Heaven, Hell Are Just Perspectives

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No matter what situation you are placed in, either you can make it your boon or you can make it your curse. Even the most horrible situations can make a human being; you can handle it gracefully. People have even walked to the galaxies gracefully. There is a particular incident from World War II. There was a girl who was 13 years of age. This was in Austria in 1939, the time when Hitler was going about, picking up Jews and packing them into concentration camps. One fine morning, soldiers walked into their home. This was an affluent Jewish family of about 17 members, living in one large home. The soldiers came, occupied the house and took the adults and children to the camps.

The 13-year-old girl and her eight-year-old brother were taken to a railway station. It was the beginning of winter; it was cold in Austria. Children of an affluent family, no need of railway-station platform for three days; the parents gone and they did not know where; soldiers with guns pointed at them. It was bad enough, but children are children, they find a little time; after that, they will find something to kick around and start having fun. So the boy started playing a little bit of football. After three days, a train came—a goods train, not a passenger train. Everybody was pushed into the wagons when the girl noticed that the little boy had forgotten his shoes. She got mad with him and pinched and boxed his ears because without shoes, in the cold, things could get bad. At the next station, boys and girls were separated and taken away. Five-and-a-half years later, in 1945, the girl came out of the concentration camp to discover that all the other members of the family were dead. That moment, the only thing she felt was that last moment that she had spent with him, how ugly she had made him for. He had boxed his ears, punched him in the face and said ugly things, but he had lost his shoes. And this made her resolve. From today, it does not matter whom I meet, any face that I see, I will speak to them in such a way that if this happens to be the last time I speak to them; I will not regret it.

If you are aware, if you are in touch with that which is within every human being, even if you are placed in hell, there also you can make your life. Otherwise, even if you are placed in heaven, you will only make a mess out of it.

Who told you, you are not already in heaven? Is there any confirmation that you are not already in heaven? No. So why do you think there is another place which is better than this? This horrible idea that there is another place better than this has been created by people who have made a hell out of themselves. If you make a heaven of yourself, if you are ecstatic, why would you want to go anywhere? One must see how to make a heaven out of himself. Otherwise, even if you are living in heaven, you will only suffer.

Suppose this is heaven and you missed it? Suppose this is heaven and you never realised it—what a horrible way to live. And I am telling you, it’s, because the basis of your experience is within you. If you take charge of that, you can make heaven out of it now. Your intolerant neighbour, the noisy child next door, your mother-in-law, all these people have been added so that there is a little spice in your life, for excitement—but it is chiefly heaven.

The writer is a world renowned spiritual leader.