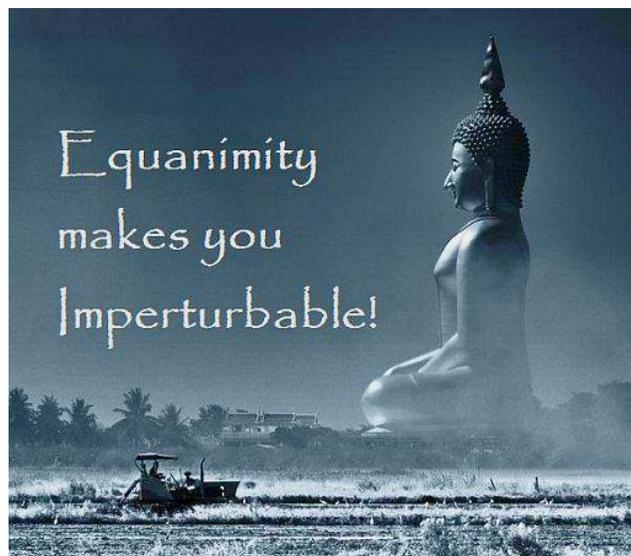


# Equanimity Even-mindedness

The art of being calm, stable and composed,  
especially under stress.



It is not the inner experience which determine the spiritual progress,  
but the basic personal attitude of serene living of the child disciple,  
which proves his or her worth.

(Sant Kirpal Singh Ji)

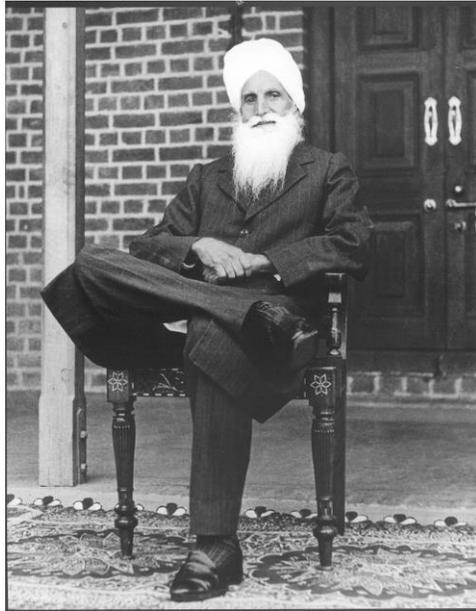
*(The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 2, 95)*



## Hazur Baba Sawan Singh

At all times our hearts should be full of love for the Master  
and our own mind should be so fearless that it should not be ruffled if it were given  
the kingdom of the world nor if the kingdom of the world were taken from it.

*(Spiritual Gems, letter 21)*



If you think that we should remove all the thorns from the path first, then walk comfortably, barefooted, that is impossible. Even if you succeed in doing so, next year there will be more thorns. If on the other hand, you put on heavy boots, then you can go about as and when you please. Whatever is to happen has already been ordained, and that will happen. Tulsidas says *“First the pralabdh (destiny) was made, and then this body. The wonder of it is that we still feel so discontented.”* Before a person is born, his entire life or destiny is settled....

These worldly cares and anxieties will remain. Whatever you have to achieve,  
you will have to accomplish in the midst of these circumstances.

*(Spiritual Gems, letter 11)*

Pain and pleasure of the devotee are in the hands of the Master. He arranges them as he sees fit.  
The devotee should take delight in pain, for that is also a gift from him...

A real devotee makes no distinction in pain and delight;  
his business is devotion.

*(Spiritual Gems, letter 49)*



One of the first proofs of self-mastery is when one shows that he can be kind and forbearing and genial with companions of the most dissimilar characters and temperaments. And one of the strongest signs of retrogression is when one shows that he expects others to like what he likes and act as he acts.

(Damodar)

Real activity is combined with calmness which can't be ruffled. It is a balance of mind which is never disturbed, whatever happens. Only when the mind is calm and collected is the whole of its energy spent in doing good work.

(Swami Vivekananda)

The only real surrender is that in which the poise is undisturbed by any adverse circumstance, and the individual, amidst every kind of hardship, is resigned with perfect calm to the will of God.

(Meher Baba)

Praise and blame, gain and loss, pleasure and sorrow come and go like the wind. To be happy, rest like a great tree in the midst of them all.

(Buddha)

Have a happy state of mind, a state that is untouched by the events of life.

(Yogananda)

The "awakened" person is recognized by particular signs. First of all is liberty; he does not allow himself to be tossed about by the vicissitudes of life, by fear, joy, anxiety, success, or failure. Then there is the spiritual force that reveals itself in calmness, an ineffable smile, and deep serenity.

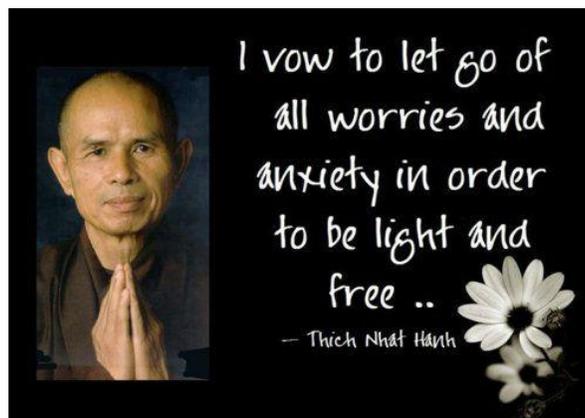
(Thich Nhat Hanh)

The Master gives himself up to whatever the moment brings.

(Lao-tzu)

Stay at the center and let all things take their course.

(Lao-tzu)



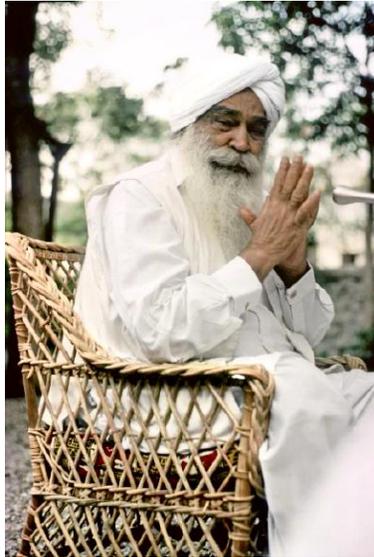
## Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

One who permits himself or herself to be disturbed by what others say and do is without question one who is still controlled by the ego and has yet to conquer the self, and learn the rudiments of spirituality.

*(Spiritual Elixir, 104)*

If one cannot rise above, be in full control of, and handle with ease the circumstances of his outer environment, he will never be able to succeed in the way of spirituality.

*(ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptive.htm)*



The Guru may give happiness or misery, for he has to make a beautiful form from a rough piece of stone and therefore has to wind up all the karmas; but a true follower will never complain, no matter what hardships the Guru allows.

*(The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 1, 27)*

The Master teaches that it does not matter in the least what happens to a man from the outside: sorrows, troubles, sickness, losses – all these must be borne by each and must not be allowed to affect the calmness of his mind.

*(ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm)*

The place where fire burns becomes heated first and then transmits its heat to the atmosphere around. So is the case with fire or anger. An imagined or supposed wrong keeps rankling in the mind like a thorn. When one cannot bear its intensity, one bursts forth into flames of hatred and contempt (begins abusing right and left), loses his balance of mind, and like a canker keeps emitting a malign odor that virtually goes on polluting the atmosphere around. Most of the injuries and wrongs are the outcome of our own process of thinking, and such thoughts breed countless others, multiplying in geometrical proportion.

We can get out of this vicious circle only by changing our attitude towards life. Why sacrifice our natural equanimity for mere trifles, for passing bubbles and vapory nothings that are things of no consequence? Instead of brooding over these supposed and imagined wrongs it would be better by far to contemplate on the higher aspects of life, the divinity within and the divinity without, for this world is verily of the divine and divinity resides therein.

