

Give Me A Break
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If you will examine the text of the Lotus Sutra, you will find it stated that, in the Latter Day of the Law, when a person practices the Lotus Sutra just as it teaches, he is bound to meet with many difficulties. (“Reply To Lord Hakiri Saburo,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 38)

I feel like I have a consistent practice, enjoy my activities, try on a weekly basis to do home visits, study, etc. But still, I have so many challenges I have to face and overcome. There are times in my practice (when my life-condition is weak or low) that I tend to ask: “Why am I faced with this or that?” “Will I ever overcome this?” “Will I ever be happy?” I know that we don’t have lives free of struggle, but sometimes I feel like, come on, give me a break!

What I tend to forget is that although I am exerting my efforts in this practice, I am also challenging my karma from the past. Buddhist practice is not just about “what I want right now” — it is much deeper. It’s for me to do human revolution and create a life that is so solid that nothing can sway me. Also, I know that because I am practicing hard, it is natural for obstacles to arise so that I can challenge myself more.

This letter was a response to Hakiri Sanenaga asking why the Daishonin is faced with so many difficulties, if he is the votary of the Lotus Sutra. The Daishonin explains how difficult it is to spread the True Law, how going through obstacles proves that he is the votary of the sutra. He also states that even with all our faults and karma, we can still attain enlightenment.

I’m realizing every day that the things I don’t want to face are the very things that will help me challenge that part of me that I try to avoid: my inner weakness, my lack of self-confidence, my fear of succeeding. I can use everything as a source for growth and development. I feel so fortunate to have the Gohonzon and be able to practice. Why not exert myself wholeheartedly? I have no time to waste.

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