

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

An Ezine for Those Who Think

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D-ANGER



The grand finale of the soccer World Cup: French star Zidane, playing like a maestro, leading his team to victory, in the last match of his career. Suddenly something snapped; "anger is momentary insanity," said Horace. And Zidane madly head-butted the lanky Italian defender Materazzi. What was about to be the crowning glory for an illustrious career turned into a

disgraceful ignominy. "Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame," cautioned Benjamin Franklin.

Undoubtedly a tragic tale, but isn't it a replay of what we have all seen in real life? Or maybe even experienced? A disproportionate explosion over a trifle. And a career is in jeopardy.

The modern media with its vivid depiction of violence portrays anger as a heroic quality, as the quintessential psyche of the macho man. But is it really? Most people recognize that in real life anger is not a pleasant emotion, yet they savor the violent scenes in the movies. And then, strangely enough, they wonder why they themselves, in fits of anger, speak such words and do such deeds which break the hearts of their loved ones and which they themselves bitterly regret later. Anger breaks hearts and wrecks homes. When enslaved by anger, people violently attack, wound and

kill others - sometimes their loved ones. Violent heroism in the media thus breeds violent crime in society. Anger is also a known cause of a large variety of ailments ranging from high blood pressure to heart attacks. Anger can lead to all forms of conflicts ranging from petty quarrels to world wars.

Moreover depression, a rampant modern mental health challenge, originates in anger. When one is unable to vent out anger on the perceived cause of frustration, one vents it out on oneself by going into a self-pity and self-martyrdom mentality, which is typical of depression.

Thus anger destroys reputations, careers, families and lives. No wonder the Bhagavad Gita (16.21) calls anger one of "the three gates to hell."

The Bhagavad-gita (2.62) describes the psychological genesis of anger. When our desires, plans and expectations for control and enjoyment are thwarted, the resentment and frustration expresses itself through harsh words and / or violent actions.

How can we deal with anger? Thomas Jefferson suggests, "When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, count hundred." Consciously delaying action is useful in checking angry outbursts. And a spiritual transmutation of our emotions can completely uproot anger. We are all souls, spiritual and eternal children of God. Our heart finds fulfillment only when we make God our first love in life. Moreover knowledge that no material upheaval or upstart can threaten our inner wealth of devotion gives us an unshakeable inner security, which anger cannot shake. Even before we attain that tranquil state, devotion engenders spiritual maturity and stability within us. Forewarned is forearmed. Often we indulge in anger because we do not recognize the danger of anger. The 'd' that enables us to see the danger of anger is the 'd' for devotion. When we awaken our dormant spiritual devotion by chanting the holy



names of God, especially the Hare Krishna maha-mantra, that devotion makes us strong at heart and wise at head. We develop the discrimination to pre-empt provocative situations, the open-mindedness to see the other person's viewpoint and the assertiveness to present our viewpoint without becoming aggressive. The Vedic scriptures describe the story of a violent sadistic hunter Mrigari who would half-kill animals and enjoy seeing them suffering till death. But when he was enlightened by the great sage Narada Muni and empowered by chanting of the names of Rama, he became so self-controlled that he carefully avoided stepping even on an ant. Will our world not be a better place if more people were similarly transformed? Charity begins at home. Why not we begin with ourselves?