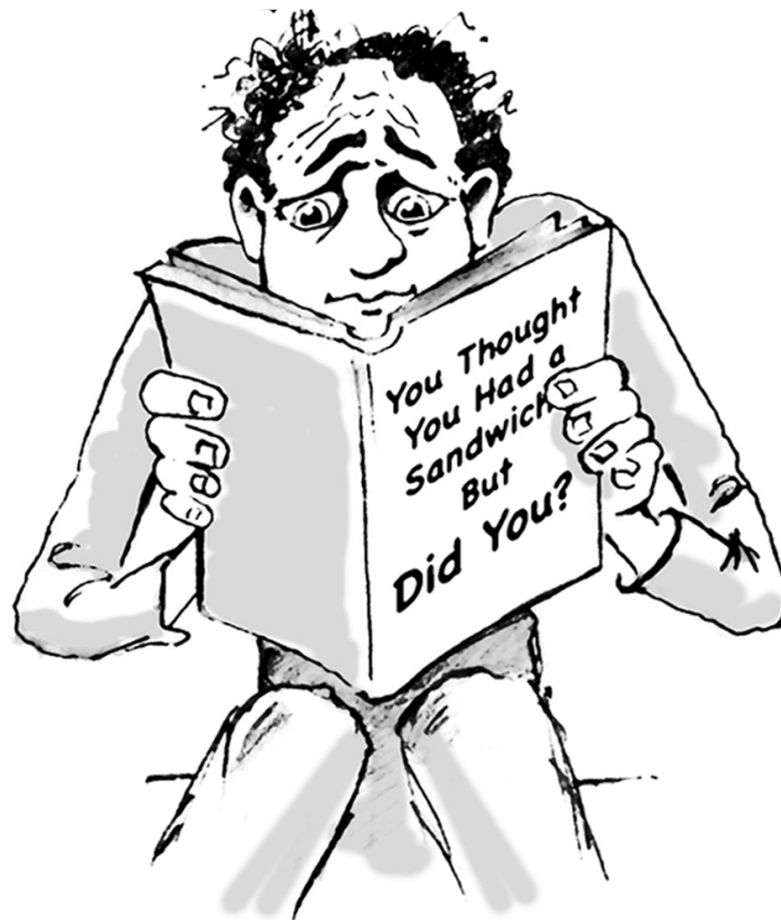


YOU
THOUGHT
YOU HAD A
SANDWICH

by Prem Rawat



IT IS AMAZING how we take all that is good in our lives and save it for last. Who came up with this idea? Maybe it started with desserts. I can understand that. Maybe some food tastes so bad that a “sugar hit” at the end is what you really need. But life is not like that. Life is a beautiful journey that takes place every single day.

It is dancing. It is calling you. It wants you to participate in it — to actively accept every gift that is placed before you every single day. Every moment. Without the judgment of good and bad. Without the judgment of right and wrong.

Recently, I was driving with someone who kept getting lost, even though the car had a navigation system. The next day, he said, “Oh, yesterday was a disaster!” I said, “No, it wasn’t.” Why wasn’t it a disaster? Because he was alive. How easy it is to judge all the things that happen in our lives and throw away the value of breath, throw away the value of existence.

THE DIFFERENCE

Not too long ago, I went to a funeral. I had known that the time was coming close for this person, so before I left on a very long trip, I went to see him. I wanted to say good-bye while he was alive, because I really don’t think you can say good-bye after someone’s gone.

So I went to the funeral, and in a way, it was shocking. It wasn’t this person leaving that was shocking, because that’s what’s going to happen to everyone. But at the cemetery, it was very obvious what all the headstones were representing: “Here lies a person.”

I had to stop and reflect: This isn’t just a headstone. This is a history. This was a person who was once alive. Good things happened and bad things happened. There were rough days and smooth days, confusing days and clear days. There were days that went this person’s way and days that seemed to oppose him. A journey was made.

