



CHAITANYA CHARAN DAS

## *Don't beat watchdog*

**Question:** Why do some people do horrible things, as if they have no conscience?

**Answer:** Our conscience is like our internal watchdog. It barks and warns us whenever the dacoit of immorality comes to plunder our integrity. Those who heed the watchdog's warning drive away the thief; they reject the immoral temptation by activating their intelligence. Others get so allured by the temptation that they beat the dog instead of the thief! They silence the voice of their conscience and delight in immoral pleasures.

The Bhagavad-gita (15.15) explains that the lord personally resides in our hearts to guide us in our journey of life. Our conscience, when pure, is actually the voice of god guiding from within. When a person knowingly and repeatedly acts contrary to the inner voice, he is telling god, "I want to do what I want to do; I don't want your guidance." Due to this adamant and defiance, god withdraws his guidance; the inner voice starts fading till it becomes almost mute. Then that person unhesitatingly does unconscionable acts.

Criminal psychopaths, animal slaughterers, pedophiles, rapists and mercenary murderers are examples of such people with muted conscience. Terrorists have not only muted the voice of the true god who loves all his children, but have imagined a god who hates those whom they hate. Thus, the terrorists' "god" is a fabrication of their own ego, created to provide a religious rationalisation for their irrational malevolence.

We are all free to neglect the inner voice, but we cannot neglect the consequences of that neglect. If a person driving a car on a steep mountainous road breaks the fencing at the side of the road and thinks, "Now I can freely enjoy riding the way I want," his freedom will simply be a free-fall to destruction. Similar is the plight of those who break the fences that god has created on the road that takes us back to him. Those who break god-given regulations for sexual morality freely fall to various sufferings, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhoea being the most obvious among them.

To help the right use of the inner voice and to expose its misuse, god echoes his inner voice as his outer voice - the voice of guru-sadhu-shastra (spiritual master -- saintly teachers -- sacred scriptures). By following their guidance, we show god that we do want his guidance and then the voice of conscience starts becoming stronger. Empowered by that inner guidance, we can always make the best possible choices and thus attain the best that life can offer.

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