*(http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Teachings.pdf)*

So long as one has not attained universal consciousness, differences of opinion are bound to exist. But if one has understood their cause, one will not allow them to disturb one's peace of mind. Whatever the outer opposition, whatever the opinions of others, if one has surrendered oneself completely to one's love, then nothing can ever disturb one's equanimity or obstruct one's spiritual course. He who is upset by what others have to say is without question one who is still controlled by the ego and has yet to conquer his self. He has yet to learn the rudiments of spirituality.

So whenever anybody hurts your feelings in word or deed, forgive. Forgiveness is the only sweet water that will wash away all dirt. Justice won't do it, mind that! If you want justice, then that will react. Forgiveness only washes away all dirt.

Forgive and forget, this is the way to spirituality.

(<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Teachings.pdf>)

In this vast creation, everyone is gifted with an individual perception. The heredity, the environment and the teachings inculcated, all combine to make one what he is.

We cannot blame anyone for thinking differently in his own way. Everyone has his own temperament and his own way of thinking. They must differ and they do differ vehemently.

There is no help for it. It is, on the other hand, the sign of sentient life.

We must not therefore, on that account, cross swords with them.

(The Way of the Saints, 257)

The apparent adverse circumstances which crop up as a reaction of past karma, on which this physical life is based, serve as a lever to raise the child disciple for spiritual growth and progress.

It is His rare Divine grace that you are blessed with the rare boon of right understanding when you see everything in its right perspective.

(Spiritual Elixir, 239)

Any time you feel overtaken with unloving thoughts towards anybody, you should resort to the Simran of Names and think of the Master.

(The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 2, 34)



Respect the other person's point of view, whether or not you agree with it. Recognize that if you had their history, their circumstances, and the forces that play on them, you would likely have their point of view.

(Werner Erhard)

If you attach yourself to gross energies - loving this person, hating that clan, rejecting one experience or habitually indulging in another – then you will lead a series of heavy, attached lives.

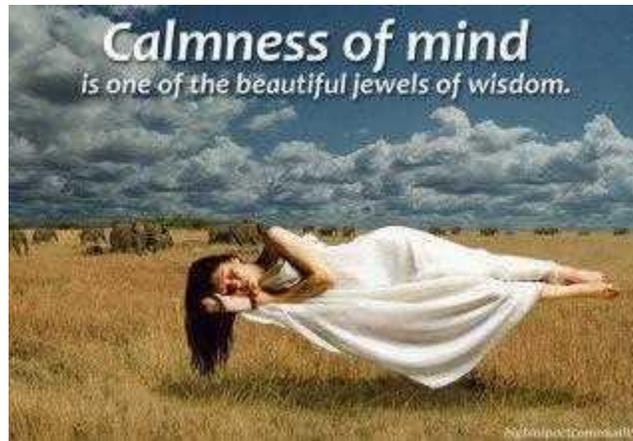
This can go on for a very long and tedious time.

(Lao-tzu)

The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences.  
When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised.  
Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.  
If you wish to see the truth then hold no opinions for or against anything.  
To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.  
(Seng Tsan)

O God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.  
(Reinhold Niebuhr)

By a man without passions I mean one who does not permit good or evil to disturb his inward economy, but rather falls in with what happens and does not add to the sum of his mortality.  
(Chuang Tzu)



The great thing is to resign all your interests and pleasures and comfort and fame to God.  
He who unreservedly accepts whatever God may give him in this world –  
humiliation, trouble and trial from within or from without –  
has made a great step towards self-victory.  
(Francois Fenelon)

Someone asked Junayd: “Slave of God who yet are free,  
tell me how to reach a state of contentment.”  
Junayd replied:  
“When one has learned through love to accept.”  
(Al-Junayd)

Life is a series of choices  
and sometimes your only choice  
is what your attitude will be.  
(Shantideva)



## Sant Kirpal Singh on the Power of Simran

Simran (or constant remembrance of God) is a tonic for the soul. It makes the will grow stronger from day to day. Troubles and trials however severe cannot cow him down. With a smiling face he pulls through the storms of fate or destiny unscathed. Simran is a panacea for all the ills of the world. It is a potent remedy and works wonders to remove worry where all human efforts fail. A man of Simran never has any worry or anxiety. Simran to be very effective must be constant and ceaseless.

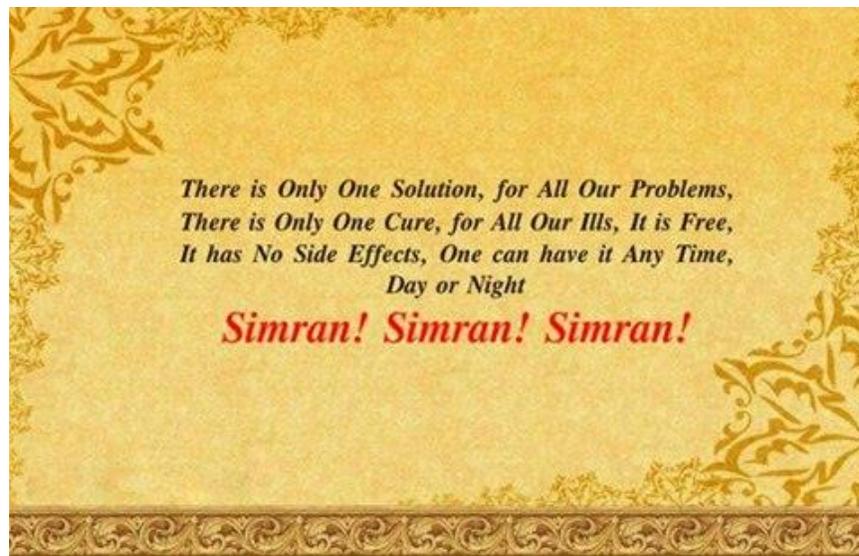
*(Teachings of Kirpal Singh: Simran)*

Simran is a potent remedy and works wonders to remove worry where all human efforts fail. A disciple who does Simran constantly has no worry or anxiety. Simran to be effective must be constant and ceaseless. Constant remembrance of God is life-giving to the devotee.

*(Sat Sandesh, March 1975, 26)*

The Sikh Scriptures detail many a benefit from Simran. When an overwhelming adversity besets your path, when there is no other help, when foes hotly pursue you, when close relations desert you, when all hopes are dashed and when all avenues are closed, if you still remember God, no harm shall ever touch you. When one is torn by cares and anxieties, when his body is diseased, when he is deeply immersed in domestic worries, when he is at the mercy of the buffets of sorrow, when he wanders to and fro and finds no home nor hearth where he can rest – even then, if he carries out the Simran of the Lord, he shall attain inner calm and peace.

When a person is under the sway of lust, anger and attachment, when he is assailed by miserliness and avarice, when he is in the grip of the four vices, namely stealing, drinking, adultery and the persecution of saintly people, when demon-like desires to annihilate others have taken hold of him, when he will not listen to the reading of a holy scripture – even then, if he thinks of the Lord, he shall gain freedom in the twinkling of an eye.



