

# Shun Violence to Be Happy?

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As we all are aware, we are witnessing increasingly shocking acts of violence these days from linguistic groups, terrorist attacks and individual crimes. And these are all manifestations of the violence within us. When human souls forget their true identity as 'spiritual beings' and begin to identify with their bodies, they come under the influence of vices and commit violence, because the soul is violating its true nature of peace, joy, love and power.

If at all we wish to lead a peaceful and happy life, there is no other go except to shun violence. We are what we think. All that arises are from our thoughts only and with our thoughts we make this world. Further, we are also aware that the violence comes from vices. Let's look at those five vices namely lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego – all connected to the feeling of wanting or desiring.

## What is Lust?

Lust is an obsessive or addictive desire to seek support, fulfillment, happiness and self-worth by indulging in pleasures that finish all inner powers and dignity of the soul. It creates endless cycles of desires and indulgence. It makes one extremely selfish and finishes all

clarity, sensitivity, love and truth in the soul.

Lust destroys all purity and power in the soul. Lust is not just to indulge in physical pleasures, but spending entire life lusting for money and power.

Anger is a fire that burns the self and others. When expectations are not met and when people don't follow our way, we become angry and react violently. Anger blunts our discernment and decision-making powers and we are not able to think and act rationally when we are angry. Anger makes a soul subservient to other people's behavior/ situations and can lead to destructive behavior that can cause great damage on large scale such as war, terrorism and murders.

Greed keeps one in a state of continuous seeking and chasing desires. A greedy person is always poor and empty inside even though he may have lots of material assets at his disposal. Greed inevitably leads to unrighteous and corrupt practices. It makes a person very unhappy, fearful, dishonest and irresponsible.

Greed can lead to total imbalance and exploitation of man and nature [Uttarakhand Disaster] which can result in widespread

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damage. Attachment is the root cause of all suffering. It comes from the need to feel supported and valued by people, objects and roles. It creates strong sense of false support and identity. Further, attachment makes one selfish, petty and narrow-minded.

Ego is the subtlest enemy of the soul. We all are under the influence of ego when we are totally disconnected from self-respect. We fabricate and identify ourselves with false self-image. An egoistic person always feels insecure and seeks attention. Further, an egoist is in delusion, always influenced by praise and defamation. Ego isolates a person and creates clashes, discord, hatred and blind competition. It is said, if you don't take care of your ego you go.

Now having looked at what these five vices are all about, let's see how people suffer when they don't control them and become subservient to them:

### **Ravana - A Case of Lust:**

Ravana, apart from being a great Shiva Bhaktha and scholar, is also known for his virility, lust and aggressiveness for women. Ravana had several wives and kept all the women captured from the conquest in the war. Many of the women accepted him for his masculine charisma, power and knowledge in all directions. Mandodari was his principal wife, who was the daughter of Mayasura and an Apsara Hema. Mandodari was famous for her wisdom and grace as well as her beauty and chastity. Mandodari is often compared with Sita for her beauty.

Ravana used to force himself upon the women who prevented his advances. Once

Ravana approached Vedavati who was a beautiful lady who was performing penance with the intention of having Lord Vishnu as her husband. Vedavati resisted Ravana's advance but Ravana did not stop. Vedavati foretold that she would return to the mortal world as the cause of death of Ravana. After that she sacrificed her life in a funeral pyre.

He also tried to capture Rambha, who was engaged to Kubera's son. She pleaded to Ravana that she was like his daughter, but Ravana was not discouraged. Kubera's son cursed Ravana stating that if he force himself upon any woman, his ten heads would fall off immediately. This curse helped to protect Sita's chastity when she was in captivity of Ravana. And see the fate of Ravana who was ultimately killed by Rama.

### **Anger - Story of Ambarisha:**

Anger is a powerful emotion and uncontrolled anger can lead to arguments, physical fights, physical abuse, assault and self-harm. On the other hand, well-managed anger can be a useful emotion that motivates you to make positive changes.

Ambarisha, a virtuous and pious king, was a stickler to the Ekadasi vriata and would take food the next day, Dwadasi, only after offering it to a guest. Durvasa dropped to be his guest on such an occasion. Durvasa went to Ganga to take bath and he did not return for a long time. On Guru's advice, Ambarisha decided to break his fast symbolically by sipping tulasi teertha and wait for the guest to arrive to take his food. This angered Durvasa and he created a demon to chase and kill Ambarisha. Lord Vishnu came to the help of Ambarisha and killed the demon with the Sudarsana Chakra.

Lord Vishnu's Sudarshana Chakra, after killing the demon started chasing Durvasa. The sage sought protection first from Brahma and then Shiva and both directed the sage to seek Vishnu for protection. Vishnu in turn advised him to approach Ambarisha for relief and Ambarisha prayed for the sage and the needful has been done.

