

Here Are Some Shocking Truths

Maulana Wahiddudin Khan

The person who invented dynamite, Alfred Nobel, went on to establish 90 armament factories and amassed huge amounts of wealth through the arms trade. Then an incident took place which totally changed the course of his life.

In 1888, the death of his brother caused several newspapers to mistakenly publish obituaries of Alfred. One French obituary stated: "*Le marchand de la mort est mort*" ("The merchant of death is dead"). The obituary went on to say, "Alfred Nobel, who became rich by finding ways to kill more people faster than ever before, died yesterday." Alfred, shocked at what he read, then took a positive decision about his life. In 1895, at the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris, Nobel signed his last will and testament and set aside the bulk of his estate to establish the five Nobel Prizes, including the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize.

Shock is a great educator. It sets off such a process of brainstorming that a whole new mindset takes shape and as a consequence a new human personality emerges: if in the pre-shock period he was just a man, in the post-shock period he emerges as superman.

Shocks, great or small, are very common. Almost everyone has had experience of them. But the majority take these as negative experiences and are unable to learn a lesson from them. However, shock is not an accident: shock is the language of nature. Nature speaks in the language of shocks. If one saves oneself from becoming negative after suffering a shock, this can be a highly creative experience.

Shock will stimulate your mind, and will unfold your potential. It initiates creative thinking processes. It helps you to take better

decisions in your life by bringing you from a state of total derailment to being right back on track. In other words, it makes you realistic in your approach.

Shock is the greatest positive factor in one's life, provided one responds positively to it. Everyone can become inspirational like Alfred Nobel; the only condition being that one should take shocks as a source of learning rather than a source of anger.

One such example is that of M K Gandhi, who spent 20 years in South Africa. In June 1893, he had to undertake a trip to Pretoria in the Transvaal, a journey which took Gandhi to Pietermaritzburg. There, Gandhi took his seat in a first-class compartment, since he had purchased a first-class ticket. The railway officials ordered Gandhi to remove himself to the van compartment, since non-whites were not permitted in first-class compartments. As Gandhi refused to comply with the order, he was pushed out of the train, and his luggage was tossed out on to the platform in the extremely bitter cold of the winter.

What happened with Gandhi was an example of violence. Yet he decided to work for peace. He returned to India and started his movement which was based on *ahimsa*, non-violence. Soon, he became a champion of non-violent activism.

According to the law of nature, life is not a smooth journey: it is a journey through shocks. One has no option but to accept this as a reality. Indeed, the course nature takes is determined by shocks and challenges. Anyone who seeks to make himself successful should understand this reality and take shocks as stepping stones in life. *Follow Maulana Wahiddudin Khan at speakingtree.in and post your comments there.*



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