## Sant Kirpal Singh on the Power of Meditation

Meditation is most necessary,  
for only by meditation will all things come of their own accord.  
([ruhanisatsangusa.org/thief\\_of.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/thief_of.htm))

It is not you who are to control the mind.  
It is that Power within you.  
(*The Light of Kirpal*, 131)

When you come in contact with Light and Sound Power within, you have not to adopt any virtues, but everything, all virtues, will come within you of themselves.  
(<http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/occupied.htm>)

Once you discover this Light and learn to live by it, your whole existence will be changed. Love will permeate your very being and it will burst forth from the very pores of your body.  
([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Volume2-Self-Introspection.pdf](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Volume2-Self-Introspection.pdf))

Learn to sit still and be mentally still, and the silence thus generated will be more vocal than words spoken and written; and you will have an instantaneous solution not only to your personal problems but to the problems of others as well. This is the greatest secret of success.  
([ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptive.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptive.htm))

Two things are given: rising above body consciousness, and contact with the Naam within you. If you rise daily the outer pinching effect won't affect you, you'll become air conditioned. Pralabdha karma also won't affect you so much as now; the angle of vision will change by rising above body consciousness daily. Is it not a blessing?  
([ruhanisatsangusa.org/lawkarma.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/lawkarma.htm))



Your task?  
To work with all the passion of your being to acquire an Inner Light,  
so you escape and are safe from the fires of madness, illusion, and confusion  
that are, and always will be, the world.  
(Rumi)

The gift of learning to meditate is the greatest gift you can give yourself in this life. For it is only through meditation that you can undertake the journey to discover your true nature, and so find the stability and confidence you will need to live, and die, well.  
(Sogyal Rinpoche)

The Merciful God has in His mercy removed all doubts and distrust, O Nanak!  
Through the holy Song I am in bliss, freed from all sorrow.  
(Guru Arjan)



## Sant Kirpal Singh on the Power of Prayer

Prayer can be defined as an anguished cry of the soul in distress or helplessness, to a Power, fuller and greater than itself, for relief and comfort.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray\\_01.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray_01.htm))

Prayer must arise from the depths of the soul. It should not be a vain repetition of empty words with little meaning in them. What we pray for we must really wish for, not only intellectually but from the very core of our being. It must churn the very soul to its depths and the music of prayer should come out and tingle from the very nerves, tissues and fibers of the entire frame making us unmindful and oblivious of everything else beside the sweet music of the soul.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray\\_14.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray_14.htm))

So if we have got full conviction, full faith in the Master and in His competency, and pray to Him from our heart, our prayer must be heard. Masters who came in the past said that if you would offer such a prayer, God would catch you by the hand and say, "All right child, tell me what you want." Do you follow me, what I say? God will listen to such a prayer because He sees that your heart, mouth and brain are in accord, and that you have full conviction in His competency to grant it.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/true-prayer.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/true-prayer.htm))

Beg from the Lord and the Guru their Divine Vision, complete self-surrender and the gift of Naam. Pray also to be saved from the evil tendencies of the mind and the senses.

Being omnipotent, He is capable of granting us all these boons. Besides this, the seekers may pray for the gift of happily resigning to His sweet Will.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Prayer.pdf](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Prayer.pdf))

Prayer and gratitude grant inner peace and harmony to withstand the hazards of physical life, which is a passing phase of the soul in its long journey back to the True Home of the Father.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm))

Prayer has in it a great dynamic force. It strengthens and prepares a person to face and fight the battle of life fearlessly and successfully. It is in fact the only panacea for all types of ill.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Elixir.pdf](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/Elixir.pdf))

Since all souls are of the same essence as of God and are correlated with each other, one may as well pray for the benefit of others. High souls always pray for the good of the entire humanity...Telepathy has now conclusively proved how heartstrings between individuals play in unison, irrespective of distance between the two. There is a tremendous power in thought vibrations and their range is unlimited.

([ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray\\_18.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/pray/pray_18.htm))

The instinct of love cannot come into play unless one sees the beloved. As long as we do not see God or the glory of God, we cannot have any faith in the existence of God and without this all prayers go in vain. But Guru or God-Man is the abode of God's Light and is a radiating center of the same. We can pray with equal efficacy to the Master, who is at one with God.

Connected as He is with the power-house behind Him, the Master is equally competent to grant our desires and fulfill our wishes.

(Spiritual Elixir, 219)



## A Bigger Container

Roshi Charlotte Joko Beck – *Everyday Zen*

In daily life we know what it means to stand back from a problem. For example, I've watched Laura make a beautiful flower arrangement: she'll fuss and fiddle with the flowers, then at some point she'll stand back and look, to see what she has done and how it balances out. If you're sewing a dress, at first you cut and arrange and sew, but finally you get in front of the mirror to see how it looks. Does it hang on the shoulders? How's the hem? Is it becoming? Is it a suitable dress? You stand back. Likewise, in order to put our lives into perspective, we stand back and take a look.

Now Zen practice is to do this. It develops the ability to stand back and look. Let's take a practical example, a quarrel. The overriding quality in any quarrel is pride. Suppose I'm married and I have a quarrel with my husband. He's done something that I don't like—perhaps he has spent the family savings on a new car—and I think our present car is fine. And I think—in fact I know—that I am right. I am angry, furious. I want to scream.

Now what can I do with my anger? What is the fruitful thing to do? First of all I think it's a good idea just to back away: to do and say as little as possible. As I retreat for a bit, I can remind myself that what I really want is to be what might be called A Bigger Container. To do this is to step into another dimension—the spiritual dimension, if we must give it a name.

Let's look at a series of practice steps, realizing that in the heat of anger it's impossible for most of us to practice as the drama occurs. But do try to step back; do and say very little; remove yourself. Then, when you're alone, just sit and observe. What do I mean by "observe"? Observe the soap opera going on in the mind: what he said, what he did, what I have to say about all that, what I should do about it...these are all a fantasy. They are not the reality of what's happening.

If we can (it's difficult to do when angry), label these thoughts. Why is it difficult? When we're angry there's a huge block that stands in the way of practice: the fact that we don't want to practice—we prefer to cherish our pride, to be "right" about the argument, the issue. And that's why the first step is to back away, say little.

It may take weeks of hard practice before we can see that what we want is not to be right, but to be A Bigger Container. Step back and observe. Label the thoughts of the drama: yes, he shouldn't do that; yes, I can't stand what he's doing; yes, I'll find some way to get even—all of which may be so on a superficial level, but still it is just a soap opera.

If we truly step back and observe—and as I said, it's extremely difficult to do when angry—we will be capable in time of seeing our thoughts as thoughts (unreal) and not as the truth. Sometimes I've gone through this process ten, twenty, thirty times before the thoughts finally subside. When they do I am left with what? I am left with the direct experience of the physical reaction in my body, the residue, so to speak. When I directly experience this residue (as tension, contraction), since there is no duality in direct experience, I will slowly enter the dimension (samadhi) which knows what to do, what action to take. It knows what is the best action, not just for me but for the other as well. In making A Bigger Container, I taste "oneness" in a direct way.

We can talk about “oneness” until the cows come home. But how do we actually separate ourselves from others? How? The pride out of which anger is born is what separates us. And the solution is a practice in which we experience this separating emotion as a definite bodily state. When we do, A Bigger Container is created.

**What is created, what grows, is the amount of life I can hold without it upsetting me, dominating me. At first this space is quite restricted, then it’s a bit bigger, and then it’s bigger still. It need never cease to grow. And the enlightened state is that enormous and compassionate space. But as long as we live we find there is a limit to our container’s size and it is at that point that we must practice. And how do we know where this cut-off point is? We are at that point when we feel any degree of upset, of anger. It’s no mystery at all. And the strength of our practice is how big that container gets.**

As we do this practice we need to be charitable with ourselves. We need to recognize when we’re unwilling to do it. No one is willing all the time. And it’s not bad when we don’t do it. We always do what we’re ready to do.

This practice of making A Bigger Container is essentially spiritual because it is essentially nothing at all. A Bigger Container isn’t a thing; awareness is not a thing; the witness is not a thing or a person. There is not somebody witnessing. Nevertheless that which can witness my mind and body must be other than my mind and body. If I can observe my mind and body in an angry state, who is this “I” who observes? It shows me that I am other than my anger, bigger than my anger, and this knowledge enables me to build A Bigger Container, to grow. So what must be increased is the ability to observe. What we observe is always secondary. It isn’t important that we are upset; what is important is the ability to observe the upset.

As the ability grows first to observe, and second to experience, two factors simultaneously increase: wisdom, the ability to see life as it is (not the way I want it to be) and compassion, the natural action which comes from seeing life as it is. We can’t have compassion for anyone or anything if our encounter with them is ensnared in pride and anger; it’s impossible. Compassion grows as we create A Bigger Container.



So the way of practice that I’ve found to be the most effective is to increase the power of the observer. Whenever we get upset we have lost it. We can’t get upset if we are observing, because the observer never gets upset. “Nothing” can’t get upset. So if we can be the observer, we watch any drama with interest and affection, but without being upset.