I asked myself, What is the difference between this headstone and me? One day, I, too, will be

reduced to a headstone, with a name, a couple of dates, and a few messages chiseled out — and that’s it. But am I not more than that?

There’s no one like you.

And there will be no one like you after you’re gone.

Isn’t life more than that? Doesn’t existence itself rise above all the things that happen — the goods, the bads, the rights, the wrongs, the judgments? Isn’t it a kindness to be alive? Isn’t this a special moment — this moment called *being alive*? How aware are you of it? How much do you recognize it?

What are you concerned about today? Are you the least bit concerned about something that is finer than the finest hair — something that cannot be measured in width, height, or weight and that is the only difference between you and that headstone? Do you know what it is? It’s the breath that comes in and out.

You cannot take a picture of it. You cannot paint it. You cannot make a statue of it. You cannot give it, buy it, trade it, or sell it. And it makes all the difference between you and your headstone. And thanks to this gift of breath, you have the capability to understand, to question, to reason, to observe, and to learn.

IDEAS OF PEACE

Are you saving the possibility of being in peace for last? If you are, time out. A change of plans is required. That is not what you want to put off till the end. You need to feel peace every day that you are alive.

I go around the world talking about peace, and I have understood one thing: People don't even know what it is. Nobody has a clue.

Some people think that peace is when people put flowers in their hair and dance in the streets, and when they meet, they hug each other. When they go to a restaurant, if the waiter was good to them, then after they're finished, they pay the bill and give the waiter a hug — no more tips. That is their concept of peace.

Other people think peace is when nobody will fight with anybody else. If your neighbor does something annoying, you'll just sit there and pout. And some people think that peace will be the day the trains stop running and dogs stop barking.

REAL PEACE

The peace I am talking about is the peace without which we would lose the very fabric of who we are, the peace that dances in the heart of everyone. The reality. The beauty. The joy. The true peace — not an absence of something, but the very presence of something. That is what is alive. That is what is possible. Even in the middle of a war, a person can experience this peace.

Some people think freedom is when you get away from your house for the weekend. To teenagers, freedom is when they leave their parents' house. Freedom to parents is when their teenagers actually *leave*. Not just threaten to leave, but actually leave. Is that freedom?

Freedom from my troubles. Is that freedom?
Freedom from my concerns. Is that freedom?
Freedom from my responsibilities. Is that freedom?



Some people think peace is being on top of a mountain overlooking a beautiful lake at sunset. When you hear crickets, you say, "Oh, it's so peaceful." Next time you see a cricket, don't just shoo it away — it's associated with peace. Of course, if that same cricket ends up in your bedroom, then peace is over; you declare war on it. And it is not a question of "wanted: dead or alive." You want it dead!

There is a freedom that can be felt even in a prison. That's the freedom that no one can take away from you. Peace that cannot be disturbed — that is real peace. Freedom that cannot be taken away — that is real freedom.



TWO WAYS

We have two ways of taking in information. One is theoretical; the other is practical. And between the theory and the practical lies a big mountain called *understanding*. On one side is theory — keep talking, keep defining. On the other side lies this wonderful phenomenon of *feeling*. So what is the difference between the two?

Let's say you went into a restaurant, sat down, and ordered a sandwich. You waited and waited, and then the waiter brought you the bill. You said, "But where's my sandwich?" And he said, "I brought you the sandwich; you ate it."

There are actually people who would pay the bill and walk away totally confused.

All day long they would keep thinking, "Did I eat the sandwich? I'm still hungry. Maybe it was a little sandwich. Did I really eat it?" They

would go home, sit down with their wife, and say, "Honey, is it possible to eat a sandwich and not know it?" Then they would go to the library. "I think I had a sandwich, but I really didn't have a sandwich — do you have a book on that?" "No." "Okay. I'll go look at the self-help section." That'd be a great book: *You Thought You Had a Sandwich, but Did You?* It would be a big seller. People could relate to it.

