

## THE EXAMPLE OF A DONKEY

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I believe that this story of a donkey is well known. I have heard it before. Recently I got it again through internet from a friend in U.S.A. I was deeply touched by the story. The story has a beautiful moral lesson to all of us but especially to those persons who are surrounded by problems and difficulties.

The story is about a farmer's donkey. One day the donkey fell into an abandoned well without much water. Finding itself in danger at the bottom of the well the donkey began to bray loudly. The loud asinine utterance brought the farmer running to the well.

Now what to do? The farmer began to think. The donkey is very old and is not much use for work. Then, the dried up well is also useless. It is time to fill and cover the well. So the farmer decided to fill the well with mud. He called his neighbour for help.

The farmer and his neighbour began to gather mud and throw the mud into the well to fill it. The donkey inside the well realized that he is in great danger of being buried alive! He began to bray evermore loudly. After a little while his braying stopped.

After sometime the farmer looked into the half filled well. The sight surprised him. As the mud was falling on the back of the donkey, it shook off the mud from its back and put the mud under its feet.

The farmer and his neighbour continued throwing the mud into the well. The well began to be filled. The donkey too continued shaking the mud off its back and put the mud under its feet. At the end when the well was nearly filled the donkey jumped over the parapet of the well and went away to freedom!

This is also the story of our lives. People will throw mud on you. Sometimes the problems and difficulties surround and pressurized us so much that it is difficult to come out of them, if not impossible. We feel that we are getting buried under the weight of the problems and difficulties! Sir Winston Churchill's advice here is, "Don't argue about difficulties. The difficulties will argue for themselves." From experiences we know that when difficulties come, many a times they come together. In the words of a famous writer, (Is it Shakespeare?) "difficulties come in legions."

The situation may be shocking. Even then without giving in to the difficulties situations, let us look for solutions. The donkey found a way out of being buried alive. If we look persistently we will find a way out from any and every difficulty. Remember that behind the thickest dark clouds there shines the sun even though we do not see it. Let us keep our hope alive and shining like the sun behind the cloud.

Someone has said that hope is immortal. Every person cherishes hopes. Perhaps that hope is built upon coming out well from of an earlier experience. Or perhaps the hope is built upon an

inspiring author or an interesting book or an article. A person may also build his hope from his faith that God is with me, he will come to my assistance in times of need.

Mother Teresa believed that all types of difficulties are opportunities to carry on our lives! That farmer and his neighbour were filling the well in order to bury and get rid of the donkey. But the donkey found a way out of the life-threatening situation. Every person who hopefully seeks a way out of his problem will find one.

A person seeking solutions to his problems should not do so blindly. Hate and unforgiveness make a person blind to realities. So without ever submitting oneself to hate and enmity a person, who seeks to solve his problems and difficulties with love and attitude of forgiveness, will always find a way out of them. Love and forgiveness will certainly help a person to overcome even those problems which seem impossible.

Knowingly or unknowingly people create or take upon themselves many problems! They simply worry about many things. Some worries are about future events. Many of those future events will never take place! So the worry is useless. So it is better and wise for the person never to worry about such imagined events. Some worry about their past. But by worrying about the past one cannot do away with the past nor change the past. The past is past. Learn from the past whatever lesson we can learn and then forget it by accepting it as one's past reality. The donkey got rid of the mud thrown on its back. Let us also do away the past as the donkey shook off the mud from its back and concentrated on the present of climping on the mud at its fact.

A person can save oneself like the donkey by giving up consumerism and other forces which create problems by simple living. A person can create a habit of appreciating what one has and what one possesses instead of worrying about what one does not have. Simple living and high thinking will help a person to get rid of the tendency to collect and keep unnecessary and superfluous things or from craving for more. Happy and contented life will certainly help a person to get rid of a lot of worries and problems.

Many problems and worries are created by a person's desire for many things. The desire creates expectations from relative and other people to get many things. When the desire is not satisfied, problems of interpersonal relationship are created. Without expecting and receiving things from others, if we create a habit of giving what we can, then many interpersonal problems and difficulties are solved. The Bible says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20, 35)

These thoughts arguments and the example of the donkey proclaim one thing. The happiness of a person totally depends on himself or herself. A person himself/herself is responsible for his/her happiness.

Finally let us give a thought to a piece of poetry by Saif Palanpuri:

"Problems are sleeping at ease  
Solutions of the problems are in waking up."