

BIG QUESTION

Why we suffer, and the solution to it



B.K. DR NIRMALA

At the present time, so many people are suffering and often questions arise, for example, why am I in this situation? Why do I have the parents and siblings that I have? Why does my boss shout at me and not at the others? Why does my friend have better parents than I do? The answers to these types of question are both simple and complex.

To understand the reasons for the situations we find ourselves in, it is necessary to understand the philosophy and eternal law of karma. It is similar to one of the laws of physics, which says that for

every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, and also similar to the proverb in the Bible, "A man reaps what he sows", more commonly quoted as, "as you sow, so shall you reap".

It can also be understood by looking at nature. The seed of a pear tree, when planted, will only produce a pear tree, not a mango tree. To carry the analogy of a seed even further, some seeds produce a result in a few months and some, like fruit trees, produce fruit only after years, and that too only if I water it, nourish it and make sure the birds do not eat the fruit while it is still unripe.

We are constantly giving and taking with other people. Sometimes we give happiness, sometimes we give sorrow. We do this with our thoughts, words and actions.

If someone does something I do not like, I may feel angry, but I do not say anything. However,



I avoid eye contact, or do not smile, so the other will feel our anger and feel sorrow.

However, I may not keep it at thought level; I may shout in anger and say hurtful things, and thereby cause sorrow. Or I may carry this further and hit them or hurt them physically, causing sorrow and pain with my actions. All of this will come back to me, not necessarily from the same person. It may come back to me through a different source, but it will come

back to me.

As we said earlier, some seeds take longer to bear fruit. Some actions and thoughts and words are more complex and become patterns of behaviour that bear fruit much later on. In fact, a full understanding of our situations in life requires an understanding of rebirth.

Much research has been done into reincarnation - in the west through psychiatry, hypnosis and near-death experiences. In India, because the concept

of rebirth is so widely understood and accepted, the soul reborn as a child is often able to recall, in quite some detail, people and places from their previous birth, and these stories are well documented.

When this law of karma is understood deeply, then the soul will take great care to neither cause nor take sorrow. The soul needs to also clear away the negative karma from the past, so that the repercussions do not reach into the present moment. This

is done through the fire of meditation, the fire of yoga, through a direct connection with the Supreme Being.

There could be no more important time than the time we are passing through, to make this easy and simple connection and ensure we carry only pure thoughts, words and actions into our next life.

B.K. Dr. Nirmala is the director of Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga centres in the Asia-Pacific region.

DISCOURSE

GOD'S LOVE STRENGTHENS THE HEART



DADI JANKI

God's love actually changes me internally. Through God's love, everything old finishes. God's love makes me like a mirror - a mirror in which I can see myself clearly and through which others can see themselves - in no time at all.

The power of the love of God,

the Almighty Authority, has accumulated in my soul. Because of God's love, my heart has become so strong that even if somebody does something to hurt me, I do not allow myself to get hurt. No matter what somebody might say, they cannot hurt me.

The experience of God's love restores faith in God. However, for this faith to be powerful, it needs to be based not just on feelings and experiences but also on a clear understanding of the true nature of the self, God and life. This makes the soul worthy and powerful.

God gives us such deep, powerful love that this love becomes eternal. It is never destroyed; it can never be reduced. Our love should remain eternal too.

IN SOLITUDE

LEARNING FROM LONELINESS AND BEING ALONE



MANDA PATEL

In recent months, many of us have been in situations where we have found ourselves spending more time on our own. For some, this is a unique experience and can cause great discomfort and a feeling of loneliness. Many find that the antidote to that sensation is any form of distraction; they put the TV on in the background, even if they are not watching it, or they have the radio on, just to feel that someone else is 'present'. These activities are avoidance techniques because when we talk about being with the self, we become aware of being

in solitude, and that means being quiet and introspective, and then the question arises, what am I going to find inside myself?

In fact, there is nothing to fear. Whatever is inside of us is part of us and not something 'other'. We need to have a deep desire to create a sacred space for the self and understand that there is a lot of beauty inside, waiting to be rediscovered. When we create spaces between what we think and what we see, between what our thoughts are and what our words are, we can find this very sweet and soft inner world of thoughts and feelings. This inner space creates our outer world, and it is important to become a friend of my own inner world.

