

Title

From Passion to Peace

By

James Allen

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About this eBook

“From Passion to Peace” By James Allen

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Foreword

The first Three Parts of this book, Passion, Aspiration, and Temptation, represent the common human life, with its passion, pathos, and tragedy. The last three parts, Transcendence, Beatitude, and Peace, represents the Divine Life - calm, wise and beautiful - of the sage and Savior. The middle part, Transmutation, is the transitional stage between the two; it is the alchemic process linking the divine with the human life. Discipline, denial, and renunciation do not constitute the Divine State; they are only the means by which it is attained. The Divine Life is established in that Perfect Knowledge which bestows Perfect Peace.

James Allen

Amid the din and strife of men, The Call Divine I hear again

Its telling is of things apart;
Above the tumult of the heart.
High o’er where sin’s dark pathways wind
Waits the wise willing of the mind;
Beyond strong Passion’s guarded Gates,
There Peace awaits—there Peace awaits.

FROM PASSION TO PEACE

Passion

The Pathway of the Saints and sages, the road of the wise and the pure; the highway along which the Saviors have trod, and which all Saviors to come will also walk - such is the subject of this book; such is the high and holy theme which the author briefly expounds in these pages.

Passion is the lowest level of human life. None can descend lower. In its chilling swamps and concealing darkness creep and crawl the creatures of the sunless world. Lust, hatred, anger, covetousness, pride, vanity, greed, revenge, envy, back-biting, lying, theft, deceit, treachery, cruelty, suspicion, jealousy - such are the brute forces and blind, unreasoning impulses that inhabit the underworld of passion, and roam, devouring and devoured, in the rank primeval jungles of the human mind.

There also dwell the dark shapes of remorse, pain, and suffering, and the drooping forms of grief, sorrow, and lamentation.

In this dark world the unwise live and die, not knowing the peace of purity, nor the joy of that Divine Light which forever shines above them, and for them, Yet, it shines in vain so long as it falls on unseeing eyes which look not up, but are ever bent earthward - fleshward.

But the wise look up. They are not satisfied with this passion-world. They bend their steps towards the upper world of peace, the light and the glory of which they behold, at first far off, but nearer and with ever increasing splendor as they ascend.

None can fall lower than passion, but all can rise higher. In that lowest place where further descent is impossible, all who move forward must ascend. The ascending pathway is always at hand, near, and easily accessible. It is the way of self-conquest. He has already entered it who has begun to say "nay" to his selfishness, who has begun to discipline his desires, and to control and command the unruly elements of his mind.

Passion is the archenemy of mankind, the slayer of happiness, the opposite and enemy of peace. From it proceeds all that defiles and destroys. It is the source of misery, and the promulgator of mischief and disaster.

The inner world of selfishness is rooted in ignorance - ignorance of Divine Law, of Divine Goodness; ignorance of the Pure Way and the Peaceful Path. Passion is dark, and it thrives and flourishes in spiritual darkness. It cannot enter the regions of spiritual light. In the enlightened mind the darkness of ignorance is destroyed; in the pure heart there is no place for passion.

Passion in all its forms is a mental thirst, a fever, a torturing unrest. As a fire consumes a magnificent building, reducing it to a heap of unsightly ashes, so are men consumed by the flames of passions, and their deeds and works fall and perish.

If one would find peace, he must come out of passion. The wise man subdues his passions, the foolish man is subdued by them. The seeker for wisdom begins by turning his back on

folly. The lover of peace enters the way which leads thereto, and with every step he takes he leaves further below and behind him the dark dwellingplace of passion and despair.

The first step towards the heights of wisdom and peace is to understand the darkness and misery of selfishness, and when that is understood, the overcoming of it - the coming out of it - will follow.

Selfishness, or passion, not only subsists in the gross forms of greed and glaringly ungoverned conditions of mind; it informs also every hidden thought which is subtly connected with the assumption and glorification of one's self. It is most deceiving and subtle when it prompts one to dwell upon the selfishness in others, to accuse them of it and to talk about it. The man who continually dwells upon the selfishness in others will not thus overcome his own selfishness. Not by accusing others do we come out of selfishness, but by purifying ourselves.

The way from passion to peace is not by hurling painful charges against others, but by overcoming one's self. By eagerly striving to subdue the selfishness of others, we remain passion-bound. By patiently overcoming our own selfishness, we ascend into freedom. Only he who has conquered himself can subdue others; and he subdues them, not by passion, but by love.

The foolish man accuses others and justifies himself; but he who is becoming wise justifies others and accuses himself. The way from passion to peace is not in the outer world of people; it is in the inner world of thoughts; it does not consist in altering the deeds of others, it consists in perfecting one's own deeds.

Frequently, the man of passion is most eager to put others right; but the man of wisdom puts himself right. If one is anxious to reform the world, let him begin by reforming himself. The reformation of self does not end with the elimination of the sensual elements only; that is its beginning. It ends only when every vain thought and selfish aim is overcome. Short of perfect purity and wisdom, there is still some form of self-slavery or folly which needs to be conquered.

Passion is at the base of the structure of life; peace is at its crown and summit. Without passion to begin with, there would be no power to work with, and no achievement to end with. Passion represents power, but power misdirected, power producing hurt instead of happiness. Its forces, while instruments of destruction in the hands of the foolish, are instruments of preservation in the hands of the wise. When curbed and concentrated and beneficially directed, they represent working energy. Passion is the flaming sword which guards the gates of Paradise. It shuts out and destroys the foolish; it admits and preserves the wise.

He is the foolish man who does not know the extent of his own ignorance; who is the slave of thoughts of self; who obeys the impulses of passion. He is the wise man who knows his own ignorance; who understands the emptiness of selfish thoughts; who masters the impulses of passion.

The fool descends into deeper and deeper ignorance; the wise man ascends into higher and higher knowledge. The fool desires, suffers, and dies. The wise man aspires, rejoices, and lives.