

AUM SRI SAI RAM

Bhagavan's Discourse on the Gita

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Anger takes birth in desire. Desire, itself, originates from thought. Therefore, thought is responsible for both Kama and Krodha, desire and anger. In the same way that you cannot get cloth without thread, you cannot get anger without desire. Gita Acharya has given a new name to desire and anger. That name is Analam, which literally means fire. Analam has the capacity to burn. There is a danger of getting some harmful effects from fire, even when it is at a distance. If this is the case, then how much more careful must you be when the fire is in your own heart. This fire of desire and anger has an extraordinary capacity to destroy all the human qualities and to suppress the divine spark that is inside you, leaving only the demonic nature remaining within you. This fire of desire has no long-term aim and can never be satisfied. It has a voracious appetite that is endless. Whatever fuel you give to fire, whether it be wood, oil, or anything else, it will never be satisfied. Alam refers to contentment; Analam is that which has no contentment at all.

In the world there are different types of fire; each has a certain limit. Certain types of fire get extinguished in a few hours, others may last for a few days. They will not last longer than that because they have limits set for themselves. Objects which operate within fixed limits cannot reach the unlimited one. People and objects in the phenomenal world are all washed away by the flood of time. A thing which is itself being washed away cannot be of any use to save others. Just as everything in the world has limits, so fire also has certain limits and boundaries set for itself. But for the fire of desire and anger there is no limit whatsoever.... no boundary, no goal. Desire and anger may enjoy the objects but there is no limit to their hunger. Then what is the way to control them? Gita Acharya declared, "Conquer anger through love and conquer desire through renunciation and sacrifice." Where there is love there is no anger. If you develop love there is no room for hatred. A Sadhaka has to make every effort to establish love in his heart. Swami has mentioned a number of times that the heart is like a single-seat sofa; there is no room for two there. Only one can be there at a time. Once a person occupies the heart, any other person will not be able to find a place there. The first will occupy the place completely and not leave any room for any other to enter there. Therefore, a Sadhaka will have to make room for only one thing in his heart, only one principle, and that is the principle of love. We should recognize that our heart is not like a musical chair. If we want to conquer

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anger through love then we will have to develop our love in a magnificent way. Love is always prepared to shower itself freely, and to overlook many defects and weaknesses. Love has this extraordinary quality... it lives by giving and forgiving, whereas the little ego-self lives by getting and forgetting. It is very clear that where there is love there is no room for selfishness, and where there is selfishness there is no room for love. In the world there is absolutely nothing which cannot be achieved when one shines with this principle of love. With love one can conquer all obstacles and achieve anything. Therefore, if we want to conquer our anger we will have to fill our heart with love and make love the dominant force in our life. Once we recognize that the indweller of our heart is the indweller of every other heart, that our beloved Lord whom we recognize as seated on the throne of our heart is also dwelling in every other heart, then there cannot be any room for hating or getting angry with any other person in the world. When the same Lord is in every heart how can you look down with contempt on any other person? Therefore, in the first place we have to firmly immerse ourself in this principle of love and establish it in our heart. As Swami has mentioned before, when love is associated with our thoughts it becomes truth. When we introduce love into our activities, all our actions become Dharma, righteousness. When all our feelings are saturated with love our heart automatically is filled with peace supreme. And when we understand the nature of love, and allow this love to guide our intellect, then it becomes saturated with non-violence. Therefore, love is truth, love is righteousness, love is peace, love is non-violence. For all these great qualities love is the undercurrent. If thoughts are not filled with love there will be no truth. If there is no love in action Dharma will not be present. If there is no love, peace cannot be there and non-violence will also not be there. So, just as sugar is the basic ingredient of all the different kinds of sweets, such as laddhu, mysore pak, jaggery, etc., so also love is the basis for Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Ahimsa. This principle of love is the Divine Principle, itself. It is the Divine power that activates everything. By this process of love we can easily conquer hatred and anger. Love is God, always live in love. Anger can be the source of any number of difficulties and expose us to numerous problems in our life. It destroys our dignity and undermines the principle of humanity within us. It first enters into us in a very subtle form and gradually becomes all-pervasive. When it comes in initially, it will only ask for a small bit of space. "Just give me a little room to sit down in," it says. Once it has established itself it declares, "Now, I'll make myself enough space to lie down and stay." We should not make even the least room in our heart for such bad qualities. Once we let anger in, it will be impossible to get rid of it. Even if you make friends with it and give 40,000 Rupies, it will not leave you. So, this

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dangerous poison should not be given even the least bit of space within us. We know that in a car, the red tail-light goes on as a warning before the car comes to a stop. In the same way, before we explode in anger, our eyes become red, the lips begin to quiver and the whole body becomes hot. The moment you start having any of these symptoms, you had better leave the place immediately, and go to a solitary spot and sit there until peace returns. As told yesterday, you can also take a cold-water bath. Once anger expresses itself in words it may lead to endless complications and problems later on. Even if your anger is justifiable and you are protecting the truth, still you must learn to express the truth in a sweet way, in a dear way, in an acceptable way that will be received by the other person, without hurting him in any way. Therefore, every Sadhaka must learn to control his anger by developing the principle of love and saturating his heart with love.

