

Black Spot

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Senses are the doors to the outer world, and, as a result, collect impressions in numerous forms, shapes and colors. One such color is black - the symbol of negativity, death or endless pain. When one comes in contact with the things and people, one experiences the lighter as well as the darker side consuming it both consciously and subconsciously. As the running events in life are fast and complex in nature, no one can surely say when the first black spot enters or entered. Of course, a person does not look inside sincerely to identify one's inner dirt rather one searches it in another. Thus, one mitigates the chance to uncover oneself and be a plain and clear mirror. Instead, a little black spot, if identified and washed out at its origin like nipping the evil in the bud can open the gates to Heavenly Abode where one can float at ease without further damaging the mind and body. And, for this, one needs to learn the art of meditation and enjoying one's company sans the support and expectations of others.

In literature, black spot is a term given or introduced by Robert Louis Stevenson in his novel 'Treasure Island' which was serialized in 1881-82 and published in 1883. In it, black spot is given to those pirates who are found guilty in performing their duties. In its historical terms, it was popular among Caribbean pirates of showing an ace of spades to anyone condemned as a traitor or informer. However, from 1911 to 2020, this term has been used a lot in various novels, stories, albums, films, serials, video games, animated films and so on. All these modes have shown this term in different contexts as someone is going to be killed wherever a man is which means the black spot forces one to kill other for some desire or other motive. It is of paramount importance to make it clear in the beginning that the man himself is responsible for creating a black spot inside which takes form in the shape of a thought especially when he is in chains or bound with others, when expectations rise to mountains, and mind travels on the clouds and floats freely instead of centering itself, when outcomes are against set parameters, then slowly, it spreads and kills the soul while sucking all the juice.

J.M. Barrie, in his one act play, 'The Will' introduced this term in relation to Philip and Emily - a couple who had no real love for each other. Both of their children are not in their control. In addition, Philip tries to make his will three times but every time, he is down with his ideas to which the senior lawyer Devizes Sr. comments 'but it was always in them, a black spot, no bigger than a pin's head but waiting to spread and destroy them in the fullness of time' as Philip was not sure about its beginning, the lawyer made it clear that there never was a beginning as it was always there.

In terms of daily life, no one is without any black or dark spot inside which one carries in the form of a sin, guilt, vice or anything else. When does a soul get it? However, it is difficult to look out its exact source all the time as the senses are prone to collect impressions through all the channels and store them in the different layers of the mind which keep us awake, dream and take deep sleep in various time zones. Further, these thoughts get multiply in zillions and one gets fully lost in their nets. Nevertheless, people with different attitudes in life experience relevant black spots in one way or another, the origin of which, as they tell, is unclear to them. However, the pain of suffering in any form disturbs them consistently and they get punished now and then as the pirates are. These people, as the fate rules people, neglect their duties, start feeling irritated, frustrated and angry which results in foggy mind and disruption of work.

Take for example, two students of B.sc 2nd year (non-medical) from Mata Sundari University girls college Mansa, namely- Kuldeep Kaur and Husanpreet Kaur, experience that they have lack of patience and toleration which make them restless as well as defocused. Moreover, the latter says that she is unable to say "no" if anybody approaches her for help of any kind. This indecisive mind makes her feel guilty that results in black spot somewhere. Though they feel that there is a corner in their hearts which is uncomfortable and needs repairing, they do not come across the right way so they can't help the negative thoughts springing up again and again and disturbing their calm and peace which is a primary factor in creating the right personality.

Hence, one who does work on oneself tries to find the timely solution so that one can nip the evil in the bud. Devizes Sr. in the play says that if one is always on watch, which Buddha says 'awareness' one can overcome all the adverse situations of life. John Keats in one of his letters to his brothers talks about 'negative capability' where a person can remain stable when the mind is under doubts, mysteries and delusions of any kind. 'Awareness is the key' Osho said. But if such awareness is not cultivated when the time is right, the black spot inside spreads fast and destroys the poor souls. This 'accursed thing' nearly gets everybody in the end, many not knowing anything about it.

