Answers to questions asked of Daya Mata in satsanga with Self-Realization Fellowship members and friends

Attuning Ourselves With the Infinite Source of Strength to Cope With Life’s Difficulties

By Sri Daya Mata

From audience: I have often heard that God gives a person only as much as he or she can bear—that God will not allow us to be tested beyond our strength to endure and overcome. If this is so, then why do some people who are under tremendous stress have a nervous breakdown or even lose their minds? I work in a mental hospital, and I see so many people who suffer in this way.

Daya Mata: Every one of us, having been created in the image of God, is innately endowed with the divine strength and wisdom to conquer and overcome all the tests that life may bring. But it is one’s karma—accumulated throughout this life and in past incarnations wherein there has been wrong thinking or living—that impedes the full expression of that indomitable soul power and the spiritual progress that comes from utilizing that power. A person gradually, over many lifetimes, takes on weaknesses and negative qualities in his or her ego-nature and can no longer perceive the ever-perfect, crystal-clear qualities of the God-image within the soul.

It is absolutely true that no one is tested beyond his level of strength and endurance. But the point is that not everyone per-

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sists in the effort required to manifest that strength! Do you see? Some people can withstand a lot of suffering, a great deal of hardship; they face it with courage and come through it. They are better for it, and grow from that experience. But other persons, the moment they are confronted with adversity, they collapse. They have not sufficiently developed the perseverance to cultivate that inner fortitude, to take hold of and use the strength that is latent within them. That is why it is so important to begin from childhood to train the thoughts and will power to remain positive and God-directed, to infuse the consciousness with courage and faith. Help your children to cultivate the right attitude toward the difficulties of life, and encourage them to be mentally strong.

Guruji used to tell us how in India some yogis would lie on a bed of nails, or practice certain austerities for years in order to build within themselves tremendous mental power. Of course, he didn’t recommend such measures; rather, that you should use the little experiences that come to you every day to train yourselves toward greater endurance. If you cut your finger, don’t go to pieces over it. If some larger misfortune happens to you, refuse to let it throw you into a tailspin. You have to learn self-control; use it to lift your mind higher than your troubles.

To return to your question about the mentally ill, when individuals have mental breakdowns so that they lose touch with reality, it is because they have lived wrongly in this life or a past life: They have accumulated such a karmic weight of wrong thoughts or actions that the burden has become overwhelming. When that happens, the mind stops. It can hold no more; it cannot function normally — and a breakdown follows.

If that occurs, you should not think that all hope of soul progress is lost to that individual. When people have “lost their mind,” so to speak, they may not behave in a way that is normal to us, but still through the mental limitations and dysfunction that they have to cope with, they work off much of their karmic debt. Meanwhile, from the onset of their illness, their actions do not affect them karmically, because the choices they make are not from a normal, rational consciousness; they cease to be aware of the right or wrong of what they are doing.

From audience: You mean that if somebody who is insane commits a homicide, it doesn’t affect him because he’s not consciously doing it?

Daya Mata: There may still be some karmic reaction resulting from such an act, depending on the degree of mental impairment. Only the person who has totally lost his mind is exempt from accruing karmic consequences. This you can say is the compassion of God.

Know this for certain: God has not forsaken such souls. He cannot; He will not. Each one of His children is precious to Him. We need to remember this and have compassion, and we should pray for such individuals. For those like you who serve in mental hospitals, let your main endeavor in helping the mentally ill be to show them every kindness and love. They need that. They have retired from the world, you could say — seeking to escape from it because they cannot cope with its pressures. How do you help them come through the fog of mental confusion or darkness that besets...
them? They of course require proper therapy, but above all, they are helped by love, by kindness and patience.

God’s love is the true panacea for all ills. Whatever external methods may be used, it is ultimately His power working through our love, our prayers, and our healing skills that enacts the healing. To whom else can we turn when we are suffering? One of the traditional Bengali chants Guruji sang with us describes this recourse to the blessings of God:

Those who are in despair, wipe Thou their tears!
They have come to Thy door, Lord; give them an audience, Lord.
Those who are drowned in sin, to whom will they go?
They have no one, Lord; do not turn them away.*

From audience: For those of us who are therapists or doctors, are there spiritual methods we can use to assist the healing of our patients?

Daya Mata: Whether the kind of therapy you practice is physical or psychological, you can increase its effectiveness by considering the threefold nature of the person you are treating — body, mind, and soul. For example, medical doctors should think not only of the physical aspects of disease, but be aware of the role of life energy and mind in keeping the body well. And those who treat mental or emotional disorders should remember that psychology alone does not have all the answers; the spiritual dimension of man’s being must also be taken into account. As Guruji often reminded us, ignorance of our connection with God is the ultimate cause of all disease — physical, mental, or spiritual.

Along with whatever form of therapy or medical help you offer to your patients, your own powerful faith in God can do much to help them. If you believe in the infinite healing power of God, your faith will aid your patients; it will help them also to be receptive to the divine healing

*From Cosmic Chants, by Paramahansa Yogananda.

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force that can be awakened within them.

I think you all know the methods Master taught us for using the healing energy that is within and all around us — gathering and feeling that energy in our hands and then sending it to others. Every night I pray for those who have requested help and prayers from our Worldwide Prayer Circle, and we join together in our daily meditations and prayer services to send out healing energy to all in need. You also can practice these techniques that Master has given; I hope you will make use of them. How effective they are! As you know, science is developing instruments for registering the presence of energy. Such instruments would show that during our Self-Realization Fellowship healing services, tremendous energy projects from our hands as we raise our hands to send healing vibrations to others. And the physical energy is only part of what is pouring out. Life energy is a vehicle for the even more powerful force of mind or thought. That is why, in practicing this technique, after meditating and attuning ourselves with God we concentrate on and chant Aum — sending out that Holy Vibration which consists not only of all-powerful Cosmic Energy but also God’s immanent divine intelligence (the Christ or Kutastha Consciousness).

An important factor is that in order for healing to take place, it requires both the faith of the healer and the receptive heart of the one who is in need. If you have strong faith in God’s power, and if when you are using Master’s techniques or giving any kind of therapy, you mentally hold to the thought that God will help through you, your faith will aid others to receive His healing energy. Never think of yourself as responsible for the healing, because then you obstruct the flow of divine power. It is God alone, and His divine life-giving energy, that heals.

From audience: What about when you want to send healing to children? How can you help their receptivity? Adolescent children can sometimes have a very rebellious attitude.

Daya Mata: If the child is at a distance, you can pray for him, to help him be receptive. You can also write or speak to him, giving suggestions of what he can do. For example, even if he does not know about spiritual practices, you can encourage him to take time to think of God, to pray and talk to Him, or have a little quiet time in meditation, a period to just sit still and feel God’s peace within. You might send Guruji’s Scientific Healing Affirmations or Where There Is Light. Teens are old enough to understand these truths, which appeal to their natural youthful idealism for improving themselves and the world they live in. In these ways, you can sow seeds of spiritual thoughts in their consciousness. Then when you pray for them, there should be more receptivity.

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