...when you find yourself in a crisis, then will you understand how to practice? Observing your thoughts, experiencing your body instead of getting carried away by the fearful thoughts, feeling the contraction in your stomach as just tight muscles, grounding yourself in the midst of crisis. What makes life so frightening is that we let ourselves be carried away in the garbage of our whirling minds. We don’t have to do that. (<http://www.slideshare.net/ankeney/charlotte-joko-beck-everyday-zen>)

# Cognitive Reframing and Stress Management

## Reframing: It's All How You Look At It!

Elizabeth Scott

Have you ever noticed that two people can face the same situation and one person can describe the situation as a harrowing ordeal while another sees it as a minor inconvenience? Or have you had one of those days when it seems that everything is going wrong--until you hear someone else's troubles that make yours pale in comparison, showing you that your stressors really aren't so bad?

Have you faced a challenge in your life that initially seemed like a negative event, but that eventually brought gifts and gains that cause you to look back on the event as positive? These situations all involve a phenomenon that psychologists refer to as 'reframing'.

### What Is Reframing?

Reframing is a way of changing the way you look at something and, thus, changing your experience of it. Reframing can turn a stressful event into either a major trauma or a challenge to be bravely overcome. Reframing can depict a really bad day as a mildly low point in an overall wonderful life. Reframing can see a negative event as a learning experience. Reframing is a way that we can alter our perceptions of stressors and, thus, relieve significant amounts of stress and create a more positive life before actually making any changes in our circumstances.

### How Does Reframing Affect Stress?

Using reframing techniques can actually change your physical responses to stress because your body's stress response is triggered by perceived stress, not actual events. If you perceive that you are threatened--physically or psychologically--by a situation, your fight-or-flight response will kick in. Your stress response can be triggered by events ranging from annoying to frightening, and can remain triggered long after the triggering event has passed, especially if you're not practicing relaxation techniques. Reframing techniques are a way of minimizing the stressors you perceive in your life, thus easing the process of relaxation.

### How Does Reframing Work?

Using reframing techniques can be simple and easy, especially with practice.

**Notice Your Thoughts.** The first step is to catch yourself when you're slipping into overly negative and stress-inducing patterns of thinking. Being aware of them is an important part of challenging and ultimately changing them. One thing you can do is just become more mindful of your thoughts, as though you're an observer. When you catch negative thinking styles, just note them at first. If you want, you can even keep a journal and start recording what's happening in your life and your thoughts surrounding these events, and then examine these thoughts through your new 'lens' to get more practice in catching these thoughts. Another helpful practice is meditation, where you learn to quiet your mind and examine your thoughts. Once you become more of an observer, it's easier to notice your thoughts rather than remaining caught up in them.

**Challenge Your Thoughts.** As you notice your negative thoughts, an effective part of reframing involves examining the truth and accuracy (or lack thereof) of these thoughts. Are the things

you're telling yourself even true? Also, what are some other ways to interpret the same set of events? Which ways of seeing things serve you better? Instead of seeing things the way you always have, challenge every negative thought, and see if you can adopt thoughts that fit your situation but reflect a more positive outlook.

**Replace Your Thoughts With More Positive Thoughts.** Have you even been to a hospital and noticed that the nurses often ask people about their 'discomfort' rather than their 'pain'? That's reframing in action. If the patient is in searing pain, the term 'discomfort' becomes annoying and seems to reflect a disconnect in understanding, but if the pain is mild, reframing it as 'discomfort' can actually minimize the experience of pain for many patients. This is a useful reframing trick that we can all put into practice.

When you're looking at something negative, see if you can change your self talk to use less strong, less negative emotions. When you're looking at a potentially stressful situation, see if you can view it as a challenge vs. a threat. Look for the 'gift' in each situation, and see if you can see your stressors on the more positive edge of reality: see them in a way that still fits the facts of your situation, but that is less negative and more optimistic and positive.

That's the gist of reframing, and you can do it as often as you'd like. Most people are surprised at what a big impact reframing can have on their experience of stress--changing the way you look at your life can truly change your life! (<http://stress.about.com/od/positiveattitude/a/reframing.htm>)



One day on the street of London Charles Spurgeon was robbed. When he arrived home and told his tale, he said, "Well, thank the Lord anyway."

His wife countered, "Thank the Lord that somebody stole your money?"

"No, my dear," answered her husband.

Then he began to enumerate some reasons why he was thankful.

"First, I'm thankful the robber just took my money, not my life. Secondly, I'm thankful I had left most of our money home and he didn't really rob me of much.

Thirdly, I'm thankful to God that I was not the robber."



Let us rise up and be thankful,  
for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little,  
and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick,  
and if we got sick, at least we didn't die;  
so, let us all be thankful.

(Buddha)

Just an observation: it is impossible to be both grateful and depressed.

Those with a grateful mindset tend to see the message in the mess.  
And even though life may knock them down, the grateful find reasons,  
if even small ones, to get up.

(Steve Maraboli)

## Wayne Dyer

*(Your Erroneous Zones)*

You can begin to think of yourself as truly intelligent on the basis of how you choose to feel in the face of trying circumstances. The life struggles are pretty much the same for each of us. Everyone who is involved with other human beings in any social context has similar difficulties. Disagreements, conflicts and compromises are a part of what it means to be human. Similarly, money, growing old, sickness, death, natural disasters and accidents are all events which present problems to virtually all human beings. But some people are able to make it, to avoid immobilizing dejection and unhappiness despite such occurrences, while others collapse, become inert or are dominated by negative emotions.

Learning to take total charge of yourself will involve a whole new thinking process, one which may prove difficult because too many forces in our society conspire against individual responsibility.

You've probably grown up believing that you can't control your own emotions; that anger, fear and hate, as well as love, ecstasy and joy are things that happen to you. An individual doesn't control these things, he accepts them. When sorrowful events occur, you just naturally feel sorrow, and hope that some happy events will come along so that you can feel good very soon.

The truth of the matter is that feelings are not just emotions that happen to you. Feelings are reactions you choose to have. If you are in charge of your own emotions, you don't have to choose self-defeating reactions. Once you learn that you can feel what you choose to feel, you'll see a given emotion is a choice rather than as a condition of life. This is the very heart and soul of personal freedom.

You have grown up in a culture which has taught you that you are not responsible for your feelings even though the truth is that you always were. You've learned a host of sayings to defend yourself against the fact that you do control your feelings. Here is a brief list of such utterances. Examine the message they send.

"You hurt my feelings." "You make me feel bad." "He makes me sick." "You're embarrassing me." "You made a fool of me in public."

Each saying has a built-in message that you are not responsible for how you feel. The list can be rewritten so it is accurate, so it reflects the fact that you are in charge of how you feel and that your feelings come from the thoughts you have about anything.

"I hurt my feelings because of the things I told myself about your reaction to me."

"I made myself feel bad by what I told myself about what you said or did."

"I make myself sick by what I tell myself about him."

"I'm embarrassing myself."

"I made myself feel foolish by taking your opinions of me more seriously than my own, and believing others would do the same."

The message is crystal clear. You are the person responsible for how you feel. You feel what you think, and you can learn to think differently about anything – if you decide to do so. Ask yourself if there is a sufficient payoff in being unhappy, upset, depressed or hurt. Then begin to examine, in depth, the kind of thoughts that are leading you to these debilitating feelings.

## Can Meditation Change Your Brain?

Can people strengthen the brain circuits associated with happiness and positive behavior, just as we're able to strengthen muscles with exercise? Richard Davidson, who for decades has practiced Buddhist-style meditation – a form of mental exercise, he says – insists that we can.

And Davidson, who has been meditating since visiting India as a Harvard grad student in the 1970s, has credibility on the subject beyond his own experience. A trained psychologist based at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he has become the leader of a relatively new field called contemplative neuroscience - the brain science of meditation.

Over the last decade, Davidson and his colleagues have produced scientific evidence for the theory that meditation - the ancient eastern practice of sitting, usually accompanied by focusing on certain objects - permanently changes the brain for the better.

