



Online Q&A chat with Beverly Goldsmith, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, on spirituality.com January 13, 2005

An event in the *Spirituality Live Series*

Event Introduction:

When tragedy strikes and lives are lost, feelings of loss and grief can overwhelm us. When this happens, is there a way to deal with it? How do you overcome the grief of losing a loved one? How do you deal with the loss of a home or livelihood? How do children find shelter, safety and love?

Spirituality.com host: *Hello everyone and welcome. We're so happy to have Beverly back for this 2nd event. Beverly, any opening thoughts?*

Beverly: Since the tragedy on December 26th, there's been an outpouring of assistance from people around the world. Last week I focused on how to exchange horror for hope. Now I'd like to focus on finding comfort when facing loss and grief. Let's discuss,

1. How do you overcome the grief of losing loved ones?
2. How do you deal with the loss of home?
3. How do you deal with the loss of livelihood?
4. How do orphaned children find shelter, safety and love?

Beverly Q.1. *How do you overcome the grief of losing loved ones?*

It's deeply sad when so many people lose loved ones. How do you deal with such loss? Prayer can help. I know.

When my mother unexpectedly passed on, I was devastated. I had no grandparents left, no father, and now no mother. I missed my mother's daily company and her wisdom, love and caring. I felt these were gone because she wasn't with me anymore.

One day I asked myself if this were true. Gently the answer came: I have not lost that mother-love. Divine Love is my Mother-Father. Right now, divine Love is mothering and fathering me. I can never lack a parent's care, companionship or protection with God as my parent. All the love, wise counsel and caring is still there. The expression of these isn't limited to a family member. All of God's children exhibit and experience God's Parent-love. These ideas brought me comfort and healed me of loss and grief.

The ideas in the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy have also comforted me. They remind me that my life, and that of my loved ones, is eternal. We're not lost to divine Love. Given the choice between believing that my life ends in death, and believing that my life is immortal, I've chosen to believe that divine Love has given me, and everyone, eternal life. This comforts me.

I'm also encouraged by Mary Baker Eddy's life experiences. A few months after marrying, her husband died. She was expecting their first child. She moved back to her parents' home where she gave birth to a son. Shortly after, her beloved mother died. Mary became ill and unable to care for her active toddler. Mary's father, the boy's legal guardian under United States law at that time, placed him in foster care. Several years later, the foster family moved West. Mary never saw her son again until he was a grown man with children of his own. Despite the heartbreak and loss, Mary found comfort and healing through divine Love.

Everyone can find the comfort of divine Love. That's why I'm praying for all the survivors: Divine Love is their Father-Mother. Everyone can find comfort and healing through divine Love. Everyone is being kept safe in God's tender loving care. God is the divine Deliverer. Life is spiritual, undying. Everyone can hold strongly to their faith.

Event Transcript of Q&A:

Beverly's comments came during a live spirituality.com Online Event on January 13, 2005. She was responding to questions from the audience. Following is a transcript of the discussion:

1. Sea: *What's the most effective and compassionate way to help with loss?*

Beverly: Hold to the true, undying, nature of each person. Each child of God is immortal. We have a choice about what we believe, and we can choose to believe that life is eternal, unceasing, and that the true identity of everyone as God's child, is always safe in His care. Thinking this, is continuing to love people who've passed.

2. Lor: *Isn't God everyone's loving Father, always present, always in control?*

Beverly: Yes God is. And that's what I'm affirming for survivors, and those who have lost loved ones in other disasters right now, such as the Australian bushfires.

3. Oz: *How can we get any comfort in the midst of grief?*

Beverly: This can seem hard to do. Comfort for me has come when I've stopped thinking that I've lost someone I've loved. I can't lose their love, goodness or the care they showed for me. Those are with me always, even though that person is not. This helps me to feel connected to them and to let go of the feelings of loss.

4. Lin: *Why did some live and others die? Why did this happen if God is good?*

Beverly: God **is** good and He wants everyone to express Life. He is Life and He made us to live and express health and well-being. That's a universal truth. It's true because God is Life and we are the image of that Life.

I've heard many stories about people who stayed safe during the tsunami. An Australian man who was a lifeguard at a Thai beach decided to clear the beach minutes before the wave hit. When asked by a reporter why he'd done that he said, "I don't know. I think God told me to do it." The reporter said, "Oh really?" The young man said, "Well how else do you explain where that thought came from to clear the beach? I can't explain it any other way." This man saved a huge number of people. No one on his beach was harmed. He listened to the divine intuition.

A 10-year-old schoolgirl from the UK who looked at the waves, told her mother that it was a tsunami. She'd learned about it at school. Because of her alertness and warning, no one on her beach was harmed. Everyone was saved.