It is interesting to see that when a person realizes that he or she has some black spot, somewhere one has crossed through his mind touching the meditative state which comes when mind is at ease with itself. As Kuldeep Kaur writes in her ideas about the concept that she feels complete rest and healthy talk with her soul whenever she finds herself lonely than in the company of others where she loses herself and dissolves in the ego of the senses. So, being with one self in a pure form of meditation i.e.

being aware and conscious about the people, things and events around, one can cross over the limited boundaries of egoistical nature and touch the hidden spheres of one's reality which is omnipresent.

Here comes a stage when one tries to save not only one self but others also as Philip tries to save both his daughter and son before that black spot spoils them. Though he fails miserably and identifies it very late. So, the best formula is to just get detached from body, mind and matter in all forms and shapes, do one's duty without expectations, follow the flow of nature, pay gratitude all the time, hug the death before it hugs and kiss the life as it flowers. This is the supreme meditation which needs great skill of acquiring resilience through perseverance.

The pirates who are found guilty of performing their duties are also known as traitors. In the same way, a common person also fails to perform their role honestly because the natural forces in the form of various voices like anger, intolerance, and dishonesty among others become a substantial part of life. Thoughts upon thoughts are collected every day and they mingle so thoroughly inside that it becomes almost impossible to identify the root cause of its existence. It so happens that a person is not aware or conscious about its further damage and considers that he would overcome it shortly or neglect it unconsciously. Moreover, heaps of thoughts get fixed in the memories so solidly and permanently that a person does act compulsively even though he likes to act differently. Hence, the art of meditation and the natural tendency to acquire negative capability can turn the whole situation in one's favor while changing the attitude of a person towards things and people around. As a ship never sinks though the water is all around but the same water can sink it if it gets in. So, a man can save himself from the world around him if he does not allow others to enter into his individual space without his permission.

Since each human has his individuality which is absolutely different from others, they all behave according to their mental planes. Numerous factors, such as our beliefs, experiences, and choices, shape our behavior and combine to form an intricate web of factors which define who we are. Thus, comprehending oneself is extremely complex, not simply complicated! It is comparable to attempting to solve a jigsaw consisting of a billion parts, where each piece is unique. It's simply complexity on top of other complexity, which is why it's termed "meta-complex." The vision of reality is the perception of oneself or understating the hidden inside the universe as one and only one. For instance, one's view of oneself declares how they should interact with or cope with the outside world, and it would also dictate their level of fulfillment. On the other hand, one's perspective on oneself would be shaped by the surrounding environment and the intention one keeps on the outside world. And if the intention is right, a person is surely going to perceive positively.

Thus, the key to face one's true identity and experience supreme humanity would be to understand oneself and know how to interact with the outside world. Hence, it is vital to comprehend both the spiritual and material aspects of the existential process. For this, a man is destined to develop and, to create and express his innermost qualities by working on stabilizing oneself under adverse or unfavorable circumstances. In light of this, the word "negative capability" by John Keats came into limelight when he introduced it in one of his letters to his brothers in 1817 in which he defined "Negative Capability" as "when an individual has the ability of engaging in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". Moreover, the word "Meditation" which is an Indian concept has a special mention in the religious philosophies of the East as well as the West. As in Hinduism, Adi Sankara in his treatises on *Gitabhasya* and *Vivekacudamani* talked about *Sthitprajna* in which a person remains balanced in all the opposite pair of situations as he neither weeps for the sad moments in life nor does he rejoice in the happy ones. In addition to it, in Sikhism, Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs, introduced the term "Sahej Dhayan" which encapsulates the same idea of negative capability for a human moves and flows with the events of the life as it unfolds without succumbing to the adversity rather he surrenders himself in the feet of the Divine. However, a variety of figures, including writers, religious authorities, teachers, philosophers, and gurus, have discussed negative capability and meditation in their own unique ways and have looked into various ways to break free from the grip of narrowness by discovering the innate ability to maintain composure in the face of a strict interpretation of reality.

