

LET GO ANGER AND ENEMITY

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“What are you two talking so loudly in the early morning? I thought that Father is giving you a sermon! But Sir, I see that you are talking loudly and Father is only listening to you. Sir, What is the matter?”

We – four friends from Ahmedabad – had gone to Godhra to conduct a workshop on reporting and creative writing to college students.

A friend and I – two early birds – got up early in the morning according to our habits while the other two were still sleeping. Our conversation must have disturbed one of our friends sleeping in the adjoining room. He came out and joined us with his mild complaint.

Actually my friend was talking to me about a social and family problem. I told him that his anger and enmity are not in order in facing the problem. My friend did not like my dissenting voice instead of agreeing with his views of the complicated problem.

“You being a priest can talk like that! You really do not understand me at all! My stand is correct. My anger and enmity towards those people are quite okay. Don’t I be angry against those uncouth and insensitive people? I have taken the right course of action,” My friend defended himself.

“As far as I understand your anger and the opposition towards those people are not okay. That is why you feel angry and tense,” I responded to my friend in a few words.

But my friend was not ready to forgive the people concerned. He was trying to justify himself as he raised his voice.

“Friend, I cannot agree with you in this matter. You understand your problem well and you feel that I do not understand you. But the truth is, this is not a new problem for me. As a priest, people do come to me with similar problems for counseling. Let it be that I do not fully understand your problem. But in your actual situation your anger and enmity against those people only make the matters worse,” I said.

My friend continued sticking to his gun and defending himself when our friend came in and interrupted our conversation. But my thinking mind continued to fathom my friend’s words, his anger and his enmity, like a giant wheel continue to go round for some time even after the stitch is put off.

I understood very well that my friend was deeply hurt by the insensitive and uncouth behaviour of some people. Overcome by his feeling my friend did not take into consideration the actual situation of both the parties concerned. In Gujarati there is a saying, one cannot clap with one hand. My friend does not understand that his own rigid position has prevented him from seeing the real situation of the people who do not agree with him. By his anger and enmity my friend is

not in control of himself but he has unwittingly given the initiatives and leadership to his opponents and he has become a reactionary!

My friend was not aware of this reality. So he tried to justify his anger and enmity towards his opponents by raising his voice in self-defense. But it is not right for a person to lose self-control and get angry even if others behave as they like, speaking ill of him and provoking him. By getting angry with such people you are giving your control into the hands of those who provoke you and allow them to make you dance!

I am reminded here an enlightened priest. He was able to maintain his cool and calmness in provocative situations. He was always in self-control in front of criticism, accusation, opposition and ridiculing. Impressed by coolness and calmness a disciple once asked him, "Father how do you keep your coolness and balance of mind amidst such false accusations and insult?"

The priest answered his disciple with a counter question: "Imagine that some one is giving you a gift. But you do not accept it. Then, who would be the owner of the gift?" It was obvious for the disciple that the gift belongs to the one who brought it and not to the person who refused to accept it.

Some times people do not understand the whole situation. They are not fully sensitive. They are neither alert nor self-confident. Such people often easily get angry with the slightest provocation. Anger and enmity are nothing else than your own personal reaction to concrete situation. You can become aware of yourself and decide for yourself that there is no need to become angry and feel enmity. If you can conscientiously choose your response, you will not easily get angry in any and every provocative situation.

In a provocative and tense situation some people's pride and selfishness come on the way of recognizing the truth. They need to convince themselves and others that there is nothing wrong in their stand; they are right and that the truth is on their side. Actually there is no need to prove to oneself and to others that one is right in all situations. There is need only to be truthful to oneself. But the people who are not enlightened go after getting the appreciation and support of other people!

It is entirely in your hands not to get angry and not to oppose those who offend you. You need to decide for yourself that you will try to understand the offensive situation fully in a conscientious way instead of getting angry on the people involved. If the behaviour of my opponents and their calumny are not acceptable to me, I will make my best effort to let my detractors know about it. Then, I will let the situation just be there. Even if the situation is intolerable and calumnious, I will not allow myself to get angry, I will not feel constrained to oppose the opponents and thus allow my blood pressure to go up.

A person needs to understand oneself thoroughly to bring about such a situation. The person needs the ability to understand fully oneself and the whole situation. Self awareness and confidence in oneself help a person to feel free from wanting to be angry and the need to oppose the opponents.

Often anger and the need for self defense originate from a person's attitude and insistence that the other person also think and act like oneself. My friend told me several times that if his opponents behaved this way and that way, there would have been absolutely no problem. So the basic problem with my friend and his whole demeanour were proclaiming to me that according to him all others should think and act in the same way as he thinks and does things! He insists with his wife, children and all other relatives and friends that they do always according to his thinking and bidding! He thinks that there will be peace and harmony if all other people will think and act 'properly'!

Yes, people want happiness and peace in life. But like my friend many people do not understand that peace and happiness depend entirely on themselves. They do not depend on other people. But one needs to shed the idea and attitude that the other people, let it be wife, son, daughter friend or anyone else, should think and act like oneself or in a way acceptable to oneself.

Only those people can experience interior peace and happiness who can let their opponents to think for themselves and act as they like. Only those people can enjoy interior peace and happiness who let free the others from their own hopes and expectations. Then there will be no need to be angry or feel enmity. (contact the author: ciss@satyam.net.in)