### **Greed: Case of Duryodhana.**

In the Game of dice, Shakuni sets the condition that upon losing, Yudhishthira and his brothers must spend thirteen years in exile in the forest before they may reclaim their kingdom. The thirteenth year must be passed incognito and in case they fail, the term of exile would be repeated. At the end of the exile term, Duryodhana refused to return Yudhishthira his kingdom, despite the counsel of Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and even Krishna whom he attempted to arrest.

Although Dhritarashtra criticizes his son, he tacitly desires that Duryodhana, and not Yudhishthira, remain Emperor. Duryodhana had a choice of giving only 5 villages to pandavas to avoid war, but he could not conquer his greed and died miserably losing his entire kingdom and in the process getting all his brothers/relatives killed.

**Also, there is an immortal story of duck giving golden egg.** A farmer had many ducks in his house. One of the ducks would lay a golden egg everyday. He sold the golden egg and became rich. One day, he thought that there would be more golden eggs in the stomach of the duck. If he cut the stomach, he could take all the golden eggs and he would become rich in a very short period of time instead of waiting for those eggs for many more days. So,

without any second thought, he took a knife and cut the stomach of the duck. But he found only one golden egg and felt very sad for his greedy attitude.

So the moral of the story is that Greed leads to huge loss.

### **Dhritarashtra - Attachment**

The classic case of causing suffering not only to himself but others as well is that of King Dhritarashtra, who due to his attachment to his sons, failed to control them. And the Kaurava chief, Duryodhana, with vain hope, decides to meet the powerful Pandavas in war. Instead of rising to royal impartiality and allowing Yudhishthira his fair claim, the king succumbs to the greed of his son and his demand to succeed the throne. But ultimately Dharma wins over adharma and Pandavas accede to the throne.

### **Ego-Story of Bhrigu**

In a popular legend involving sage Bhrigu, once he participated in a debate concerning who among the Trimurti (Divine trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) is greater and worthy of receiving fruits of a yagna. On the suggestion of celestial sage, Narada, Bhrigu, the sage who had an extra eye in the sole of his foot, first visited Brahma and Shiva, both of whom, when they learned of his quest, sought to impress him with their power.

However when he reached Vaikunta, the abode of Vishnu, he saw that the God was fast asleep. Bhrigu called to him many times, but could not wake him up. Angered, he kicked the God on his chest. This woke Vishnu up, and immediately he started pressing the feet of the sage and asking him if he had hurt his feet while kicking his hard chest. In the process, Vishnu

also destroyed the third eye that Bhṛigu had on his foot, which signifies his false ego. Upon seeing the humility of the God, Bhṛigu learned the answer that he had been seeking for so long.

### Conclusion

Negative thoughts, which include feelings of anger, fear, ego, greed, doubt, sadness, regret and unease, make us lazy and drain our energy. When we violate ourselves, we are violating eternal spiritual laws that are needed to sustain peace and harmony in this world. The Supreme Soul, the ocean of knowledge, purity, peace, love, happiness and power, recreates and re-establishes a new world order and culture of 'Ahimsa' as the supreme Dharma and way of life. Soul-conscious thoughts arise from the truth of who and what we are, and require the effort of remembering and gently reminding ourselves that we are eternal soul, "Athma"

and our real nature is peaceful and loving. When we restore our awareness of the self as a soul, it allows us to clearly see and release (clear up) any negative or waste thoughts and it helps us experience true relaxation of the mind. So, Violence can be eliminated when we follow spiritual principles to become vice-less through Rajyoga which is a spiritual process of intellectual communion with the Supreme.

Let me conclude with the Serenity Prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr:

God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things that I can not change.

The courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

*"Aa no bhadra kratao yantu viswatha* [Let Noble thoughts come to us from everywhere].



### Anger Destroys Peace

Anger is by nature a painful state of mind. Whenever we are angry, our peace of mind immediately disappears and even our body becomes tense and uncomfortable. We are so restless that we find it nearly impossible to sleep, and whenever we are able to sleep it is fitful and unrefreshing. It is impossible to enjoy oneself when we are angry, and even the food we normally find delicious seems unappetizing. Anger transforms even a normally good-looking person into an ugly red-faced monster. We grow more and more unhappy, no matter how hard we try, we cannot control our emotions.

Patience is a mind that is able to accept, fully and happily, whatever occurs. It is much more than just gritting our teeth and hanging in there. Being patient means to welcome wholeheartedly whatever arises, having given up the idea that things should be other than what they are. It is always possible to be patient; there are no circumstances so difficult that they cannot be accepted patiently, with an open, accommodating, and peaceful heart.

When patience is present in our mind it is impossible for disturbing thoughts to gather strength. There are many examples of people who have managed to practice patient acceptance even in the most difficult situations, such as under torture or in the final ravages of cancer. Although their body was damaged beyond repair, deep down their mind remained calm. By learning to accept the small difficulties and hardships that arise every day in the course of our lives, gradually our capacity for patience will grow and we shall come to know for ourselves the deep happiness and freedom that true patience brings.