We also need to consider how to deal with desire. To conquer desire we have to develop a sacrificing nature; we must be steeped in renunciation. Renunciation does not mean that you give up your family and go to the forest; nor does it require you to give up all your property and take up Sanyasa. Once we realize the defects in any object, once we recognize its transitoriness and worthlessness in helping us to reach our goal, we will automatically stop desiring it. Even when living the life of a householder immersed in the world, we can recognize the defect and weaknesses of various things of the world. For instance, there may be certain kinds of food that we very much enjoy, and we may be having a nice variety of dishes made of this food on our plate, and are getting ready to eat it with great relish; but then the cook comes to us and says, "Sir, please don't eat this dish because some poisonous insect has fallen in and is dead inside." The moment a person hears this and recognizes the harmfulness of a particular item of food, he would never consider eating it, no matter how much he liked that dish, before.

In the same way we have to recognize the nature of the things of the world. They are ever changing and inevitably some day they must cease to exist. Once we know this how can we remain enthusiastic about acquiring them, and try to get lasting enjoyment from them? Food is really only medicine for the disease called hunger. How can it ever be an item of luxury? When you are sick and medicines are given, do you refuse them if they are not tasty? Therefore, we should recognize and accept that the things which we use in the world are only medicines for the diseases we have. As the disease improves the medicine becomes less; when we are well we do not need medicines and when we are sick we do not crave for particularly tasty medicines.... just those that will do the job of getting us well. But now, we feel that we are enjoying all sorts of delights and that we are living a

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very happy life, enjoying so many things, which seem to give us so much comfort and joy. But these are not real enjoyments, for surely we will have to face consequences of all these present indulgences in future.

Consider a giant tree which has a number of branches heaped with flowers and fruits. It is very grand and attractive. One particular day, this big tree begins to dry up and its flowers fall off. Is it because there is a shortage of water or manure? Has there been some neglect in feeding it? No, there is some kind of pest that has attacked its roots and is destroying the tree. Through the roots the pest enters and starts to eat up this giant of a tree. In the same way, once we allow this pest Raga-Dvesha to enter our heart, one day or another, we will suddenly come to ruin. This is absolutely certain. In the world we think that a rich man is a very important man, but in the world of spirituality, wealth is not a very special thing. Charity can be considered much greater than the possessions of wealth. If there is no charity, wealth has no intrinsic value at all. There are four people that will enter their claims to your wealth. The first is Charity. The second is the government. The third is the thief. And the fourth is fire. Each of them expects to inherit your wealth, but if you were to hand over all your wealth to your first son, who is Charity, then the others would get no share of it. When we look at people who freely give in Charity, we see that other claimants will have a great reverence for the person and will not press their own claims. For example, we see that the government gives income-tax exemption for people who donate to charity. Even fire is a little frightened of a person who gives charity, and thieves also will leave him alone. So, when one gives to charity, which may be considered as one's oldest son and natural heir, then the others who would otherwise try to claim your wealth will respect your action and not interfere. But if a person has wealth and does not give to charity, then the thief will have his eye on that person, and the government will also like to catch hold of him and claim his riches. If these two, the government and the thief, for some reason choose to ignore him, then fire will come and one day destroy his possessions. Therefore, Gita has concluded that it is not wealth but charity which is really important.

In a similar way, in human being it is not the ability to talk, but the truth that is uttered, which is important. If there is no truth in one's speech, then whatever is said will have no value at all. The Gita has also declared that it is not life itself but good name and reputation that are important. A life that is devoid of a good name is useless. One has to earn a good name so that the principle

of humanity will shine forth in him. The most important duty of a man is to harbour good thoughts, to have good behaviour, to speak good words and lead a good life. You should be careful in your words and actions so that you may not earn a bad name. Instead of living one hundred years the life of a crow, scavaging off others, it is far better to live a few moments as a swan, with an untarnished name and an unblemished character. Gita has called such a sterling soul whose life is replete with goodness, a Paramahansa, a most sacred being.

Next let us consider the body aspect. Good actions are far more important than mere physical strength. A body is not being used to serve others is nothing but a dead body. These bodies have been given to us to serve others, not just for the purpose of catering to our own selfish needs.

