

The shadows in my mind

May 2016

By Nandini Sarkar

Depression can be rooted out through spiritual methods such as prayer, japa, meditation, pranayam affirmations, says Nandini Sarkar



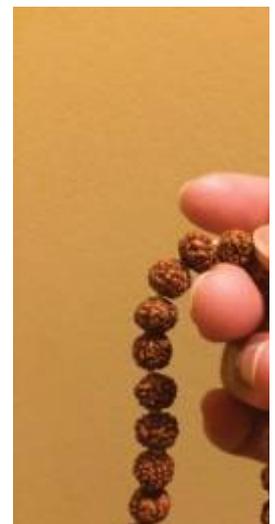
I put down the phone and got ready to visit a friend, whose called in distress. Their handsome young son opened the c me in. She was lying on the couch, pale, listless and inert, lil Her husband informed me she had been like this for the pa

"I just want to die!" she said, dully, when she saw me. I look beautiful home and the concerned faces of her husband ar son had taken two months' leave from his PhD at a foreign be by his mother's side. "But they don't want you to die, isn

contradiction!," I exclaimed. "I am just a burden on them," she said, in a faint voice. For a moment I was que what to say. My friend's life was undoubtedly tough. After years of dialysis, my friend's family had finally fou donor for her. However, after the kidney transplant was done, the new kidney did not function, throwing he depression. Long spells of dialysis and recurring infections had put a brake on her active, happy, social life a bouts of depression. Now, the failure of the kidney transplant was more than what her fragile mind could h. was ready to give up on life.

Miracles from the master

Normally, I never impose my beliefs on anyone. But this situation was grave and I was convinced that we needed a dynamic spiritual solution, and a great spiritual master who could take on and lighten her heavy karmic load. My friend used to do daily puja but somewhat mechanically, more as a social tradition, than out of any interest in spirituality. For some reason, which I cannot explain, the image of the great master, Lahiri Mahasaya, had entered my mind when I was preparing to come to her home. I always have a stack of *Autobiography of a Yogi* at home, and I had brought one along with me. I opened the page which had Lahiri Mahasaya's picture on it, and touched his picture to her head, heart and belly. I read out to her various miracles that Lahiri Mahasaya was credited with, including raising a man from the



miscarriages. With his divine intervention, the ninth child had survived. My daughter's birth had also been in somewhat miraculous circumstances, by Lahiri Mahasaya. Firmly believing him to be one of the guardians of humanity, I had urged my colleague to reach out mentally to Lahiri Mahasaya. A great master lives on even if his physical body has been laid to rest and responds compassionately to sincere calls for help. My colleague and I prayed earnestly and ardently to Lahiri Mahasaya all through her fourth pregnancy and the birth of the fourth child, a girl, to see the light of day. Today, bless her, she is six years old. After this incident was reported in the office, two other colleagues, a female and a male, also turned to Lahiri Mahasaya for help in similar circumstances, and were also and unconditionally helped.

Normally, I don't talk much. But surprisingly, in a chat that lasted nearly two hours, I found myself discussing the power of healing affirmations and the power of the superconscious mind to heal. I asked her to fight to the finish and not give up tamely. I also told her that it was no casual coincidence but Divine will that we were having this conversation. I told my friend that I would demand of her that she do a 41-day tapasya that involved a healing affirmation, japa, and devotion to Lahiri Mahasaya. I also told her that I was convinced Lahiri Mahasaya had already taken up her cause and that, on an astral level, she was already healed.

Her husband was also charged by now and took out their wedding album and old dance show albums to show her how she had been before and how stark the contrast was today. She had been so beautiful at one time that people called her Kashmiri Kali. She still had a figure and skin to die for, despite the ravages of a debilitating disease. Since she was an accomplished dancer, I challenged her to live and do the garba at her son's wedding, with me. Finally, a vein crossed her face and to our surprise, she got up slowly from her supine position and sat up on the couch. I was convinced it was a sign from Lahiri Mahasaya, that things were going to be fine. It definitely wasn't me but she was not a trained healer or counsellor.

Calling for help

Her son, the PhD scholar, had been listening intently. He was an atheist so I was surprised when he piped up and said he would do the 41-day practice with her. "What a son!" I remarked with sincere admiration. "And you are saying you still want to die without seeing him settled. Give the 41-day practice one chance and if it doesn't work, you die!" I said, needling her, just to arouse her fighting spirit. "I'll try," she said, weakly, but with a little smile and a selfie, just to record her promise.