Divine intuitions come to everyone. And I'm learning the importance of listening for, and heeding, those angel messages from God.

I was saved from being bombed in Vietnam by listening to a divine intuition that said not to go to the place we were intending to visit. We were all saved. I think it's very important to pray without ceasing and to listen. We can stay safe. We can be assured that God's love is with us.

5. Cik: *Our prayers are bringing comfort right now. An Indonesian friend, said these prayers here, have become his prayers.*

Beverly: That's so good to know. It's what I was hoping for with this event. Being able to share our love, support and prayers with each other is strengthening. You don't feel isolated or alone while you pray. There's comfort and strength knowing that others are praying about tragedy too.

Beverly Q.2. How do you deal with the loss of home?

As someone who loves her home, I feel saddened that an estimated 5 million people are now displaced and left homeless. Mary Baker Eddy wrote **"Home is the dearest spot on earth,"** *Science and Health* p. 58:21-22. I love that thought. It's so true. So what can you do when your home has been washed away? Can survivors find a place to call home? I believe they can.

One day I came home from work and found a letter on the kitchen table from the people I was boarding with. It told me to find somewhere else to live immediately! It was late afternoon. I was desperate. I didn't know what to do. I asked God to help me. I believed that my Father-Mother was looking after me. I couldn't be left homeless. There'd be an answer. As I prayed, I recalled these words of Christ Jesus: **"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."** King James Bible. John 14:1,2

Those words comforted me. They said to me, "Don't be afraid, Beverly. In divine Love's sheltering care, there are abundant answers and a solution to your housing need. There's a place for you. You haven't lost your home. There's already somewhere prepared for you to go."

Reassured by this Scripture, I went to a real estate agency to make inquiries. Amazingly, I found a fully furnished home I could occupy right away. And it had become available for rent just minutes before I arrived.

In my life, I've moved residence more than 20 times. I've lived in different countries, in a Vietnamese village, on a ship, in various types of accommodation, with other people and sometimes I've had no place to go. Each time though, through prayer and responding to divine Love's guidance, I've found a place.

In all my moves, I've been comforted by thinking of home not so much as a location, but as a spiritual concept that I take with me wherever I go. Home to me represents love, security, privacy and peace. These are within thinking. I've never lost my sense of home, even though I've had to leave one home and move to another.

Now, while I know that my housing needs have never been, and most likely will never be, as urgent as the tsunami survivors', my experiences do give me hope that their needs will be met. That's why I'm praying that through the goodness of divine Love and the compassion of people around the world, each tsunami survivor will have a place they can call home.

6. hb: How can we help those who've lost everything dear to them?

Beverly: One way I know to help people who've lost photos and mementos is to remember that memories live on in thought. I can close my eyes now and picture my mother, who has passed. I have photos of her in my mind. I can't lose these memories. I also have "photos" of her love and kindness. All the qualities she expressed are still with me. I have them forever. So I'd pray that although all the material things that remind us of another have gone, we still have the good things. They're still there, because all good comes from divine Love.

7. Gen: Sometimes when people lose material possessions, they realize that goodness and love are the really important things in life.

Beverly: Yes, loss can focus thought on what is true and really important to us. I've heard many survivors say that it's people, not possessions, that matter. Love and goodness are never lost. They come from God and so are permanent. This leads to the restoration of that good in our lives.

8. NH: Psalm 46 reminds me that even though the earth may move, God's goodness is constant. It's a firm foundation that doesn't get swept away.

Beverly: That's so true. Good is a constant factor because God is constant. Love is always present. No disaster can wipe God, or good, out. Good is permanent. That's a foundation that's unmovable and we can hold on to that every moment. I've been caught in storms at sea. I've been on a boat hit by a rogue wave. Right there in the midst of trouble I was able to be calm, to acknowledge God's love and care for me and others, and remain safe from harm.

9. Sun: The weather has been extreme all over the world. Is this a sign of God?

Beverly: The weather has been extreme and many reasons have been proposed. I don't attribute it to, or blame, God. God is Love and He is good. God doesn't punish His children. Perhaps we need to be more alert to how the universe is being treated. God gave man dominion over the earth. Perhaps a prayer might be to affirm that man can use that dominion wisely to bless and prosper health and goodness.

Beverly Q. 3. How do you deal with the loss of livelihood?

When tragedy strikes it's good to affirm that the good that people have from divine Love, can't be taken from them by a tsunami, a bushfire or any other tragic event. God is not absent. Good is not absent. God's goodness is always present. You can't destroy good because it's spiritual and comes from a divine source. [This is true for people who've just lost homes and farms in the bushfires in South Australia]

Here are 5 things to spiritually aid those who've lost their livelihood.