“We all know that if you engage in certain kinds of exercise on a regular basis you can strengthen certain muscle groups in predictable ways,” Davidson says in his office at the University of Wisconsin, where his research team has hosted scores of Buddhist monks and other meditators for brain scans.

“Strengthening neural systems is not fundamentally different,” he says. “It’s basically replacing certain habits of mind with other habits.”

Contemplative neuroscientists say that making a habit of meditation can strengthen brain circuits responsible for maintaining concentration and generating empathy.

One recent study by Davidson’s team found that novice meditators stimulated their limbic systems - the brain’s emotional network - during the practice of compassion meditation, an ancient Tibetan Buddhist practice. That’s no great surprise, given that compassion meditation aims to produce a specific emotional state of intense empathy, sometimes call “lovingkindness.”

But the study also found that expert meditators - monks with more than 10,000 hours of practice - showed significantly greater activation of their limbic systems. The monks appeared to have permanently changed their brains to be more empathetic.

An earlier study by some of the same researchers found that committed meditators experienced sustained changes in baseline brain function, meaning that they had changed the way their brains operated even outside of meditation. These changes included ramped-up activation of a brain region thought to be responsible for generating positive emotions, called the left-sided anterior region.

But most brain research around meditation is still preliminary, waiting to be corroborated by other scientists. Meditation’s psychological benefits and its use in treatments for conditions as diverse as depression and chronic pain are more widely acknowledged.

(<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/26/can-meditation-change-your-brain-contemplative-neuroscientists-believe-it-can/>)



Controlled studies have found consistent reductions in anxiety in meditators ...Several stress-related conditions have demonstrated improvement during clinical trials of meditation including: hypertension, insomnia, asthma, chronic pain, cardiac tachyarrhythmias, phobic anxiety.  
(Dr. John Craven)

Among all my patients in the second half of life there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life.  
(Carl Jung)

As meditation deepens, compulsions, cravings and fits of emotion begin to lose their power to dictate our behavior.  
(Eknath Easwaran)

If you really want to rid yourself of present bad habits you have no greater recourse than meditation. Every time you meditate deeply on God, beneficial changes take place in the patterns of your brain.  
(Yogananda)



Patience has three stages:  
First, the servant ceases to complain; this is the stage of repentance.  
Second, the Sufi becomes satisfied with what is decreed; this is the rank of the ascetic.  
Third, the servant comes to love whatever the Lord does with him; this is the stage of the true friends of God.  
(Abu Talib al-Makki)

If I want only pure water, what does it matter to me whether it be brought in a vase of gold or of glass? What is it to me whether the will of God be presented to me in tribulation or consolation, since I desire and seek only the Divine Will?  
(Saint Francis de Sales)

I am always content with what happens;  
for I know that what God chooses is better than what I choose.  
(Epictetus)



## Karmas [Sufferings] - A Time of Trials

Sant Kirpal Singh

Whatever good or bad happens to you, through whatever persons or object, directly proceeds from our loving Father. All persons and objects are but tools in His hand. If an evil befalls you, think it as His greatest mercy. We have to suffer for our past actions sooner or later. Our Master, by taking us through these sufferings speedily, and by hastening the approach of those which were to come later, intends to relieve us of our burden earlier. And by this earlier payment of debt - because debt it is - the amount of the suffering is very much lessened. We may have to pay one ton of karma first, but instead, by the Grace of the Master, we are released and only pay one pound. So never be disheartened if you are made to pay some severe debt. It is all for your good. Suppose a man ill-treats you without any fault on your part, you should see in this ill-treatment the Hand of the Master working. He wants to find out, and to make known to you, whether or not your self-reverence has died out, and how deep has meekness and love taken root in you.

Again, suppose a man loses a relative, it is to test the decrease in love of earthly relatives. Father wants to loosen these heavy chains which bind us down to this earth. More love towards earthly relatives means less with the Master. So all events which appear to be misfortune are not really so. They come to chasten us and to add to our power of resistance - and leave us better in the end. Be always resigned to His Will. What Father does, He does for the best.

In this world, those persons who are engaged in the upward march have constantly to face the inroads of two powerful enemies - the Mind and Matter. They try to put many obstacles in our way. If an untoward event happens we need not be disheartened. Rather, we should rise with redoubled love - and finally victory is ours.

Desire has abused the soul. When it desires something and fails to find the object of its desire, it feels pain. Therefore, abandon your desires even now and accustom yourself to be resigned to the will of the Father.

Your fall from the window - my daughter you truly say. There is nothing accidental here. Every misery or trouble that comes to us is the result of our own past actions. The sooner our debts to Kal Purush are paid off the better for us. Whatever befalls us is regulated by direct orders of our Guru, and we should take it as such as a blessing unexpected. Such obstructions are sure to come in the way of a Satsangi. But we should not be disheartened by these acts of the Kal Purush, rather during such intervals we should attend to the Bhajan with double zeal. Master is always with you and watching you and helping you in every action. Go on increasing love and faith in His Feet by regularly attending to exercises. He, Himself will look after our worldly affairs.

A Master-Saint's mission is to distribute Heaven's Treasure of Mercy with the Laws of Sympathy and Mercy. Thus all troubles of devoted disciples are softened to a bearable minimum degree. Sometimes intensity of bodily and mental trouble is increased to shorten duration of suffering. With others, intensity is decreased and duration is prolonged. But this is not all. Sufferings, troubles, and diseases of physical body are the interest we accrue from pleasures. Bodily troubles are to be borne on the body. The Master as Word-Personified and Polarized God-Man knows all His disciples, whether at a distance or near at hand. He even takes

the burden of karma of His devoted disciples on His own shoulders to bear Himself. This happens in very rare cases where Master sees fit. Besides, no disciple would like to adopt this course, that the Holy Master should suffer for his wrongs. The disciple should be well conversant with the Laws of Prayer in the world. He should pray to his Master Saint and help is sure to come to relieve or soften the situation and to minimize the results of sins.

Your question about the necessity of suffering in the economy of creation is one of those problems which cannot be satisfactorily understood so long as the soul is on this low plane, but so much can be said that spirit entities are merely forced into this condition at the time of creation. The object of the creator was that they, too, should attain full consciousness and join the region of pure bliss. Therefore, in order to develop their consciousness and to create in them a longing to reach the region of pure spirit, it was necessary to subject them to a course of suffering, without that they would not have cared to make their condition better. The soul that is satisfied in this world does not feel the necessity of joining its creator. The truth of this explanation becomes established as the soul travels upwards.

The individual's desires are mostly the outcome of past karma. Feeble and passing desires arise in thought and are stilled after mental satisfaction. There are other desires which are more persistent, they have to be satisfied, some even on the physical plane. So whatever happens is for the ultimate good, although at times it appears antagonistic to our calculation. We are ignorant of our past karmas but Master knows. So the whole thing reduces to this: that we do what we have been asked to do by the Master (spiritual exercises) and doing our worldly things with our ordinary wisdom and never caring for the result. Do your duty and expect nothing; leave that to the Master. Take for granted that all that has happened, is happening, or will happen, is with His will. So in whatever circumstances we find ourselves we should remain contented. If He sends us misery, we should accept it with pleasure and if He keeps us happy we should take it as His children. So do not consider that your life is not a bed of roses. Take it as His gift and be happy with it. "Misery is a blessing in disguise," says Shakespeare. Misery is a medicine and pleasure is a disease, for in pleasure the mind dominates and keeps us away from the Path. You say you are thirsty for knowledge; knowledge is in the sound current. It is within you. You speak of your husband's illness and loss of position - naturally you feel very much disturbed and disheartened.

Rest assured that before you are born here the arrangement of your livelihood was made. The pains and pleasures and the general run of life were then determined. This was not any haphazard process, but by a careful regulated system known as the Rarinichan.

Nothing happens here of its own accord. The pains and pleasures of life are the result of our own actions. He who is born, no matter in what form (all forms) cannot help doing actions and all actions must have reactions. Every action is indelibly written on our minds. The memory is poor and the whole record is forgotten, but it does not mean that there is no record.

