

LET GO

FORGIVE TO FORGET AND MOVE ON



MARA RITA GOMES

“Forgiveness is to let go of resentment.”

When we are hurt by someone or a situation, it is as though something inside us breaks – just like a precious vase. How can we mend that hurt? We have a choice – we can either remain with the deep sorrow, which will continue to grow and become huge, or decide, then and there, that we will not take this any further along our journey. We may still feel the sorrow, but it will heal if we let go, and it will not grow any further. So how do we let go? How, in

other words, do we release the other?

Firstly, we can have a deep conversation with the self. Spiritual knowledge and understanding are the foundation of this conversation. When we have understanding at a deep level, then we have the power to decide what to do and how to do it. We can understand what is lying behind the hurt. Sometimes, for example, the person who hurt us is not even aware of having done so. It is simply their way of being, and they do the same thing to others, because they lack understanding. So, do I want to keep this person in my heart forever in this way? If so, I will be trapped in the sorrow and bitterness. It is all a matter of choice.

Whatever someone has done will have repercussions. Our forgiveness does not release them from those consequences. We release them from the resentment and hurt we are feeling. If we harm someone and ask



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for forgiveness, if our wish is sincere and with the realisation of a true heart, then perhaps this will lessen the full potential of the outcome of our actions. However, we will have to face the residue

of the consequences.

We must think two or three times before we say or do something that has the possibility of causing sorrow. If something needs to be said, truth and honesty are es-

sential, but they have to be delivered with mercy and love. Anything can be said with love because no hurt will be caused. We should never take the law into our own hands. Whatever pain

is caused will have repercussions. We do not need to concern ourselves with retribution or revenge, because that is not part of spirituality.

We must also remember that anyone who may have

harmed us in the past is no longer the same person. If we meet them again today, then they will not be the same person, they will have lived through other experiences, they may have grown spiritually and changed.

So, we must not keep someone stuck in our old perception of them from the past. We must be open to give them a second chance. No one is perfect, and neither are we. We also make mistakes and cause sorrow and would like to be forgiven and given a second chance.

Of course, sometimes the person who hurts is not only very close to us, but they may need us in some way. Perhaps we work with them, or they are a close family member for whom we are responsible, so it is even more important to make the choice to forgive and let go, otherwise the relationship may be spoiled forever. This may seem difficult to do, but the choice is ours; to let go and give the person another

opportunity to put things right, or hold on to the hurt.

However, sometimes it can be a bigger challenge to forgive the self. We can talk to ourselves and see what we can learn from a particular situation and how we could have done it differently. Learning now helps ensure it does not happen again. Once something has been said or done, it cannot be unsaid or undone. We must be our own best friend and get to know ourselves so that we understand what we must heal inside. Otherwise our own pain may be getting reflected in our actions and causing sorrow to others.

Meditation teaches us how to deeply understand the self, and how to change the things we need to change. It is only through meditation that we can have such deep clarity.

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SPIRITUAL VISION

Faith in action for climate justice



MAUREEN GOODMAN

The Loss and Damage Fund established at COP27 was a fund, given and not loaned, to provide financial assistance to those nations most vulnerable and impacted by the effects of climate change. While this is undeniably a moral imperative, there are still, post COP28, many aspects that need to be formulated, one of which is that the fund should in no way increase the burden of debt of developing countries or increase the dependency of poorer nations on richer nations.

If we think of climate justice and a just transition, we need to make sure that all basic needs are met, and this does not mean just food and shelter but also the well-being of those concerned. This involves education, healthcare, and the giving of hope. In our dialogue

of faith at COP28, organised by the Interfaith Liaison Committee, the question was asked: how do you compensate a community that has lost hope? There are so many non-economic factors that need to be taken into consideration in order to ensure the preservation of communities and cultures. Crucially it also means that richer nations adopt a simpler lifestyle.

Until our decisions and actions are based on understanding of the sacredness of all human life, there can never be true justice. Where one group of people are valued more than another group, there cannot be justice. Where one section of humanity seeks to dominate another section of humanity, there cannot be justice. While there is gender inequality, there cannot be justice.