The next afternoon, I got a call from her son. "After you left," he said, "She cried for a long time. All her pent-up emotions came out. She told us she hated to see us suffer on her account. However, she is ready to do the spiritual practice for the family's sake. She also slept peacefully for the first time in 15 days," he reported. I was elated and offered sincere thanks to Lahiri Mahasaya. The next three months flew by for me with various business and personal engagements, somehow I could not check on her progress. Or maybe subconsciously, I didn't want to check on her because I was afraid that she would not recover despite my brave words about Lahiri Mahasaya and healing affirmations.

To my utter surprise and delight, after three long months, I had a visit from her daughter who had been away from home. She visited their house, but was updated on the discussion. She told me that her brother had faithfully done the

chance that a failed kidney transplant will suddenly be reversed on its own.

Singing the blues

This experience has been profound for me and for those who were in it with me. It's about a simple, honest Universe is genuinely concerned about our well-being and not out to punish us or wreck us. No way. I remember from an Elvis Presley letter, written to God, seeking help, when he was going through a period of deep mental

Help me, Lord

I need the sun to drive away, the shadows in my mind

I need someone to guide me, when the path is hard to find

As I awake again today, and my pain won't go away

I just wish I could go home

I don't know if I can make it another mile, I feel so alone

According to medical experts, almost everyone is challenged with depression at some point during their life. For some people, depression is a passing phase that comes and goes according to life events, and generally subsides. For others, depression can be a debilitating experience lasting for weeks, months, or even years. The worst part is that your family thinks and believes that anti-depressants will make the problem go away. Anti-depressants come with documented side-effects, drug dependency and a failed track record in helping patients find their own feet. During my friend's crisis, when I did a little online research on depression, I came across this moving testimonial from a patient on how soul searching and not medicines had finally removed the shadows in his mind:

"I have experienced both forms of depression, and have come to understand that there are multiple factors to depression, stemming from the layers of the human experience: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual layers are profoundly interwoven, affecting one another in ways that modern science is just beginning to understand. As we understand each of these layers more fully, we can cultivate the ability to transform depression back into energy. As I watched my ego, I began seeing the layers of negative thoughts and emotions that were constant in my mind like a broken record. I saw how the root cause of my suffering was not due to the events of my life, but my thoughts and reactions to life. I realised that I was the one creating this suffering within myself."

The shamanic view

Interestingly, depression, according to the shamans, is more like an injury than a disease. The shamans believe that spiritually strong people have balance in their lives, and a good relationship with some form of spiritual connection, whether that be religious, spiritual, philosophical or just a healthy appreciation of nature. If that connection is wounded or that spiritual power is drained away – we feel dis-spirited. Our energy is weak. We feel like a whole. Our passions burn less intensely, if they burn at all. We lose interest in things that once brought us joy. We feel stagnant in our lives, trapped behind barriers we cannot see or understand. Everything seems harder than

downward spiral mentioned above gets all the worse. Shamanic treatments for depression revolve around ceremonies to recover (power retrieval) and return (soul retrieval) missing power or missing soul pieces.

This thread of restoring the spiritual connect or soul energy for mental happiness reminds me of a cousin's been on anti-depressants for years after a long love affair had ended. In frustration, she threw away all her and astrological stones and wept to God for help. Desperate for any way out, she agreed to my suggestion of Sudarshan Kriya from a friend of mine, who had started teaching the course. She related that on the first day copious tears but felt unburdened and lighter. After some months of the Kriya practice, she found her form at her door with a wedding proposal. She confided in me that four years into her marriage, she had felt the depression symptoms returning. She had stopped the Sudarshan Kriya practice after her marriage. She had feeling stressed and unhappy because of the pressures of managing a young child, a demanding and somewhat autocratic husband, and her husband's refusal to allow her to work till their daughter was grown up. Her mother nagging her to take anti-depressants and for some time, she fell into the temptation of taking the easy way out. Thereafter, she decided to start doing Kriya and japa and found peace and balance from her practice. She had not been easy and she was tempted to take her mother's advice rather than carve out time for spiritual practice. She remembered the futility of medicines that suppress the problem rather than cure its root cause, and will do practise daily, no matter how busy her home, child and husband kept her.

Eternal joy waits for us. Let's pledge for our own sakes, that we never stop reaching out for it, no matter what the circumstances. We just need to take that first step and move towards the light with optimism, saying, "Help! badly!"

About the author: Nandini Sarkar is Co-founder, C-Quel, a management services company. A lover of the Sri Masters she is a follower in the Kriya Yoga tradition. nandini@cquel.com

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