Main events of the life are the results of our past actions and this is the debt that stands against us, and like a debtor we should be happy when the debt is being paid off. The debt has to be paid. We incurred it at one time as cheerfully as some people are doing now. It seems painful now to pay, but we were not cautious when we incurred it. The only course open now is to reconcile ourselves with what is happening, for happen it must, and undergo it we must, then why not do so without opposition?

It is difficult to be happy in calamity, but you will find much change if you look at it from the viewpoint just stated. Nanak, a Great Saint, has said, "Misery is medicine and pleasure a disease, because in pleasure mind scatters and in adversity or misery, it contracts." The teachings of the Saints is to subordinate and merge the individual will in His Will.

The Saints and the world differ here. The world pays the debt and weeps or laughs, while the Saints neither weep nor laugh but are unaffected by the pains or pleasures of this life. The question arises: "What supports the Saints in this attitude?" The answer is that while they have bodies like us and live under the same external circumstances in which we live, they are not attached to the bodies as we are.

They can withdraw the attention from the body at WILL not only from the material body, but also from the astral and causal bodies. When the attention is withdrawn and, in proportion to its withdrawal, then the influence of pain and pleasure is not felt; for the mind that was to feel (attention) is not there for the time being. They withdraw the attention and live in the sound current. The current is their life. They teach the same to us and not only wish it, but make him a Saint who follows them. Hence, with patience, perseverance, and faith, try to rise up, first to the eye focus by repetition of names, and then catch the sound current there and reach your Naam.

**DO NOT LOOSE HEART BUT TRUST IN THE MASTER.  
SUBORDINATE YOUR WILL TO HIS.**

The game of life seldom runs smoothly; when everything seems going well something comes in to disturb it. The Kal interferes. But if the faith is strong and one keeps on with the current the times pass on well. The wind has come and gone. The pains and pleasures of life come and go and mind learns by experience. Let Mrs \_\_\_\_ alone. Let her gain by experience.

When the time of very favorable karma comes, only then the mind feels inclined to go within and only then the love for the Master and the sound current spring up, and he spends some time in devotion. On the other hand, when the disturbing karma intervenes mind feels dry and indifferent and runs away from Satsang and sinks back in the quagmire of the world. It takes time to remove the layers of karmic dirt deposited through innumerable births - Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita says, "Freedom from karma is attained after a long succession of lives spent rightly on the path."

Life is a combination of pains and pleasures. If the happy days are gone, the days of adversity will also go in their turn to make room for the happy times again. The karmic cycle must work. The arrow that has left the bow must find its mark. The Man should put up with it as best he can for the karma is unchangeable.

Two devotees of spirituality went to pay respects to a lady well advanced in this line. The talk turned on the visitation of good and bad days. The lady asked them to state the attitude a person should have under these varying circumstances. One of them replied, "Good and bad should be borne with patience." The lady replied that there was pride in that attitude. The second said that one should take delight in both good and bad. The lady smelled pride here as well. They asked the lady to state the attitude and she replied, "Soul should be so advanced that it feels no difference in good and bad."

In adversity and disease one gets an opportunity to test himself and his depth in his faith.

In this world you seldom come across a happy soul. Under the burden of ailments and troubles, mental and physical, every soul feels oppressed. When hard times come, a devotee should face them with patience and should derive strength from the sound current to bear them, remembering that if good days have passed away giving place to bad, the bad also in their time will be replaced by the good days again. A boat held to its moorings will see flood waters pass by, but detached from its moorings, it may not survive the flood. Current is our base - our mooring. Soul attached to the current is safe.

The span of life can neither be extended nor shortened. Even by one single breath. Fate cannot be altered. Health and disease are connected with past karma, and come and go as determined by the cycle of karma. Medicine does not cure the disease. Karma is at the root. When the karma has been gone through; the disease has run its course; and the medicine is effective. No medicine is effective as long as the disease has not run its course. But it is good to take medicine in disease as advised by doctors. Medicine keeps the patient consoled. Friends do not unnecessarily trouble and press the patient, while others get no chance at all to call the patient a miser or a stupid person. Again, it is an opportunity for the paying up of old debts through the doctor's fees and apothecaries bills. Faith unsupported by direct evidence from within should not be put to very severe tests for it is shaky. When the spirit has access within and is in communion with the Master then it receives support from within and has direct evidence of the coming, duration, and going of the disease. In such cases, even Saints advise the use of medicine - for the patient may be getting evidence and support from within, but his relations or attendants in whose charge he finds himself may not be of his way of thinking. They will be constantly pressing him for medicine. So why not take a little dose and let things go smoothly.

The karmic debt has to be paid. The power to pay this debt increases as we follow the current. As long as the attention is in the current it is withdrawn from the body and mind, and as the debt is to be paid through sufferings of the body or the mind, and through association with the current, both of them have been elevated and they do not feel the suffering to the extent to which they could have felt otherwise; not that they are dulled but because the soul - the life-giving principle - is capable of detaching or withdrawing itself from their sphere. Again, if a devotee is doing his bit faithfully he receives Master's help to a greater degree. Just as a benevolent person coming across a man carrying a heavy load would offer to share his load, so does the Master. A faithful devotee is taken care of by the Master as a child is taken care of by its mother. But look at the implicit faith of a child in the Mother. The sound practice does not postpone the karma but destroys it. ([ruhanisatsangusa.org/trials.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/trials.htm))

## The Man and the Box

Sant Kirpal Singh

A man traveling in a train has a box beside him on the berth. Now both the man and his box are being carried by the train. If the man were to put the box on his head, he would surely be a fool, for he would break his neck for nothing. This is exactly the state of affairs with the worldly wise. We generally lack faith in the gracious Master Power and unnecessarily create problems for our bondage as, otherwise, everything would progress smoothly in the well established divine plan.

(Sat Sandesh, December 1973, page 8)

## Have You Met the Master?

Sant Kirpal Singh

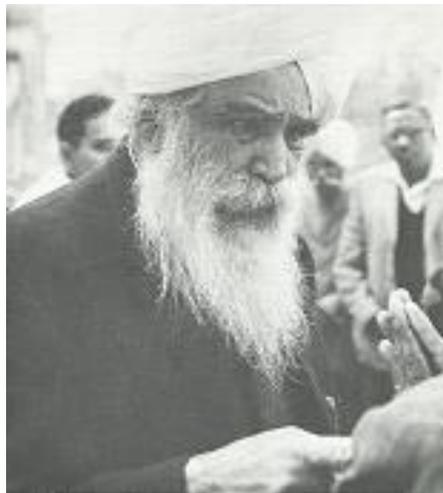
There are three criteria which show that you have met the Master; I will tell you. First, one is put on the way, but that is not the only thing. There are three criteria to judge whether you are following the Master.

If you daily put in time for meditation and rise above body consciousness, above the level of all your faculties, to enjoy the higher bliss of the God-into-Expression Power or Light and Sound, to the extent that the outer bliss has less and less fascination, you will lose your outer attachment. What is that? That means, if someone dies, perhaps your friend, you do not feel it; or if someone is born you are not unduly overjoyed. These are all results of give and take reactions of the past and when you are not affected by them it shows a way of living; it shows that you have met the Master...

Now there is a second criterion. Things happen in life; sometimes one is rich, sometimes poor, sometimes one is bankrupt and one pays, sometimes one has a golden or silver spoon in the mouth. They are all enjoyments and should make no difference because you are not attached to them. This indicates the second criterion. If you are sick, you are not worried or upset. Outer things do not pinch you, for you are air conditioned. They air condition rooms, do they not, to help you to get away from the heat? So nothing affects you.

The third criterion is this: if for instance a bomb fell and there was danger of your losing your life, you would say, "all right, let's go" without any worry or attachment-quite jolly about it. Now see where you stand; for these are the criteria which show that you have met a Master. If you leave everything to the Master, he takes care of all your affairs.

