

Purification and Health

To purify means to remove unnecessary elements corrupting the integrity of a substance or object. For individuals, it means to eliminate those things that are not essential to our original nature. Whatever pollutes the body, mind, or spirit must eventually be removed through a process of purification.

Suffering and Purification

By its very nature, the spiritual body rises and falls according to the amount of its clouding. A pure spirit is Light, and rises; a clouded spirit is heavy, and sinks. – The Strata in the Spiritual World. HT

We inevitably experience the effects of negativity or pollution as sickness, emotional disturbance, or external problems. The more these harmful influences accumulate, the more powerful the resulting purification will be. Purification serves the purpose of releasing the negativity or pollution so that we can return to health and internal harmony. From a larger perspective, *all suffering can be viewed as a process of purification.*

Meishusama gives an example of physical purification:

In each and every man is a certain amount of polluting toxin. Some is inherent and some acquired after birth. These toxins gather at the places of greatest nervous activity—that is, the nerve centers of the part of the body from the neck up; or the brain, eyes, nose, mouth, and ears function all the time that a person is awake—unlike, for example, the limbs, which sometimes rest. It is therefore inevitable that the toxin should accumulate in this upper area, and this is why a great many people complain of stiff necks and shoulders, and so on. This toxin gathers and solidifies, as time passes, into a lump, and when this lump exceeds a certain limit, the process abruptly reverses itself. In other words, the lump is dissolved and expelled from the body. This is what we call the process of purification. This process is always accompanied by a fever, which is necessary to change the solidified lump into a form easily expelled by the body. That is, the lump is melted down into a liquid. This natural purification is what is called a cold, and the signs of its activity are phlegm, nasal mucous, perspiration, and other excretions. This kind of cold varies from quite serious to a semi-permanent type of purification that almost everyone is undergoing all the time. This latter is so slight as to be unnoticeable to the person, who considers himself to be healthy. – *The Three Great Disasters and the Three Lesser Disasters. HT*

Although all suffering can be viewed as forms of purification, it is important not to use this understanding as a convenient excuse to avoid dealing responsibly with a situation. Sometimes the universe presents us with a purifying event as a way to draw our attention to a circumstance that needs correcting. The best way to learn and grow from experience is to recognize our mistakes and to take responsibility for our actions.

Although this may require some deep soul searching on our part, to do so promotes wisdom and maturity.

When confronted by the sickness or suffering of others, the best response is one that communicates empathy and compassion, not apathy or dismissal. Empathy is communicated when the recipient feels that we share in their misfortune and can identify with how they feel. And compassion, which is motivated by the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, is expressed by offering a helping hand. Sometimes just listening with a nonjudgmental attitude and an open heart is the most effective way to help others. There is no need to outwardly label someone's suffering as purification or to lecture the person on spiritual philosophy. Usually that will cause the suffering person to feel denigrated and dismissed rather than cared for or helped.

Generally speaking, understanding and accepting the theory of purification promotes detachment from pain, which can help us endure our own suffering more easily. But this detachment, if directed towards others, can appear as cold indifference. Therefore, it is important to remember, when confronted with another person's suffering, what it feels like to suffer, yourself. This allows us to sympathize with their pain and thereby offer genuine emotional support.

Thus the underlying cause of this spiritual corruption is the clouding of the soul, and since this clouding directly results in an impurity of the blood, there is sure to be a time when this is purged and purified in a violent and dreadful way. At that time, the amount of suffering that affects a person corresponds to the degree of clouding of the soul – *An Evil Person Is a Sick Person. HT*

Although clouding of our spirit leads to suffering, the resultant process of purification brings us eventually to increased health and happiness. But there is no need to deliberately seek out suffering in order to quicken this purification. That would be like “putting the cart before the horse.” Suffering occurs when it is needed, and only the higher intelligence of the Creator knows when and how it should occur. For those individuals who want to speed up their quest for greater health and happiness, Meishusama recommends giving of oneself in loving service to others, engaging in the practice of Jyorei, striving to improve one's character, cultivating an appreciation of beauty, and adopting a healthy, natural diet. These are the most effective ways for us to actively promote positive purification and profound healing. The rest is left up to God.