

BATTLING DIFFICULTIES

Power of yoga helps us face tough situations



B.K. DR NIRMALA

We are sometimes asked, 'Why is that although you are yogis and meditate, some of you get sick and have serious illnesses?'. This question is based on the belief that when we attain God, then life will run smoothly, and no adverse situations will have to be faced.

However, the world is in a state of upheaval and conflict, so even yogis will experience difficult situations. Those who are able to connect their minds to the Supreme Consciousness, will face the challenges in a very different way to others, and will receive strength and clar-

ity to find the solutions and acquire the courage that is needed.

There are six types of adverse situations that can come to anyone in the world as it is today.

HEALTH

Yogis are aware that the law of karma dictates that the consequences of all sorrow caused will have to be confronted. Sickness, and with that, sometimes pain will certainly come into the life of most.

With deep understanding, a yogi can, with meditation, go beyond the effect of pain, remain aware of the body being a separate entity to I, the soul, and can remain peaceful, cheerful and accepting.

They take medicine, and meditation, to overcome the illness. Yogis are free from worry and stress, which can actually make matters worse.

FINANCIAL

As the economic climate across the world deteriorates, unem-

ployment rises and there is increased hardship. Yogis are not exempt from this.

However, employees who meditate have an attitude towards work very different from many others. They tend to be cheerful, cooperative, sincere and efficient. Employers value this kind of personnel and will tend to keep those employees for as long as is possible, even in times of difficulty.

Yogis are also very happy with very little. Their living expenses are smaller than others. They have no greed for the latest gadgets and fashion. They use what they have in the service of others and this means they will always have enough.

RELATIONSHIPS

At times of stress and adversity, one of the first things to suffer is relationships. Insecurity and ego make maintaining healthy and happy relationships difficult and divorce rates



tend to increase.

Yogis develop tolerance and the ability to accommodate difference of opinion, and their understanding makes relationships more cordial, loving and friendly, which is the key to steadfast relationships.

ACCIDENTS

Road accidents or other types of accidents can happen to anyone. The calm acceptance and patience as things are dealt with in the aftermath and the concern for others, be it the others involved in the accident or those respond-

ing with help, make situations smoother and easier to bear.

NATURAL CALAMITIES

The same applies to those involved in earthquakes, storms, tsunamis. In many situations across the world, yogis have been able to respond with peace, clarity, charity and benevolence.

BEREAVEMENT

Everyone loses loved ones at some time or another. However, when there is loss of this kind, if there has been great dependency and deep attachment to

the one who has gone, then this loss is very difficult to deal with and some feel that they may not be able to carry on without the one they have lost.

Yogis too lose those closest to them, but because they have developed self-reliance and a connection with the Supreme, although they may experience sorrow, they will also have understanding, and will be able to remain detached, and have the resilience to continue on their own journey with courage.

The key to responding to adverse situations in life is yoga power. Accumulate this energy in the daily practice of meditation and in the development of a deep, loving relationship with the Supreme Being. What can then not be achieved?

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DISCOURSE

SPIRITUALITY IS THE ART OF BALANCING RESPONSIBILITIES



DADI JANKI

Spirituality is the art of balancing your responsibilities; to yourself, to your family and to the whole world. The basis for this is a deep understanding of the self, God and the law of cause and effect (karma).

Knowing the self enables you to be de-

tached from physical factors and their limitations. Knowing God enables you to create a deep link of love and draw into yourself all attributes, virtues and powers from the Source. Understanding the deep philosophy of karma motivates you to settle debts of the past and perform elevated actions now.

Anyone can fall victim to the suffering of a poor state of mind, ill health, loss of wealth or unhappy relationships. Human life depends on these four factors and yet each of them has become so fragile and unreliable. God's power restores tolerance and the ability to face anything. An understanding of the deep philosophy of karma reveals how elevated thoughts, pure feelings and good actions can resolve all difficulties for the self and for the world.



A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The greatest authority is the authority of experience. I may know many things, but until I have experienced them directly they remain theoretical. My wealth of experience becomes practical wisdom when I spend time in silent reflection. Solitude provides the incubator for discovery and wisdom. Today let me draw value from my experiences in solitude and enjoy the authority of my own experience.

GOOD LIFE



B.K. USHA

Contentment is a virtue that is clearly visible—it is apparent in the form of satisfaction, and it sparkles on the face. Contentment is of three kinds—being content with oneself, with others, including all of Creation, and with the Creator. One who is always content is admired by all.