(Sat Sandesh, May 1974, *Your Life Should Show Criteria*)



## Stories of Perfect Acceptance

### The Will of the Lord

There was once a fake sadhu, who did not believe in Naam or Gurus. On one occasion he was given the opportunity to stay with Guru Nanak Dev.

One day he asked Guru Nanak if he knew of a holy man with whom he could spend some time. Guru Nanak told him that although there were many holy men, he should go to Bhai Lalo, the carpenter.

When the sadhu came into his humble house, Bhai Lalo stood up in reverence, offered him a charpoy to sit on, and silently went about his work. The sadhu expected Lalo's attention and, disappointed, he rose to leave.

"Wait for a couple of hours," requested Lalo, "I have an urgent piece of work to do. I shall be at your service as soon as I'm through with it." The sadhu started to think Lalo was a worldly man, wrapped up in his worldly affairs. How could he be a holy man?

Bhai Lalo was making a bier on which to carry a dead body and was also collecting material for a cremation.

"Why are you doing all this?" asked the sadhu.

"My son went to bring his bride from her parents' house," Bhai Lalo replied. "On the way he fell under the wheel of a cart and he died. I have made this for him."

"If you knew what was ordained to happen, why did you not go with him to keep him safe?" asked the increasingly skeptical sadhu.

"Whatever the Satguru wills, only that happens," replied Bhai Lalo.

(Baba Sawan Singh; *Tales of the Mystic East*)

### Drawing Water and Carrying Wood

Master Pang lived a simple life with his wife, son, and daughter, earning his living by making and selling bamboo utensils. Renowned for the depth of his spiritual insight, Pang refused to engage in philosophical speculation or debate. In response to a taunt by a scriptural scholar, Pang responded: "Let go of longing and aversion and everything will be perfectly clear. Because you select and reject, you can't perceive things as they are. My daily affairs are quite ordinary; but I'm in total harmony with them. I don't hold on to anything, don't reject anything; nowhere an obstacle or conflict. Who cares about wealth and honor? Even the poorest thing shines. My miraculous power and spiritual activity: drawing water and carrying wood. Immersed in the wonder of Tao, I can deal with whatever life brings me, and when death comes, I am ready."

## Is That So?

The Zen Master Hakuin was praised by neighbors as one living a pure life.

A beautiful Japanese girl whose parents owned a food store lived near him. Suddenly without any warning, her parents discovered she was with child.

This made her parents angry. She would not confess who the man was, but after much harassment at last named Hakuin.

In great anger the parents went to the Master. "Is that so?" was all he would say.

After the child was born it was brought to Hakuin. By this time he had lost his reputation, which did not trouble him, but he took very good care of the child. He obtained milk from his neighbors and everything else the little one needed.

A year later the girl-mother could stand it no longer. She told her parents the truth – that the real father of the child was a young man who worked in the fish market.

The mother and father of the girl at once went to Hakuin to ask his forgiveness, to apologize at length, and to get the child back again.

Hakuin was willing. In yielding the child, all he said was: "Is that so?"

## Without Batting an Eye

During a time of civil war in Korea, a certain general led his troops through province after province, overrunning whatever stood in his path.

The people of one town, knowing that he was coming and having heard tales of his cruelty, all fled into the mountains.

The general arrived in the empty town with his troops and sent them out to search the town.

Some of the soldiers came back and reported that only one person remained, a Zen priest.

The general strode over to the temple, walked in, pulled out his sword, and said, "Don't you know who I am? I am the one who can run through you without batting an eye."

The Zen master looked back and calmly responded, "And I, sir, am one who can be run through without batting an eye." The general, hearing this, bowed and left.

## To Live in God's Will

There was a learned man who, for eight years, desired that God would show him a man who would teach him the truth. Once when he felt a great longing, a voice from God came to him and said, "Go to the church, and there you will find a man who will show you the way to blessedness." The man went to the church and found a poor man whose feet were torn and covered with dust and dirt, and all his clothes were hardly worth three cents. The man greeted the poor man saying – "God give you good day!"

He answered: "I have never had a bad day."

"God give you good luck."

"I have never had bad luck."

"May you be happy."

"I have never been unhappy."

"Why do you answer me the way you do? Please explain this to me, for I cannot understand it."

The poor man answered willingly. "You wished me good day, I never had a bad day; for if I am hungry I praise God; if it freezes, hails, snows, if the weather is fair or foul, still I praise God; am I wretched and despised? I praise God, and so I have never had a bad day. You wished that God would send me luck. But I never had bad luck for I know how to live with God, and I know that what He does is best; and what God gives me, whether it is good or bad, I take it cheerfully from God as the best that can be, and so I have never had bad luck. You wished that God would make me happy. I am never unhappy; for my only desire is to live in God's will, and I have so entirely surrendered my will to God, that what God wills, I will."

## We're Out of Cheese

One evening Mulla Nasruddin said to his wife, "Please bring us some cheese to eat, for cheese enhances the appetite and makes the eyes bright." "We are out of cheese," the wife said. "That is good," Mulla replied, "for cheese is injurious to the teeth and gums." "Which of your statements is then true?" she asked. Mulla answered, "If there is cheese in the house, the first one; if not, the second."

## Total Surrender

I go to the house of my one true Lover. When I see His beauty, I only crave Him more. At dusk I go to Him, at dawn I return. Whatever His pleasure, day and night I am His. The clothes He gives me, I wear. The food He offers, I eat. Where He wants me to be, I stay. If He wants to sell me, I want to be sold. My love for the Beloved has lasted through many rebirths, without Him I scarcely breathe. She offers herself to Him in all of her lives. (Mirabai)

## By the Will of Rama

In a certain village there lived a weaver. He was a very pious soul. Everyone trusted him and loved him. He used to sell his goods in the market-place.

When a customer asked him the price of a cloth, the weaver would say, "By the Will of Rama the price of the yarn is one rupee and the labor four annas; by the Will of Rama the profit is two annas. The price of the cloth, by the Will of Rama is one rupee and six annas." Such was the people's faith in the weaver that the customer would at once pay the price and take the cloth.

The weaver was a real devotee of God. After finishing his supper in the evening, he would spend long hours in the worship hall meditating on God and chanting His name and glories.

Now, late one night he was sitting outside the worship hall when a band of robbers happened to pass that way. They wanted a man to carry their goods and said to the weaver, "Come with us."

So saying, they led him off by the hand. After committing a robbery in a house, they put a load of things on the weaver's head commanding him to carry them. Suddenly the police arrived and the robbers ran away. But the weaver, with his load, was arrested.

He was kept in the lock-up for the night. Next day he was brought before the magistrate for trial. The villagers learnt what had happened and came to the court. They said to the magistrate, "Your Honor, this man could never commit robbery." Thereupon the magistrate asked the weaver to make his statement.

The weaver said: "Your Honor, by the Will of Rama I finished my meal at night. Then by the Will of Rama I was sitting outside the worship hall. It was quite late at night by the Will of Rama. By the Will of Rama I had been thinking of God and chanting His name and glories, when by the Will of Rama a band of robbers passed that way. By the Will of Rama they dragged me with them; by the Will of Rama they committed a robbery in a house; and by the Will of Rama they put a load on my head. Just then, by the Will of Rama the police arrived and by the Will of Rama I was arrested. Then by the Will of Rama the police kept me in the lock-up for the night, and this morning by the Will of Rama I have been brought before Your Honor."

The magistrate realized that the weaver was a pious man and ordered his release. On his way home the weaver said to his friends, "By the Will of Rama I have been released."

Whether you live in the world or renounce it, everything depends upon the Will of Rama. Throwing your whole responsibility upon God, do your work in the world.

*(Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna)*

## It Is Not Well to Oppose One's Beloved

On one occasion a Sufi said to Rabia when she was ill, "If you would utter a prayer, God would relieve your suffering." She turned her face to him and said, "O Sufyan, do you not know who it is that wills this suffering for me? Is it not God who wills it?" "Yes", he replied. "When you know this, why do you ask for what is contrary to His will? It is not well to oppose one's beloved," replied Rabia.