Today, whatever man does, thinks or utters is primarily inspired by selfishness. In order to overcome this tendency we have to constantly seek opportunities to help others and develop the principle of service. In that process, by our good actions, all of humanity gets sanctified. It is very difficult to obtain birth as a human being. We must spend some time thinking over how properly to utilize this rare life that has been given to us and develop good habits which will overcome these weaknesses of desire and anger, which will only waste our life. How do we best do this? Consider a small example. One day a beautiful dog happens to come to our house; we do not know to whom it belongs. It is such an attractive thing, in order to keep it there for some time and enjoy its presence, we give it a little food. Next day it comes about the same time, and again we feed it and enjoy having it visit us. Like this it comes back every day to get fed, and gradually over a period of time, attachment increases and this dog now regularly visits the house, spending more and more time there. One day we find it will no longer leave; it just continues living in that house all the time. But the happiness that we enjoy from looking at physical beauty does not last very long; once the beauty is without its attendant joy it becomes obnoxious to us. In the case of this dog, we soon get tired of having it around and so we look for a way to get rid of it. We ask ourselves what is the reason this dog has attached itself to us and is now living in the house all the time? The reason is that right from the beginning we have been feeding it regularly every day; we have also been stroking it, admiring it, and paying so much attention to it. It is that daily practice which has created the attachment between ourselves and this dog. Now we must develop a practice (Abhyasa), which will break this attachment and help us to get rid of the dog. For this the best method is to reverse the original process that created the attachment and made the object so dear to us. In the case of the dog, if no food is given for some days and everyone is indifferent to it, paying no

attention to it whatsoever, then soon, of its own accord the dog will go away. Therefore, it is the practice that is important; it is through practice that we have developed certain attachments and undesirable qualities, and it is through practice that we can change them. The Bhagavad Gita has said, that for everything practice is the starting point. In the 12th Sloka of the chapter on Bhakti Yoga it says, through practice you will be able to get knowledge, through knowledge you will be able to develop meditation, through meditation you will develop sacrifice, and only when you sacrifice will you obtain peace of mind. Therefore, it all starts with Abhyasa or steady practice.

For many births, we have been enamoured by beauty and we have engaged in desire and anger until these passions have struck deep roots in our heart. Ultimately we have become slaves of our desires. Now, mere words will not be enough to get rid of them. Once they have developed such strong roots, even if we cut them off at the surface, they will sprout up again and again, after this long period of having practiced attachment. Where desire has become an integral part of us, it is only by reversing the process and practicing detachment and renunciation that we will be able to get rid of these deeply ingrained pests. In the beginning, desires are extremely attractive and sweet. After some time we develop a disgust for them; but then it is already quite difficult, in fact, almost impossible to get rid of them. Therefore, it is best if right from the very beginning we develop renunciation and detachment as part of our nature, and give no place or importance to desire. Unless we have such an attitude of sacrifice and a capacity to resist desires, we will not be ready to receive the Grace of the Lord. A bullock or a horse which cannot be controlled, a car without brakes, or a life which is not based on the control of the senses, are all dangerous. Control of the senses is very important. In the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali emphasized the need to tightly control the tendencies of the mind to run in all directions, following after desires. Mind and senses must be kept in check within limited bounds. Even happiness which exceeds certain limits can be harmful. For everything there is a limit, there is a range of healthy operation.

For example, the normal body temperature is 98.6° ; if it goes up even one degree there is a disease in process. Only when it is within the appropriate level does it indicate a healthy body. Similarly, our blood pressure is normal when it is 80 over 120. If the blood pressure goes up to 90 over 150 it indicates an abnormal condition in the body, which may be indicative of a disease. Similarly, the heart beat should be around 75; if it increases there will be a disease. The same is true for our eyes; there is a range of light that is appropriate to healthy functioning. If the light is too bright the eyes

cannot see and will be harmed. Or in the case of the ears there is a proper range of sound; if the level of sound exceeds that range, such as may happen close to a plane or train or loudspeaker, the hearing will become impaired. We see that life is something like a limited company. If you want to carry on unlimited business with this limited company then you will be subject to a great deal of distress. Therefore, we have to impose restrictions on our behaviour, and spend our life acting always within certain prescribed limits. This can also be called discipline. Discipline is necessary for the spiritual progress of an individual; without discipline a person is likely to become nothing but an animal. But even discipline has to be exercised within limits; so, there is even a need to regulate our discipline if we are to enjoy life. We see that for everything there is a limit and a bound; if we stay within these limits we will not be troubled by life.

Now, in the first place, we will have to take proper notice of these two dreadful enemies of man, Kama and Krodha, desire and anger, and try to develop complete control over them. These enemies are not external to us; they are our inner enemies. If a person is defeated by his inner enemies, how can he ever hope to conquer his external ones? Once we keep these inner enemies under firm control, our outer enemies can be defeated quite easily. The Bhagavad Gita has taught that desire and anger are the primary obstacles to liberation. So they absolutely must be curbed. Tomorrow we will take up some of the other enemies that get in the way of our path, such as jealousy and miserliness.

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