

The Art of Relationships

Talk by Sister Ranjini at the monthly meeting of TSCA on 16 March 2019.

Sister Ranjini is from the Brahmakumaris Spiritual University, Chennai branch. She is a renowned interactive speaker and has done many public and management programs, some of which can be viewed in YouTube.

Sister Ranjini has been a Brahmakumari for 32 years, joining the organization at a very young age. She has met people from different cultures. Tamils live in most of the countries in the world and are renowned for their hospitality and sister Ranjini experienced it. In 2011 she visited Sri Lanka. She recalled that at a meditation session in Mullaitivu 98% were women, because most men have died. Jaffna was like a funeral place, with so many widows.

How do we get the energy to face life, how do we get more peace and happiness?
Is the focus of her talk.

Material possessors do not bring happiness.

For example, you are happy when you own a late model car, but you when you find another car with more features that happiness disappears.

The conflict in our preferences

In a class of many naughty little boys, the teacher told the story of Ramayana¹ and asked them who do they prefer Rama or Ravana? To her dismay most boys preferred Ravana. When she asked for the reasons for their preference, the boys had many: Shiva devotee; veena player; Ravana being a cool guy compared to the boring Rama (based on a TV serial on Ramayana being broadcast at that time); Rama never missed his wife; etc.

Then the teacher asked who you would prefer your elder brother or father be (like Rama or Ravana). Now the answer was Rama. So, though the boys preferred Ravana

¹ Ramayana is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. Rama is the hero of Ramayana. He is an upright Prince (and later King) revered as an Avatar of the Lord Krishna. Ravana is the villain of the story, who abducted Rama's wife Sita.

in a general sense, they would like the ones close to them be like Rama. [A an aside to sister Ranjini's talk, this a profound observation in the world today where 'strong' populist leaders are in ascendancy – it is useful to reflect would you like any of your loved ones to be like these leaders? Yet, many will vote for them.]

The importance of personal responsibility

We do not want to take responsibility for our actions – and this is a major cause for our unhappiness.

If a small child hits his head on the table and looks around. If there is no one around the child snuffles and walks away. But when people (e.g. the mother) are around s/he starts bawling seeking attention. The mother comes running and smacks the table and says 'naughty table, you hurt [name]. Such behaviour teaches us to avoid personal responsibility in an early age.

[Again, as an aside, lack of personal responsibility is a major cause for many of problems.]

The ABC of Happiness

- A-Appreciation
 - In a rose garden, thorns outnumber roses, but no one notices them. The flowers give us happiness and do not prick us. Likewise, in relationship always notice good things and ignore the bad ones. We must appreciate the goodness in everyone.
 - Negative emotions can become a habit.
 - Ego and anger are obstacles to happiness.
 - Forgiveness leads to happiness.
- B-Blessings (Aseervatham)
 - Sister Ranjini illustrated this with the story of a Sadhu. In a funeral procession, a mother tells her child go and find out whether the dead person will go to heaven or hell. The boy runs to follow the casket and returns to his mother. The curious Sadhu asks how will you know? The mother replies that if the people in the procession talk good of the person, s/he has gained blessings. Only blessings come with you to the end.
- C- Choice
 - The importance of personal responsibility (see above).

- Focus on yourself. Correct yourself – not others. Do not criticise others.
- Choice [C] is between Birth [B] and Death [D].
- Happiness is your choice.

Conclusion

Say thank you before you go to bed and as soon as you wake up. Meditate as much as you can. And think of every day as your birthday.

Atman is like atom, small very powerful. Full of energy. Spirituality brings out the best in Atman.

Sabesh Shivasabesan (views between square brackets are my interpretation of sister Ranjini's talk).