



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Anger and duty

Extract from 13/2/03 Satsang

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*Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha*

**Q:** You have said that anger comes from unfulfilled desires. What about anger that comes from our reaction when we see innocent and helpless people - for example children - being treated badly by adults. When anger comes from unfulfilled desires, I understand how to deal with it. However, in the case of injustice or hurt done by unscrupulous people to innocent children, I do not know what to do. What kind of anger is this?

**A:** Firstly, let me correct something. You stated that I said that anger comes from unfulfilled desires. I did not use the word 'unfulfilled' - I just said 'from desires.' There is no question of fulfilment or non fulfilment. Anger is born of whatever type of desire you may have. I said that, whenever there is an obstruction to the desire, a person gets angry. Whenever someone wants something, and another person does something that is contrary to it, at once the person feels anger. I also said that greed is also born from desire. If the desire is fulfilled then one wants more, and more, and then greed starts.

What about the case when injustice is seen to be done to innocent people, like children, and we are angry? This anger also arises from desire. All anger is born of desire. The desire in this case is that people should not do an injustice - this is a desire. That children should not be badly treated - this is a desire. Here also the cause is desire. Now comes another question - Is this desire bad? I am not saying good or bad, just that it is a desire. When we desire that injustice should not be done to helpless, weak, old or sick people, or to children - this is desire. When someone does such things, then they act contrary to our desire and we get angry.

Now another question - Should we not have such desire? I do not say you should not have good desires. Actually, everybody has them, as any civilised person is supposed to have. But why do you get angry? You see injustice being done to an innocent person and you want to help. If you have the opportunity, time and strength, go and try to help. What is the problem? Who is stopping you from helping these innocent people? Nobody is stopping you. You want to help when you see an injustice, so go and try to help without anger.

Here are examples of great men. The autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi shows that injustice was done to him many times. He was travelling with a ticket in the correct compartment of a train. Simply because of discrimination he was thrown out on to the platform, kicked and abused. There is no question of injustice to others. It was injustice done to him. When the question came whether punishment should be given to them, he said not since he bore no grudge. But he said he would stand against injustice - and he did stand against it. That is how he got a place in the history of mankind that only a few people have. When he was leading the national liberation movement in India, injustices were often done to him, but he faced them without anger. He did not bow to injustice. He did not compromise, but he stood there like a mountain without anger.

Anybody can be angry - it is very easy. There are people who are angry without cause, just sitting alone in their room! What is the matter? Has something happened? No! So what is it? They are ready to burn the whole world if they can! They invent ideas in their own minds and consider themselves to be people, who have come as prophets to solve the problems of the world. They have to change the whole world, for the liberation of the people and to obtain the adoration of the people. Anger comes out of desire.

A challenge was put before the great warrior in the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna. He entered the battlefield with the intention of fighting for justice. The background to that battle was that they were about to be deprived of their kingdom. In fact, they sent an emissary and tried to make a compromise. In the end, they sent even Lord Krishna as their representative. They said they were ready to accept five villages only from the estate they were legally entitled to. They said it was better to have peace rather than war. The reply came from the King's son on the other side: "There is no question of even five villages! I am not willing to give even that minute area of ground that is covered by the point of a needle!" Ultimately, it was decided to enter into a battle. Arjuna had to fight with relatives in his clan - his own people and friends with whom he played as a child - even his great grandfather who loved him. Attachment and disillusion developed in his heart. He said it was useless to fight: "Even if I win, after killing them, the victory would be useless." He presented these arguments to Krishna, who at that time was doing the work of his charioteer.

There were two alternatives that would have been quite easy for Lord Krishna to do. Firstly, as Arjuna was pleading, Lord Krishna could have said: "You are right! Very many people will die. It is useless to fight. Come on, let us go to an ashram and let us meditate there." They could have said to the commanders of the army: "OK, you do whatever you like, but we are going away!"

There would have been another easy alternative for Lord Krishna. He could have instilled anger into Arjuna: "O Arjuna, do you not know that, even though they are your relatives, they are people who tried to kill you. They are people who wanted to see you burned in the house they set fire to. They insulted your wife." The Lord did neither of these things. He adopted a third course. It was the course that every man or woman should take in their lives. He said: "It is your duty to fight, but fight without anger. They are doing injustice and it should be confronted. It should not be allowed by any person who has dignity. But before fighting with them, fight with your own anger. Do away with your anger; and then take up your bow and arrow, and, with a peaceful mind, pierce them through the chest! Do your duty without anger."

Duty is duty. When the question of duty comes, do it! Duty is the real religion. When people do not do their duty honestly and sincerely, they are not at all spiritual.

Anger is born of desire but desire must be replaced by a sense of duty. This is the point. The more we have the sense of duty, the more we are peaceful and balanced inside. Desires have a secondary place, and ultimately they get finished.