

The Summit

Introduction

Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia was a member of the first successful Indian expedition to Mount Everest in 1965. In this lesson he tells us how he felt as he stood on the Everest.

On Everest

Standing on the Everest, Major Ahluwalia felt very humble. Physically he was very tired. Instead of being very happy, he was jubilant and sad. He was not sure of the reason. He wondered if this sadness was because now there was no higher peak to climb.

A Life-long Joy

Ahluwalia says that after climbing Everest, he felt a deep sense of joy. This joy was to last the rest of his life. He also felt thankful to God.

Other Summit

Ahluwalia had climbed a summit but he thought of another summit. This was the summit of mind. He came to the conclusion that in order to climb a summit, a person needed three qualities. These are—endurance, persistence and will power. It is only with the help of these qualities that a man overcomes obstacles. The climbing of a summit is thus a demonstration of these three qualities. That is why men take delight in overcoming obstacles.

Why Everest ?

Ahluwalia says that a question arises why he chose to climb Everest. He says that the first reason is that he has always loved mountains. Everest is the highest and the mightiest of them all. It is a great struggle against rock and ice. So after climbing this summit there is a joy of having done something which only a few can do. Looking at the peak from a distance, Ahluwalia is transported to another world. He has a mystical feeling. In fact the difficulties of climbing Everest are huge. But this is what attracts him to it. It is a challenge that he finds difficult to resist. Ahluwalia says that the call to face the challenge of overcoming the obstacles was irresistible.

Not A Physical Climb Alone

Climbing Everest is not just a physical achievement or conquest. It brings fulfilment and fame. Besides, the experience is emotional and spiritual also.

Comradeship

Climbing mountains also gives us lessons in comradeship. He gives an example. While climbing two persons have to share a rope. One climber holds the rope firmly while the other climber cuts the steps in the hard ice. Then he belays and the other climber inches his way up. Famous climbers have left records of the help given by

others. A single man cannot simply think of being a climber. It's not only the physical difficulties which will deter him. The difficulties are emotional too. In all those moments the comrades draw inspiration from each other.

Coming Down Everest

Looking down from Everest, the climber feels that the effort was worthwhile. It is an ennobling experience. The climber bows down to God. Ahluwalia left on Everest a picture of Guru Nanak. Rawat left a picture of Goddess Durga. Phu Dorji left a relic of the Buddha. Edmund Hillary had buried a cross under a cairn in the snow. These are all symbols not of conquest but of reverence. So the experience of being on the Everest changes a man completely.

The Summit Within

Each man has within him his own mountain peak. It is fearful and unscalable. Yet no one else but that man has to do it himself. Climbing this inside peak is like climbing Everest too. The effects are the same. Both the climbs change you. The internal summit is perhaps higher than Everest.