Hence, both "negative capability" as well as "meditation" work on the same plane and teach one to keep one's calm when the things go wrong outside as the wind may spoil and shatter the things inside the house only when the windows or doors are opened but if the house is locked fully from inside, it may come with a tough blow but leave it without harming or damaging anything. Further, a person can see the black spot fairly well when the vision is clear and can remove it early or root out the evil as soon as it starts spreading. And for this, one needs to gain the composure by feeling empathy with others as poets like John Keats and Shakespeare did by merging themselves in the characters they chose to depict. These are the moments when the writer leaves out his logic and reason but chooses to move with the flow of the time by sacrificing his own identity.

However, the same black spot is the result of number of others factors and one such factor is passing final judgment about others which is a wrong attitude because Nikita Gill, a poet, says in her poem "People aren't Homes" that people are always changing and flowing. So giving a tag to someone especially a negative or black one leaves an everlasting impression on one's mind and further blocks all the energy inside and outside which strangles all those who come in contact with such people. The same poet says that it is better to look inside and find one's own home where the heart beats for one. It is a place which is known as "Pearl of Peace" or "Sukhmani" according to Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru in Sikhism, who emphasizes that by being in the company of true Guru and surrendering all ego, one can transform oneself and reach a stage of final liberation where all black spots are washed out.

So it can be said that a black spot is a weakness of the mind which takes birth through different channels while entering into one's mind and becoming an essential part of one's routine. As the attention or awareness is missed when the actions are

performed or the involvement in the acts is not positive, the results are always half-empty not half-full. But, if one practices to be 'here and now' and acts with full awareness, silencing one's mind and giving due attention to the whole of nature, one can surely be free of all guilt as well as the instability of the mind. Not only this, but regular practice of 'negative capability and meditation' also uproot the early evil sprouting somewhere in the brain and damaging each cell of the body.

In addition to all this, the practice of Sthitprajna, according to Gita, is a sure way to heal one oneself. However, one can attain that stage by following any one of the three paths mentioned in the Gita by Krishna. These are namely, "Gyana Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Bhagti Yoga which can be learnt easily in the company of a true teacher. If one crosses the three gunas i.e., tamas, rajas and sattvas and becomes gunatita, one can experience the transcendent and achieve the 'turiya' state of mind where the Ultimate Reality sunders the cycle of birth and death and all the dark spots are cleaned forever.

Moving ahead, Hatha yoga Pradipika, a Hindu Yogic Granth, focuses on the Kundalini Shakti which lies dormant at the base of the spinal cord in the form of a coiled snake. However, it can be uncoiled by doing asanas, pranayams, meditation and other such practices of the body and mind which will pave the way for the silent energy to travel upwards and shine like a thousand suns at the base of the head that is named Sahasrara Chakra. Here, at last, one is free of all the base desires and dark or black spots. Nevertheless, one attains the state of 'Mukti' or 'Nirvana' which is the final liberation everyone seeks. The fruits of actions do not matter here, the Supreme knowledge is achieved and the Atma and Parmatma become one. The new soul always lives in present without any fear and enmity, surrendering everything in the feet of the Lord.

This is a state which Nanak says "Sahej Dhyani" in Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

*Ja kay sahej mann bhaiya anand//
Ta kau bheteya parmananda// (Ang 236-237//5//)*

At the end, in addition to all this, walking on the fresh grass or sand, doing exercises and deep breathing, meditating in the morning and evening, spending time in nature, doing some artwork, listening to healthy talks, sharing in good company, eating healthy diet and such things can open up the dead cells pushing one to embrace the whole power and grace of the God or Nature. But, for all this, one needs to be cautious and listen to one self only so that the mind itself becomes a teacher and leads one onto the right direction washing out all black spots and making one conscious to live in the present moment and lead a both simple and relaxed life.

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