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Extracts from
Sri Babuji's Satsangs

Light on Anger

DEVOTEE: What is anger? How does it arise?

GURUJI: Everybody has an image of their own self, what they think they are in the eyes of others. That is what we call ego. We use the word ego very loosely. "We should erase the ego!" "The ego should not be there, it should be destroyed." But what is that ego actually? Have you ever thought of it, anybody? You say "I" is the ego, but is that an answer? Just a simple, "I is the ego"? Then why don't you use the word "I" instead of "ego"?

Normally in our experience, what the ego is – it's not an exact definition, but if we want to catch hold of some idea of what ego is – our ego is what we think we are in the eyes of others.

DEVOTEE: Why do you differentiate between what others think we are, and what we ourselves think we are?

GURUJI: Because what we think usually depends on what others think of us. In fact, not what others think, rather what we think the others think of us! [Guruji chuckles] We may believe that everyone thinks us great, while in fact other people may not be thinking like that. And there comes the problem: if this image is disturbed in any way, then anger springs.



DEVOTEE: Guruji, anger also sometimes comes when nobody else is there, all of a sudden.

GURUJI: It won't come like that. You will be recalling an incident, or you will be anticipating something, something which affects this image, this ego. Even though we are physically alone, we are in the company of such a memory, or the anticipation of something. It might be the effect of something that happened before, which at the time we suppressed because of the circumstances, and then when we are alone it comes as a recollection, a memory of it, a



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shade of it. Secondly, anger may come because of misunderstanding, not being able to clearly understand something. Thirdly, we may get angry if we experience pain, if we lose some of our comfort.

Grossly speaking, these are the three reasons for anger. If you think of any of the instances when you get angry, it will be one of these three.

The first – remembering or anticipating something which affects our image – is quite imaginary, it doesn't have any real basis. So if we start thinking clearly and realistically and see that it is based on something imaginary, we can limit its effect to some extent. The second – lack of understanding – we can antidote by having clarity. And the third – experiencing pain or losing our comfort – by having love, a positive emotion. Unlike the first reason, this is real! If somebody beats you, that is not imagination or a myth.

With regard to the second reason – which is connected to the first – I usually give an example of travelling on a bus or a train. You are travelling, sitting in your seat, and somebody comes and steps on your toe. That causes you pain. You say, "Hey! Can't you see? Are you blind? What is this nonsense?" And you shout at him and become very angry. Then the person who is standing next to him says, "I'm sorry, Madam, but he is blind, he can't see!" Immediately the same anger becomes, "Oh, I am very, very sorry. Please excuse me. I didn't know that when I shouted at you. Please come and sit." And then we even give our seat to him. [Guruji chuckles]

Just think of the instance. What happened there to your anger? What is the mechanism behind it? What actually hurt you is not the physical pain. If that was the reason you would still be angry because the pain remains, your toe still hurts. So it is not the pain that triggered anger in you. There was an expectation that the other man should behave properly towards you, in a certain way. So it is the lack of politeness that hurt you. When you know that he didn't mean to do it, that it was only because of some physical limitation that he did it, the whole thing changes immediately. You even get up from your seat and offer it to him and stand yourself. What is happening to the anger? How is it transforming into compassion and love? In the same way try and apply that to the different situations. Why I am getting angry? "Oh, I am expecting this from him, that is why I get angry."

And when you are playing with your child and she stands on your chest and starts jumping, it's painful, no doubt, but you say, "Oh, my sweet, come on! Jump more! Jump more!" [Guruji laughs] If pain were a reason for anger, you should be angry with the child also. Why you are not getting angry then?

DEVOTEE: Because there's love.

GURUJI: Because there is love. When I told you the reasons for anger and said that you can antidote anger with love, it was very abstract to you, so I gave you some examples. "How can love antidote anger?" This is how.



GURUJI: What we usually think is that we are angered because something has happened, or because he has done that or she has done this – but that is meaningless. That is not the reason. There is something behind it. If you try to explore what that is, even though you might not be able to eradicate it totally, at least you'll reduce the instances of your anger.

Our anger shows that the image we have of ourselves, of what others think of us, is false. You think that other people have to respect you and love you and behave towards you in a certain manner, but it is not happening. If it is not happening, it means that what we have understood is not true. What we think, is wrong.



GURUJI: Why should we expect love and respect from others and why should we get angry with them? Why this begging for affection, concern, love and all these things from others? And if they don't show it we get angry. We beg for attention, and we desperately want other people to go according to our wish. If we understand the mechanism behind anger, it will cease. It may come again, but again if we understand it, it will slowly vanish.



GURUJI: So as I said, the second reason for your anger is that you don't have clarity, you don't have clear understanding. And the third is you don't have the simple love which you are always talking about. "Love, love, love! I should have love!"

DEVOTEE: But Guruji, how to go about it? When anger flares up there is a strong physical reaction in the body, so it's almost too late then to tell myself there's a lack of love – isn't it?

GURUJI: When any emotion is strong it triggers a bodily reaction, that's all. That bodily reaction is not important. Just shedding tears is not crying. It is the suffering, the sorrow that you feel in your heart that is the actual sorrow. Even if you cut onions you'll get tears in your eyes. [Laughter] So don't bother about physical reactions. People react in different ways, and for some, their body is more susceptible to the flush of the emotions, but I'm talking about the basic emotion itself.

DEVOTEE: I would like to have a recipe for what to do next time it happens, or for how to catch it. Is it possible to catch it before somehow?

GURUJI: If you understand one thing you'll be able to overcome it. For instance, if somebody comes and starts telling you their sorrows, talking about all their problems, and you get fed up and start getting angry, think about yourself in the same situation. If you have some problems, you want some solace, then maybe you come and tell me. What you expect is that I should react to you with love, with concern, with understanding. Or maybe you go to Baba and pray, "Oh, I'm like this. I am not able to do that thing. Please accept me." When we are trying to be accepted by somebody as we are, why can't we accept somebody else like that? We don't accept another person, but we want to be accepted ourselves! That person just wants to tell us their difficulties. What is it that we lose by simply listening, even if we can't do anything? And if you *are* able to do something, okay, do it.



DEVOTEE: How can we get ourselves into a state where we do not feel this anger, this pain, this hurt?

GURUJI: Only by having the love kindled in your heart by a Satguru. Once you have the love in you then you don't see evil; you see ignorance, you sympathize with others and you understand their aggression. What did Jesus say? Even when he was being crucified, nailed to the cross, what was it he said? "Father, they know not what they do. Forgive them." His tolerance came from that wisdom, that love. And Baba also reacted like that. He said, "If a child passes urine on your arm, will you hit the child? Will you cut your arm?" No, because a child does not know what she is doing.

So saints don't feel it as aggression. If our children do anything, how do we look upon it? For that kind of attitude, our heart should be filled with love. The love should be springing and filling up our heart, only then is it possible to be like that. And once you have it, all else follows. Jesus was not seeing evil at all.

DEVOTEE: Until we get the experience of love, how can we deal with the anger that is already existing?

GURUJI: By understanding, by concern, by sympathizing with the other person and understanding their situation. With that, that anger won't stay.



Guruji's voice