For true justice, we need spiritual vision that takes us beyond the labels we attach to our identity and takes us back to our original state of being. Our original state of being is that we are souls, we belong to one greater Divine Being. Our original nature is peace, love and truth. As souls we inhabit our physical form for a short while, but our eternal identity is deeper, more meaningful



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and constant. We are beings of peace. Without that awareness we cease to live as spiritual beings. We lose all love for the self and greed and arrogance become our props to survive. We dominate and exploit our

planet and fail to care for and respect other human beings.

Our world needs healing, and true healing is possible through love. Love is the greatest transformative power in the universe. Love is the great-

est healing power in the universe. The inherent love within us all is empowered by our connection with the Divine, the source of love, the source of peace. The reason for war and exploitation is a lack of

love. We need God's love and the love of the soul itself to heal our world.

Maureen Goodman is Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, and BK NGO representative to the United Nations in Vienna.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

When a vista beckons on the horizon, I move towards it. Although the destination may be clear, the path is not always visible and I must create my own. A path is not built all at once but with small steps laid down bit by bit until a path is created to reach my destination. A spiritual path is built with simple steps such as a daily meditation practice and the habit of redirecting my thoughts. These small steps build a pathway to my destination of spiritual development. Today let me build a path to my destination ~ bit by bit.

SELF-EMPOWERMENT

USING OUR SPIRITUAL POWERS



B. K. SHIVANI

Spiritual powers are not something we need to acquire – the powers already exist within each soul; we only need to learn to use them.

The first power is the power to withdraw from situations, to not get entangled in them. The tortoise illustrates this well. What does a tortoise do when it encounters danger? It withdraws into its tough shell, and remains unharmed. The ability to do this is very much needed today. Some of us would have

seen what happens when someone's car happens to brush against another vehicle on the road. The two drivers get into an argument, which sometimes escalates into violence. Nowadays, when something similar happens, those travelling in the car tell the driver to let it go and not confront the other driver, because it is just not worth it.

That is about avoiding a physical fight, but in our daily lives we so often get caught up in verbal and mental battles with other people. Someone gets angry with us, or taunts us, or is rude, and we respond in similar fashion. It is like a tug of war and it consumes the energy of both people. The easiest way to end it is to let go of your end of the rope. When someone in a low state of mind confronts us, getting tangled with them can drag us down to their level, and if this happens repeat-



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edly, our mental energy is depleted. Disengaging from such situations keeps us unaffected by them, and we can respond in a positive manner that will help the other person regain their composure and self-respect.

The next power is the power to pack up – to keep the mind under control and our thoughts to the point. When anything happens, do we do what needs to be done or do we get into questions – Why did this happen? How could

they do it? What will happen now...? All these are waste thoughts that drain our energy. Having the power to pack up means avoiding unnecessary expansion and creating only thoughts that are useful and will bring

benefit.

When we learn to do this, we develop the power of tolerance. Today people get upset over trivial matters. They take offence if someone does not respond quickly to their Whatsapp message. We

need to tell ourselves daily that our tolerance power is at 100 per cent. If we repeatedly think, 'I cannot tolerate this...', we are reducing our power to tolerate. Tolerance does not mean putting up with something under compulsion – doing that brings sorrow. Right tolerance comes from understanding that each person has their own nature and destiny, so there are no questions in our mind about the way they are and their behaviour.

Next comes the power of acceptance. When we come to know of a weakness in someone, instead of keeping it to ourselves and having good wishes for them so that they can overcome it, we talk about it, rather broadcast it. This creates a karmic account. Merely relaying gossip makes us complicit in creating negative vibrations. We need to be careful not to spread any message, joke, or news that is tinged with neg-

ativity, because by doing that we spread mental pollution. Going a step further, we can stop consuming such content, to keep our mind clean and calm.

Strengthened by the above practice, the mind develops the power to discern what is right and what is not. The definitions of right and wrong have changed over time. What used to be wrong some decades ago is now considered normal. But there are some boundaries of right and wrong. When we are able to discern them correctly, we can take the right decisions.

The ability to take the right decisions fosters a valuable power in us – the power to cooperate. Cooperate in what way? Having good wishes for everyone is the best form of cooperation.

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