



Life without struggle - 3

From where we left off

Having a clearly defined ideal empowered as a resolve, restores harmony in the mind, eliminates all inner struggles and results in a better state of overall wellbeing. We have been talking about this recently – today, let us summarize what we have already covered and go a little deeper.

What is struggle?

Struggle is being at the crossroads of wanting to go one way while there seems to be some sort of pressure or pull to go another way. Why should this happen at all? Let us look at struggle from a broader perspective than merely choices, likes, dislikes or personal preferences.

Is it not possible to have one ideal or goal of life that can guide all action in all the different aspects of our own life? How we see all of life, is called our vision of life and this does not have to change with what is seen. We are one person, the same one person and if this one person can have one single focus or way of seeing life – it should reduce to eliminate all struggle as not matter what the situation.

If we do not have one single ideal that guides all action – we will experience confusion, struggle and inner conflict as different priorities which lead to different ways of looking at things is what observes different conditions. But, if we have a single ideal, one focus – then what does it matter if the situation is this way or that – we can simply do the very best we can in line with that ideal and be free of struggle.

We may not be able to change things but we can change – return to our original simplicity of oneness within first and then find a way to through action – be one with all things by not acting outside each situation.

All action has the same value

The different aspects of our life like family, work and recreation are not as different as we may think they are – they are just different fields of activity. This may seem odd at first but let's go deeper. What is the purpose of any and all activity when you really get down to it?

You may feel that I need to work to eat or feed my family but if this is so – it makes unethical means even if it is not considered ‘illegal’ – justifiable if they provide more as then you could probably provide better. At this crossroads, there will be a grinding of conscience or our inner sense of right and wrong versus the feeling or quality which will come if we are able to increase quantity. Quantity can never out-balance quality – they are on different frequencies.

Those who walk the way of righteousness or goodness know that this precious gem called goodness has its own value and it is goodness that gives value to all else. Do not mistake righteousness with merely following the law, procedures or social norms. For example: the traffic law in one area may state, ‘No Stopping’ – but, if you see someone on the side of the road, desperately in need of help – would you stop or use the convenient and flimsy justification of ‘following the law’ and nonchalantly drive on by? You can stretch this across all action – just because something is legal or ‘not considered illegal’ does not make it right. To use justification such as: what is legal, not considered illegal, social acceptable and what others are doing as a yardstick for one’s own decision will lead to inner degradation though perfectly acceptable and even laudable in society.

Goodness has its own value

Righteousness or goodness is much more than following the law, procedures, norms and such. We are not talking about disregarding or violating secular laws but to remember that there are higher laws that cannot be ignored as it is these laws that give our very life purpose.

We did not ask to come here but we are here and we may not ask for many situations that come but they will. The good news is that though we are here – this is a rare opportunity to free ourselves of this cycle of birth and death called samsara. Today, we will not get deeper into samsara but rather, look at ‘being good and doing good’ from a practical sense.

On being good

‘Being good’ is not as easy as it sounds as it involves the abandonment of all that is contrary. It does not have to take time but it usually does only because we are not able to renounce all that is non-good for many reasons – two of the main reasons are: weakness of resolve and strength of habit, and, our direct understanding of what is non-good is still evolving.

Rather than look at renouncing ‘non-good’ – we can take the plunge into ‘being good’ very sincerely. It does not matter what the understanding is and if we slip up as each slip will broaden the understanding, increase humility and love for God as we see our weaknesses and ask God for inner spiritual strength to overcome them. How can you fail when you make a firm resolve and try your very best each day to live up to it? Each fall will give you more and polish the mind and heart cleaner.

A sincere and wholehearted resolve is essential and requisite to eliminate struggle as with it, we are not struggling to let go and all struggle is in letting go. Instead, with a firm resolve, we are looking at attaining and what must be let go is let go without struggle as the sights are on the positive – on attaining and in attainment – there is always gain.

On doing good

Now, let us focus on ‘doing good’ in a very practical sense. Doing good is doing or action that is in accordance with the truth of things which is unity, oneness and non-separation. For this, there cannot be specific rules for what we call secular action and different rules for other action. What we call secular is just that – something we call or a way of seeing things – let us rise above all notions and take the broadest view.

First rule of doing good: Is it possible to act in such a way so that our actions or responses to life do not stem from notions, habits or what is called conditioning but rather, from real situations as they happen? This is doing what needs to be done rather than what ‘I would like to do’ or ‘what is in my best interests’. This way of action will not strengthen the sense of agency or ego and the source of all problems and pain – both to ourselves and others.

Second rule of doing good: Is it possible to act without concern or expectation for the fruits of action and this includes appreciation for anything done? If the carrot and stick drive our actions (and they can be golden ones), we are slaves to something and not free. Can we do everything that needs to be done (first rule) without concern or expectation of results in any way – just because it needs to be done?

When you free action from results, you actually become more productive and more comes. Why? Because there is no throttling of effort while doing. What else comes? You weaken the ego and find a way to gain inwardly with each action of wholehearted responses in life, thus, doing more, contributing more and finding immediate satisfaction in doing rather than what comes. This takes out hopes, expectations, frustrations and disappointments as joy is found in action rather than result. Don’t worry, results will come – no need to sweat unnecessarily. Sweating or worrying is a habit that you can do without.

Third rule of doing good: Both, while doing or during action and after action – can we keep a balanced state of mind? This can only happen if we follow rule two (above), which is to not be concerned about outcome, result or what comes. The reason we struggle with wholehearted actions is because of our habit of selectiveness and always looking for personal gain. If you eliminate the cause of imbalance in action (which is selfish action), you learn how to get rid of imbalance from your life period. All mood swings, good days and bad days and the lot are at once let go as just unnecessary.

Wholeheartedness is joy in itself. You must be wholehearted in everything you do – however mundane to train the mind to find delight in action as wholehearted action keeps the mind whole and the deep interest in all things sees satisfaction in a job well-done. Continual satisfaction is contentment and contentment is the biggest gain.



Wrap-up

What does it matter if things go one way or the other as long as you have approached each situation to see what needs to be done, done it without personal expectation and kept your balance in all situations? What you have started is a cycle of freeing yourself from the grip of karma and this cycle is first brought under control by good choices in thinking, feeling and acting which are seeds that must bring better conditions in this life and journeys to come.

Eternal vigilance or keeping the mind unceasingly in the field of observation along with the activity on hand becomes essential if we are to grow and evolve spiritually. Action, any action becomes a mirror to see the mind as the mind which is difficult to observe without getting caught up in its ways cannot resist reacting to situations with its preferences and habitual ways.

Unless we have one single clearly defined ideal as a firm resolve as a needle and thread with which we are willing to thread all our life's activities with – we are bound to struggle with what is more important and susceptible to our own flimsy self-justification or taking refuge in existing little laws and norms at the cost of silencing our conscience and compromising our innate goodness.

When one is awake – it means one has seen through things and has no problem with not even rejecting the old but choosing the new, choosing the good. When one resolutely walks the way of 'good' – there is never any fear of anything – come what may. This does not mean one is calloused but rather, one's sensitivity is fully awakened in its broadest sense without any tinge of selfishness and this expanded mind and heart is very different from self-centered, narrow and constricted ways – all will be well in the very moment and in all moments to unfold.

Swami Suryadevananda

22 April 2014