Destroy Egocentric Desire and Anger
Category : December 1997
Published by Anonymous on Dec. 01, 1997

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

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Lasting joy comes when the mind is purified enough to surrender to devotion and dharma

Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirtha

Adi Shankaracharya says, "again birth, again death and again lying in the mother's womb. This world-jugglery is very difficult to cross over. O Lord! Please save me and take me ashore."

Spiritual strength alone bestows joy in one's life. People devoid of this are often caught in the maddening rhythm of a helpless delusion. Having been caught thus, they even bring in disintegration, disasters, disturbances and disharmony around them for others to suffer. The knowledge of the objective world, however exhaustive it may appear to be, cannot give us any durable satisfaction. This is evidenced by the present-day testimony that there is an increase in tensions amidst increases in material comforts.

Though the common direction of all human endeavor and the instinct of all the human mind is to run away from sorrow and seek only peace or joy, few alone achieve this. This joy which a

human being seeks outside in this phenomenal world is never experienced by him in its truest sense. Instead, illusion takes possession of him, and he mistakenly thinks that illusion is joy. Continuous egocentric desires and anger are the breeding ground for the spread of illusion around us. Because of this illusion, one is not able to correctly discriminate between right and wrong, and the situation deteriorates from bad to worse.

Before the dawn of peace or right knowledge, this illusion, being spread out by the "desire/anger" syndrome, seems to affect the majority of the universe, and this syndrome is shared by all who are engulfed by it. Unlike a small dream which lasts for a few hours during deep sleep, this dream of life's journey is an elongated illusion generated by the continuous nonrealization of one's peaceful nature and sequences of wrong outbursts of desire and anger. And, naturally, as long as this illusion lasts, one has to live in accordance with the effects of that illusion.

Anger harms the one who gives room to it in more ways than one. It is, as declared by the Lord Himself, a gateway to hell. Hence, it is in the interest of everyone to give no quarter to anger.

Desire, anger and greed are the pitfalls that one should avoid to lead a peaceful life. What is the way out? Shastras [religious scriptures] promise the way to achieve permanent peace by a permanent cessation of sorrow. To achieve this peace, one has to disengage oneself from the cobweb of illusion. This disentanglement is called chitta shuddhi [consciousness purification]. To attain this chitta shuddhi one has to remove

all dirt from the mind. And what are the dirts of the mind? One is egocentric desire, and the other is anger.

If we reflect on the nature of desire, we will arrive at the conclusion that almost all desires have failed to yield any permanent satisfaction or peace. By attempts at fulfillment, both the ego as well as the objects of desire get expanded. And expanded growth of such vices in the world has been the cause of ruin. Anger, being the effect of an unfulfilled desire, is yet another enemy to mankind. In thousands of years people have fought hundreds of wars--all prompted by egocentric desire and by destructive anger.

Sruti [the revealed scriptures of Hinduism] advises us to intelligently evaporate the unending egocentric desires for acquisition of trivial and unworthy things of this world by repeatedly pointing out the faults both in the ego as well as in the object of egocentric desires. These two dirts are removed by performing the svadharma [the individual's unique duty according to his or her station in life] as prescribed in the shastras in the spirit of sacrifice and self-surrender to the Lord. Action performed with this surrender generated in the mental mood is called devotion. On attaining such a concentration of devotion, the mind gets clearer because the ego and egocentric desires obstructing that clarity are removed by the "therapy" of self surrender to the Lord. And this enhances chitta shuddhi. Desire and anger distract the mental moon like an eclipse, and are removed by the treatment of devotion. The mind then becomes fit in the trans-mental stage to receive the tattvopadesha [discourses on the nature of reality] from the Lord Himself, incarnated as the supreme Guru. This removes all the illusions of jiva [individual soul] and jagat [the

phenomenal world] and makes one dwell in pristine glory and unending bliss. By eschewing adharma [wrong actions] and discharging one's duties in a spirit of dedication to the Lord, one attains great purity of the mind. Full of dispassion, he turns away from the world and, seeking refuge in Guru, strives to attain liberation from transmigratory existence, the cycle of reincarnation.

Dear devotees! Learn to respect the teachings of wise and elderly persons. Do not be puffed up with pride as though you are the master of your life, as though you have nothing more to learn. Such a misunderstanding has been the downfall and misery of many. Be humble, subdue your arrogance. Understand that elders, wise and learned men, are all your well-wishers only. They have nothing personal to gain by showing you the path of peace. A happy world is our motto.

Never make the mistake of acting in haste, without considering the consequences of your actions. You will have to pay dearly for your impetuosity.

May God give all the wisdom to practice dharma.
May all become better persons and lead a happy life.

SHANKARACHARYA SRI BHARATI TIRTHA,46, head of the Sringeri Math in Karnataka, is the 36th descendent in an unbroken line of spiritual preceptors beginning with the great Adi Sankaracharya.