## Cow Karma

In Kashmire long ago lived a monk named Mirathi, an exemplary upholder of the Buddhist precepts. Through the power of meditative concentration he had developed miraculous powers. His numerous disciples made firsthand reports of their teacher flying in the air, reading their minds, describing past lives, and accurately foretelling future events.

The great monk Mirathi was a vegetarian. Moreover, in strict adherence to Buddhist tradition, he did not eat after midday. One day he happened to be in his forest abode, dyeing his old ochre monk's robe in a large pot set over an outdoor fire pit, when a band of angry men came upon him looking for a baby cow that had recently been lost. Opening the pot and finding it full of motley bits and pieces of blood-colored hue, they shouted accusations at the silent monk, accusing him of stealing and slaughtering their cow. Then they led him away.

A kangaroo court that was convened in the nearby village immediately sentenced the silent monk to be placed in chains in a dungeon-like hole in the ground, where he remained for several days. He said nothing to disprove the claims made against him and made no attempt to secure his release. His disciples beseeched him to rectify the matter, but Mirathi himself said nothing.

After several days, the villagers found the missing cow. Realizing their mistake, they petitioned the local chief to free the monk, but the chieftain was distracted by other important affairs and neglected the case for months and months. Meanwhile, Mirathi lingered in his earthen pit.

Finally, several of the foremost disciples of the imprisoned monk sought a personal audience with the local king. He was astonished at their tale, fearing that a grave injustice had been done and that immense bad karma would ensue for the entire kingdom as well as for the irresponsible villagers. Therefore, he quickly ordered the monk freed and had him brought forth in order to make amends. It was not every day that a distinguished cleric was condemned under false charges to spend six months in a filthy hole!

When the dignified old monk appeared before the king, the king begged his forgiveness and asked what could be done to right the terrible wrong that had befallen Mirathi through his oversight, promising to punish the parties directly responsible for Mirathi's unjust incarceration. Mirathi replied, "Esteemed king, please punish no one. It was my turn to suffer, and I endured it willingly. No one suffers anything except at the hands of the karma that his or her own actions have inescapably produced."

The king was astonished. "Why, venerable sir, what have you done?"

Mirathi explained that in a remote past life he had been a thief who had stolen a baby cow from some villagers. While escaping from hot pursuit, he had abandoned his stolen cow near a liberated sage who was meditating in the forest, and it came about that the enlightened monk was punished for the crime by being chained for six days in a hole. Mirathi continued, with downcast eyes, "O gracious and just king, as a result of that negative karmic action, I have endured lifetime after lifetime of misery in the lower realms of existence. Now, at last, my karma has been fully exhausted, and my sin expiated. Therefore I have only gratitude and respect for you and your subjects."

Bowing low, Mirathi went quietly back to the forest to pursue his spiritual practices in peace.

## Maybe

Once upon a time there was a Chinese farmer whose horse ran away, and all the neighbors came around to offer their sympathy that evening, saying, "So sorry to hear your horse has run away. That's too bad".

And the farmer said, "Maybe".

The next day the horse came back bringing seven wild horses with it and everybody came around that evening and said, "Oh, isn't that lucky! What a wonderful turn of events, you now have eight horses!"

And the farmer said, "Maybe".

The next day the farmer's son tried to break one of these horses to ride, but was thrown off and broke his leg. And all the neighbors came around and said, "Oh, dear, that's too bad."

And the farmer said, "Maybe".

The following day the conscription officers came around to draft people into the army and they rejected his son because he had a broken leg.

All the people came around again and said, "Isn't that just great!"

And the farmer said, "Maybe".

## The Duty of Resignation

During her last illness, the great saint Rabia was visited by three of her friends, and they endeavored to discuss the duty of resignation. The first friend said, "He is not sincere in his claim to be a true servant of God who is not patient under the chastisement of his Lord."

"I smell egotism in this speech," remarked Rabia.

"He is not sincere in his claim to be a true servant of God who is not thankful for the chastisement of his Lord," improved the second friend.

"Something better than this is needed," remarked Rabia.

Then the third friend tried, "He is not sincere in his claim to be a true servant of God who does not delight in the chastisement of his Lord."

"Even this is not good enough," observed Rabia.

They then said, "Please tell us, what is the test of resignation to the will of the Lord?"

"He is not sincere in his claim who does not entirely forget the chastisement in his contemplation on his Lord," explained Rabia.

## Be Content with Your Time

Master Yu fell sick one day, and a friend paid a call to cheer him. The friend found the master lying on his cot in an awkward position. “It is simply amazing,” master Yu said after the greetings had been observed. “The Creator has made me crooked. My back is hunched and my vital organs are on top of me. My chin is hidden in my navel, and my shoulders are higher than my head, and my pigtail points to the sky. There must be some dislocation of the great balancing forces of nature, the yin and the yang.”

Yet, master Yu was smiling as he spoke, and his eyes were calm with his unconcern.

“Do you resent what is happening?” his friend asked.

“Why, no,” master Yu said. “Why should I resent it? I received life because my time had come. I will lose it when my time passes on. Be content with your time, dwell in your time, and neither sorrow nor joy will touch you. In ancient times, this was called ‘freedom from bondage’. There are those who cannot free themselves because they are bound by things of the world. But there is no point to that. Nothing can win out against the Creator. That’s the way it has always been. So what is there to resent?”

## In Accord with Natural Laws

Chuang-tzu, the Chinese Taoist sage of the fourth century B.C., was visited after the death of his wife by his friend Hui-tzu, who came to express his condolences. The latter arrived to find the master sitting on the ground with his legs spread wide apart. The widower was singing away and whacking out a tune on the back of a wooden bowl.

Hui-tzu said to him, “You’ve lived all these years with your loving wife and watched your eldest boy grow to manhood. For you not to shed a tear over her remains would have been bad enough. But singing and drumming away on a bowl – this is just too much!”

“Not so,” the master replied. “I am a normal man and grieved when she died. But then I remembered that she had existed before this birth. At that time she was without a body. Eventually, matter was added to that spirit and, taking form, she was born. It is clear to me that the same process of change which brought my wife to birth eventually brought her to death, in a way as natural as the progression of the seasons. Winter follows autumn. Summer follows spring. To wail and groan while my wife is sleeping peacefully in the great chamber between heaven and earth would be to deny these natural laws, of which I cannot claim ignorance. So I refrain.”

## Master Kirpal Singh’s Last Evening Darshan Talk

Disciple: Master why don’t you heal yourself? You are all-powerful.

Master: Why don’t you heal yourself? If anybody whom you love gives you something, would you refuse it? Tell me. What does he hope to do? He would gladly accept it.



How people treat you is their karma;  
how you react is yours.  
(Wayne Dyer)

Understanding the play of karma is one aspect of awakening.  
If we are not aware, our life will simply follow the pattern of our past habits over and over. But if we can awaken, we can make conscious choices in how we respond to the circumstances of our life. Our conscious response will then create our future karma. We may or may not be able to change our outer circumstances, but with awareness we can always change our inner attitude, and this is enough to transform our life. Even in the worst external circumstances, we can choose whether we meet life from fear and hatred or with compassion and understanding.  
(Jack Kornfield)

One must be in the world attending to the duties and obligations assigned to him or her,  
but one should do these in a very detached manner.  
(Sant Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Elixir*, 277)

Ups and downs do come here as a result of the reactions of one's own doings. They have to be faced and squared up. If we were to run away from them, the debts will remain unliquidated. When something is to be given, it is always better to give it and be free. The way that the Master has given, works both ways. It gives progress within, which strengthens one's powers of tolerance and humility to face trials and tribulations with equanimity, while severity and duration of such hardships are toned down considerably.  
(Sant Kirpal Singh, *Spiritual Elixir*, 117)

The Masters test the disciples again and again to see how much the disciple can sacrifice, how much loving devotion he has, and to what extent he still remains under the influence of mind.  
(Sant Kirpal Singh, [ruhanisatsangusa.org/tghp.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/tghp.htm))



May your soul be happy;  
journey joyfully.  
(Rumi)

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