How do we remain constantly content? Challenges and ad-

versities inevitably confront those who seek to progress in life. They are like scenes that appear on the way during the journey of life. If we stop to look at the scenes and become engrossed in them, the destination begins to seem far away.

Instead of carrying on while seeing the scenes, we halt and wonder, "Why is it like this?", "What is this?", "This should not be so." We start finding fault in every scene, forgetting our journey and what we need to do.

The result is that instead of being amused by the scenes, we end up confused, upset and discontented. Some people go to the extent of blaming God for what they



do not like in the scenes of life.

Having become emotionally involved in the

scenes, we start feeling that we are tolerating a

great deal. Tolerance is a power that helps us move forward. In fact, if we are powerful, we never really feel we are tolerating something, but in the absence of this power we begin to complain that we have to endure a lot.

For example, it is the nature of fire to burn, but if someone does not know that, instead of making use of fire, they are harmed by it. As a consequence, instead of happiness they experience sorrow. Similarly, when we do not know the cause of our problems and adverse situations, we think we are having to tolerate them. The easy journey of life seems difficult. This brings discontentment -

with the self, others, and God.

Discontentment does not allow us to remain happy for long. One day we are cheerful and the next day we become dejected.

To stop swinging like a pendulum between different emotions, we can start by being content with the self. When we are no longer preoccupied with our own perceived troubles, we will be able to notice and understand the needs of others, and help them. This will earn us their good wishes, and blessings from the Creator.

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FESTIVE TIMES

LET'S BE THE CHRISTMAS SPARKLE OF HAPPINESS



ARUNA LADVA

Although the season has become increasingly commercialised over the years, millions of people, Christian and otherwise, celebrate the festival of peace and goodwill in many ways.

For many it has become a season of meeting, eating and gift giving. A time to show love and generosity and feel a sense of community and togetherness. Sadly, much of the real significance has been lost in today's consumerist world.

As with all celebrations, Christmas carries a deep spiritual significance. The story seems very relevant

for the seemingly dark times we are passing through now, and the birth is a metaphor for the awakening of our inner truth.

Baby Jesus was born in the dark night, bringing a ray of light into the world. Corruption, anger and violence—are these all not traits of the dark night of the soul?

He was born in a stable, surrounded by animals—in the same way our awakening takes place amidst a world where human behaviour is becoming more animal-like by the year.

It's time now for our inner child—the purity of spirit, our original divine nature, our inner truth, to overcome the darkness. In the world we are starting to see evidence of this—it's time now for honesty and justice.

The story tells us that the angel, a messenger of God, came to give good tidings of the birth to shepherds tending their flocks in the fields. Who is the angel, and who



are the shepherds and the flocks of sheep?

The world is made up of leaders and followers—choose which one you want

to be. Leaders of today are leading the folk astray. We want a new spiritual leadership—angels. These messengers of God show the

way of the truth, just as the star in the sky led the three kings to the infant Jesus. We need to hold on to the light of truth and also show the

way of peace and love to others.

The three kings, wise men from the East, arrived bearing gifts of gold, frankin-

cense and myrrh—exotic and priceless commodities at the time. Could we also be those wise (wo)men? For we have travelled a long way following our compass (conscience) of truth.

Our priceless 'gifts' are already within us! Peace, love and purity are the treasures that we all carry at all times to share with others. We will 'realise' them when we follow the star of truth.

In the same way that the wise men bowed down before the infant Jesus, we also need humility at this time to realise our inner treasures, which are our true greatness, our innate God-given gifts. This respect for the self is our true nobility.

As with all good stories, there has to be a villain to make the drama all the more entertaining! In this case it was King Herod. Worried that Jesus might compete for his throne (Ego playing out), he tried to kill

the baby Jesus so that he would be no threat to the king's position. But both Joseph and the Magi had visions of Herod's impure intentions and Joseph fled with his family to safety.

As we too embark on the journey of truth, we have to be aware of our inner 'Herod'—demons of jealousy and envy, carelessness, laziness and other subtle vices that may kill our inner child—preventing us from moving forward. By following our inner, God-given truth, we can stay safe.

Surely, the way of the light is the need of the hour. With so much sorrow in the world, let us be the Christmas sparkle of happiness!

Courtesy of istimetomeditate.org
Aruna Ladva, author of several books on self-development, is a Rajyoga meditation teacher who has taught this ancient art of meditation in many countries.