

Goodness is Alive in the World

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Focus on your breath. Give the mind a good solid place to stay inside, because the goodness of the mind depends on having something solid to depend on.

A while back I went onto Amazon and typed in “truth,” “beauty,” and “goodness,” to see what came up. Goodness was all about recipe books. It’s as if there’s no real goodness in the world anymore aside from a good chocolate cake or a good pie. Which is really sad.

Right now in Thailand they’re mourning the death of a really good king. I read in the newspapers in the West what they have to say about his passing, and they’re all very guarded in their praise of him. They don’t really understand all that he did. They’re very loathe to say that someone was really good. But it’s good to realize in Thailand that there are people recognize that was a really good man. Goodness is still alive in the world.

It’s good to take heart from that fact, so that we can create goodness in our own lives: the goodness of our thoughts and our words and our deeds that really are good things. They’re to be treasured. They’re to be developed as much as we can.

Of course, we need strength to do that, because the currents of the world keep pushing in the other direction, make everybody cynical, make everybody dubious about the fact that goodness is there and goodness is possible. That, of course, makes it easy for your defilements to take over and they say, “Well, there’s no real goodness; we can just do what we want.” But that kind of world just keeps going down and down and down.

So you don’t want to go down with the world. You want to come up with the example of really good people, finding the resources within yourself so that your own goodness can develop and become something really solid that you can depend on even when things outside are not good. You want to be able to depend on the goodness of your own heart.

This is why we meditate, to develop the strength we need. Then from the strength and the solidity and the stillness of the mind, we gain some clarity.

Otherwise, you keep spinning around with the ways of the world. Gain pulls us in one direction, loss pulls us in another. Status, loss of status. Praise, criticism. These things keep pulling us around. So we need strength to resist their pull. And this is where we find it.