You are the only one who can decide whether or not you are feeling peace. It is not dependent on somebody saying, "By the way, you're experiencing peace. So keep quiet." No. *You* have the last word. You have to feel that peace, that freedom, not just write "I feel free" three hundred times.

A MIRROR

Some people say, "I heard his speech; it was nice, but he didn't give us anything concrete." What can I give you when you already have all that you need within you? It's like, what could you possibly give to a beautiful woman? If she's really beautiful, you could give her a mirror and tell her, "See what I see every day." I think that would be a romantic compliment.

Even in the middle of a war,
a person can experience this peace.

Maybe it is possible that the woman would take it the wrong way and ask you, "Why are you giving me a mirror? What's wrong with me?" It's

funny, but that's why we look at ourselves in the mirror — to see the faults. "Is my tie crooked? Is something stuck in my teeth?"

People stand in front of the *Mona Lisa*, and they all gawk and say, "Beautiful." There should be a mirror! Because there is no one like you on the face of this earth. Not even if you have a twin. There's no one like you. And there will be no one like you after you're gone.

There is a freedom
that can be felt even in a prison.

That's the freedom

that no one can take away from you.

This is what I offer people — a mirror. What else can you give to someone who has everything? You have everything! That which is within you is, by its very nature, divine. By its very existence, it is the most beautiful symphony. By its very existence, it is the most beautiful play ever written. You are the actor, and the most incredible script has been written for you. There is love. There's a little bit of action. There's a little bit of clarity and a little bit of confusion. It's an amazing script. How well are you playing it? How well do you know your lines? How well do you know this play? Do you need somebody in the orchestra pit to read you the script?

When you don't know, you need somebody to whisper your lines. How many of you know about the people who are whispering your lines in your life? And when two of them start speaking at the same time, what happens? Family feud? "I want you to be this way," "I want you to be that way," "I want you to do this for me," "I trusted you."

No. You expected. Don't bring trust into it. You don't even know what trust is.

Trust is meant to be for the coming and going of your breath — that it will come and it will go. Trust, not an expectation. Will tomorrow come? Are you expecting it to come? Or are you trusting it to come? Think about it. If it doesn't come, there's nothing you can do about it. You can't argue. You can't complain. Wise are the ones who begin to

understand the value of what they have been given while it's still being given. Understanding the value of something when it is gone is too easy.

REMINDING

I'm talking about the presence of a beauty that is inside of you, through which you have everything and without which you have nothing.

You know this. You know everything I have said. You know that peace is beautiful. Now the time has come to actually feel that peace in your life. Nobody is too young, and nobody is too old. Now is the time to understand. Understand. Then you won't need all the explanations. When understanding kicks in, that's all you need.

In life, know. In life, understand. Let every step be real. Not somebody's instruction from the orchestra pit: "Now say this." Because this is a matter of life. You have one life. One existence. One incredible gift that you have been given.

Your life, your breath, your existence is good. It has been given to you. The motive is kindness.

Peace is not an abstract concept. Peace is a feeling. Peace is real. It isn't about a flower giving off a beautiful blue hue. It is about feeling a feeling inside and saying, "Yes!" because you have felt it. Not like that person who says, "I think I had a sandwich," but like the one who says, "I *know* I ate the sandwich," and being happy because you enjoyed your sandwich. Not walking around wondering, "Did I really eat that sandwich? Where is that sandwich?"

There's no room for that in this life.

This is one in a series of edited addresses by Prem Rawat, known also as Maharaji. Prem Rawat has dedicated his life to bringing the simple and profound message that peace resides in each and every person.

Words of Peace Global - wopg.org

Watch videos of Prem Rawat, read articles, download materials and more.

© **The Prem Rawat Foundation** - tprf.org

The Prem Rawat Foundation
P.O. Box 24-1498
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Illustrations by Bill Cotching

there is a **freedom**
that can be felt even in a prison

that's the freedom 
that no one can take away from you