**First Place: Creating Ripples**

**Author: Prameet Biswas**

**A little boy once threw a stone at a mango tree and in doing so, he saved a life.**

Let me expand this. A little boy once saw a few ripe mangos on a tree and he was tempted to try a few. He aimed a small pebble and threw it at a mango. The stone hit the mango which promptly fell onto a bush. A mouse that was hiding in those bushes was startled by the mango and scampered away to safety. It crossed a woman who was carrying a basketful of fruits on her head to sell in the market. The woman moved quickly to avoid what looked like a furry ball that streaked past her foot and lost her balance causing the basket to topple and fall. Cursing loudly, she got down, picked up all the fruits, and walked on to the marketplace. As she reached the marketplace she noticed a commotion at the place where she usually sat. She was shocked to see a car that had lost control of its brakes; had crashed into a pole. Had she reached her place on time, she would surely have lost her life.

On another note, in a recent study, people were asked if they had the option to go back 10 years in time and rewrite their lives, would they take it. Many of the people opted to the idea of going back in time. The basic conclusion was that people were not satisfied with where they were in their lives and many of them believed that they were cut out for greater things in life. It was only the wrong decisions, the misdirection of fate, the cruel push of destiny for which they were stuck in their seemingly insipid existence.

Fate, destiny, luck etc. are some of the few most heavily misunderstood concepts since time immemorial. I myself was rather disturbed by the notion of destiny. If it is in one’s destiny to be rich, one could achieve so doing absolutely nothing. And if it was in someone’s destiny to remain poor, then no matter how much one tried, one would remain poor. The very essence of the concept seemed flawed to me. Every successful person by definition would have to have been successful because of their well written destinies rather than their attitudes towards life.

As my young mind tried to understand how something so complicated like fate worked, I came across the story of the boy who threw a stone at a mango tree. It was a story that struck a chord with me because of the ending. It was amazing how the act of throwing a small stone managed to create a series of circumstances which eventually led to the woman realizing that she had almost lost her life. This was a pivotal point that changed my way of looking at fate.

To understand the concept of fate, one must first accept that our lives our governed by two spheres. The first sphere represents everything in and around our environment that we can control. Anything akin to one’s name, one’s choices, one’s dreams etc. The other sphere represents everything that is out of one’s control. Something akin to one’s place of birth, one’s environment, one’s parents. These two spheres work together in tandem for us to lead on with our lives.

In the story above, a seemingly small act of throwing the stone was done in the sphere of control. This in turn led to a series of events that escalated into something as momentous as saving one’s life through the second sphere. To put things in perspective, there are seven billion people on this planet! That amounts to 7 billion actions every moment. Another way to look at this would be to imagine a torrential downpour on the ocean surface. Drops would fall relentlessly causing ripple after ripple, cancelling a few and creating others on the surface. And this would undoubtedly shake the fragility of the entire surface of the ocean.

Our lives can also be somewhat analogous to the ocean. Each and every act that we do creates ripples in other people’s lives. Imagine when a person secures a job in a company. This person has simultaneously affected the lives of all those people who couldn’t get the job because of him. This little ripple has struck all those people who make different choices now, causing more ripples; affecting more people.

It is the effect of these ripples that is what is felt by us in our lives and it is to these ripples that we attribute the name of fate, destiny and what not! In simple words, fate is the consequence of our actions not the consequence of our having an extra capacity for “storing luck.”

Having understood this, the best way to live life is to create more of these ripples. This is achieved by doing new things, thinking of things differently, experiencing novel things. The more we act, the more ripples we create. Soon our ripples become powerful enough to counter the other ones that are intended to hit us. And our luck itself appears to change. In hindsight, all successful people seem to be having great amounts of luck, but the reality is they are just great at making ripples.

So the next time you feel down because life seems unfair, just remember: successful people make their own destiny!