Most people believe that thoughts just 'arrive' in the mind. This is not true. Thoughts are generated by us, but are fed from our past experiences, our de-

sires, our expectations.

So, let me go inside and find out what is going on, what I am thinking and feeling, and then I can begin to deliberately create the thoughts that will be powerful and beneficial.

My glass can be half empty or half full. It all depends on how I think. I can deliberately create a thought of deep peace, for example, or reframe my thoughts with positivity about a situation I am concerned about. This will help to lessen the addiction to keep on 'doing' and give more space for me to start 'being' in my inner world. We learn the ability to stay with our own self, to commit to being in our own company. This is the gateway to the art of meditation and of freedom from anxiety and worry. It is the path to peace.

Manda Patel is a Rajyoga teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK.

MIND MATTERS

WHO OWNS YOUR HAPPINESS?



YOGESH SHARDA

It is part of human nature to experience happiness. Why is it that our happiness is sometimes high and sometimes it disappears? Can we actually make the choice to be happy? Could being happy actually be in my own hands?

It is all down to the power of the mind. As any sportsperson will tell us, winning is all in the mind. Politics and business are all mind games too. The ultimate mind game is the game of life. If I have some control over my mind and can achieve total composure, then it is 'game over'!

The ups and downs of emotion level out and the way I feel is then entirely of my own choosing.

There are three ways the self can engage with life. One is to just survive, but that is what a tree or a plant does. There must be more to life than just surviving.

The second way is to exist. That is, to go through life on a day-to-day basis, the ups and downs, reacting to circumstances as if on an emotional roller coaster. When things are good, it is great, and when they are not so good, we can become depressed, upset or hopeless. The mind becomes exhausted because of the emotional upheaval.

The third way is the way the smallest group of people engage with life - they actually live. They realise that the way we feel is a choice; it is my responsibility.

Adversity is something



to learn from and help me to grow. I cannot control what is happening, but I can choose how to respond to what life is showing me. Then I own my feelings and develop my own inner strength.

The first step is to identify what I can learn from a situation and what I could have done differently. Then forget

it and let go. Finally, move on and carry only the lesson, forget the situation.

Aristotle said that the beginning of all wisdom is to know yourself. The way to know the self is through meditation.

Start each day with some silent meditation; charge the battery of the soul. Meditators understand that the

most precious energy we have is our thought energy. Meditators take care about what they think and spend time accumulating the power of silence, daily. The mind then becomes steady, safe, secure and stable. That is the way to happiness.

Yogesh Sharda is the National Coordinator of the Brahma Kumaris' services in Turkey.

LIFE MANTRA

LET GO AND BECOME FREE



B.K. MRUTHYUNJAYA

If we want to be free from old habits that are possibly holding us back in life, we need to find a way to let them go. Is it an old way of thinking, is it an old attitude that does not serve us well anymore? Are we, in fact, blaming others for our problems instead of taking the initiative and finding solutions?

If someone comes into conflict with us, we can end the friction by letting go of the matter. If we think that we will be in peace only when the other person stops creating conflict, then after one conflict

ends, another one will start. How long are we going to wait for others to change so that we can be free of troubles?

Obstacles and tests of various kinds confront us from time to time. In school, do we pass exams when we study well or do we pass only if the questions are easy? Similarly, in life it

is up to us to pass or fail or complain. Situations will not change for our sake and it is our job to overcome them.

In the journey of self-improvement, we are sometimes attached to a person, place or object, or we lack a virtue or power. But if we are unaware of these shortcomings, we make no effort to remove them, and instead we make excuses for why we cannot progress.

The result is that we become tired of ourselves, and sometimes tired of others. We hold on to our weaknesses and expect others to do something for us, forgetting that we just need to let go. A bird cannot fly if it keeps holding on to a branch, no matter how much it flaps its wings. No one can help it fly if it does not let go of what it is holding.

B.K. Mruthyunjaya is Executive Secretary of the Brahma Kumaris.



A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Silence opens the mind to new possibilities. When I am involved with too many thoughts I get tossed around on a sea of inner turbulence. Silence is a lifeline out of this turbulence. Silence is an active state of inner power that enables me to focus on the horizon rather than get lost in the waves. Today let me enjoy moments of silence.