1. Affirm the presence of God to meet every human need. **"Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need."** Science and Health p. 494:10-11

2. Pray with this promise, **"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."** Psalm 23

3. Affirm that divine Love has many good ideas—for new opportunities, for restoration of former trades and professions such as fishing, tourism, building, and for further progress. Every person can listen for and hear these right ideas, solutions, from their heavenly Father-Mother.

4. Remember that God, divine Love, is not helpless in the face of catastrophe, so neither are Love's children. Each person has within them the strength, resilience and wisdom that God has given them. They can never lose the ability to recover and progress.

5. Continue to pray about livelihoods—that right where there is a sense of loss, right there, there is an answer. I've experienced that in my life. At one time my family's livelihood was being taken away. It was restored through the understanding that the opportunity to work and provide for oneself comes from God and is present at all times.

10. 77: The task of supporting thousands of affected people is so overwhelming. What good will my little prayer or effort do?

Beverly: Prayer is **always** effective. It's like a pebble you drop in a pond. It ripples out good. Every time we acknowledge that God is in control, that His laws of Truth and Love are in operation for everyone, everywhere, we're doing so much to help others. Think of your prayer as powerful. Think of it as having a healing effect. Affirm that it will. Believe that it will. Rejoice in it. Every time you align your thought with God, it has a healing effect.

11. Ym: I've been praying that God will give all those touched by this tragedy a sense of purpose, meaning, value, worth, a reason to carry on.

Beverly: That's an important prayer. God is giving everyone a sense of purpose and no-one can lose that God-given purpose. No disaster can take that purpose from them. They can carry on with God's help.

12. Lu: *Through all that's happened, great compassion is being expressed, and there's a much wider sense of brotherhood and caring.*

Beverly: Yes. I'm so impressed by the outpouring of love and generosity from people everywhere. Such love is coming straight from divine Love. It's truly God's love being expressed. I'm praying for this spirit of love and brotherliness to continue - that it will change the world, and break down barriers between religions and political groups.

13. DD: *We can continue to cherish these people in our prayers as they rebuild their future, long after the media attention has faded.*

Beverly: Yes. I'll be talking about this in next week's event. This is the time to be persistent in prayer and not give up when the tragedy fades from the news headlines. I'm praying and affirming that good will continue to be available to everyone in the affected areas —and in our own lives too.

Beverly Q.3. *How do orphaned children find shelter, safety and love?*

It's heartwarming to hear that some orphaned children are being reunited with extended family members who want to care for them. Many children are being registered, monitored, sheltered and cared for in refugee camps. More can be done. Here are 4 things you and I can do.

1. Affirm specifically that God is taking care of His children; that orphaned tsunami children can be treated with dignity and respect by those around them; that those who cherish young ones will express divine Love by keeping guard over them; that aid workers, locals and others on the ground will be alert to any danger that could threaten the children's well-being.

2. Say "no" to ruminating, reiterating and speculating over the dire things that could happen to these youngsters. Don't speculate on whether God can protect His children from harm. Affirm instead that divine Love is looking after His little ones.

3. Maintain faith in a divine Love that is caring for and guarding orphaned children. Divine Love did not cause this disaster, nor punish anyone because he or she is Muslim, Hindu or Christian. Love is universal and impartial. It blesses everyone equally; it applies to everyone equally. That is the universal spiritual law.

4. Affirm that God is fathering and mothering His/Her children. That He/She is caring for, guiding and accompanying them. No child is therefore left "alone." Each one has his or her divine Parent present.

Divine Love can wipe away tears, bind up broken hearts, comfort, support and keep His little ones secure. For more than 40 years, 25 of which have been as a professional Christian Science healer, I've found that heartfelt prayer that utilizes the universal laws of divine Life, Truth, and Love, can and does bring peace, safety and healing.

That's why my continuing prayer is that the children who have lost their parents will feel God's comforting love and the heartfelt support of millions of people around the world who are including them in their prayers. And that they will see their heavenly Father-Mother's love evidenced in the compassion and kindness of those who are helping them to be safe.

Spirituality.com host: *Beverly, we're almost out of time. We have our 3rd event next week but is there anything you want to share in closing?*

Beverly: When you hear about the tsunami tragedy, and other disasters like the mudslides in California, bushfires in South Australia and Victoria and flooding in the UK, continue to give spiritual aid. Your prayers are needed. Please join me here next week to pray about recovery and restoration.

Citations used: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures: p. 58:21-22 (to ,) 494:10-11
King James Bible: John 14:1,2 Ps 23:1*