

Understanding the Unconscious¹

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One-step and two-step response

The inner space is provided by a certain clarity and understanding of all that has happened to me. It gives me a beautiful frame of mind to deal with myself, and also, others. Not only have things happened to me, things have happened to others too. A person behaves in a particular way because there is a background. I recognise the person's background in that behaviour. This recognition gives me space, so I will not immediately react to that person. This is what I call a two-step response to the world. A one-step response is, "How can you say that?" "How you can ever say that?" "How dare you say that?" It is a mechanical response.

With a two-step response, you say, "Oh, there is a background behind the person's remark." You have the space inside for that. You recognise that there is a background for his or her statement; otherwise this statement would be unacceptable. It is unbecoming of the person. You understand that there is something behind the person's behaviour, and you respond to the person, not the behaviour. Thus, you make a two-step response.

A two-step response gives you that inner leisure, the inner space to deal with people of different backgrounds without being ruffled, without being taken for a ride. You can just step back and look at them kindly. Here is where kindness comes, compassion comes and understanding comes. If everyone had this two-step response then everybody would be saintly. All saintliness lies just one step away. Everybody has this saintliness one step away. To respond to the world consciously, you first need to respond to your own issues. You need to have the space to welcome your anger, your fear.

Managing the anger

"Swamiji, this seems to be something different. We are always told to control our anger." If you control your anger, a few days later, you will have a tsunami. We do not control anger; we control the expression of anger. Please understand the difference. By not expressing your anger, you do not victimise your children; you do not victimise your spouse. Marriage does not mean having a sparring partner. You do not victimise anyone. 'Control your anger' is a loose statement. You cannot control anger, because anger does not seek your permission to come. It does not ask, "May I come? I have been waiting for some time. May I come now?"

There is so much ignorance about anger that it has become a moneymaking topic. At some workshops on 'how to control anger', they say, "Whenever you are angry, think of this or of that. Divert yourself from anger." If you divert your anger you will develop diverticulitis! Where will the anger go? You only control the expression of your anger. You can use your will for this, that too with the help of people. Intelligent living is to seek help when you need help. Therefore, if you can use your will with some help, you can avoid victimising anyone. This is called dama; dama means bāhyendriya-nigraha, control of the external organs. You do not victimise anyone, but since anger is inside you, smoke will come out of your ears.

To avoid that, you write the anger out. Writing the anger out means getting rid of anger. You handle your own unconscious intelligently; you handle yourself intelligently. You cannot be ignorant about this.

When a New Year begins, you make a vow, “I am going to write a diary.” Recently² you might have made one. Please check the diary now; check all the diaries from 1999 onwards at least. You may have entries on the first three pages. The rest will be blank and it may have been used as a scrapbook. Such is its fate. So, do not make these unintelligent vows. Why do you make them? Be intelligent. You know that you are not going to write a diary, so, why do you make the vow? In the same way, never say, “Hereafter, I am not going to get angry.” It is wrong. You say, “I welcome anger, but I am not going to victimise anyone. I will not victimise my own children. I am not going to victimise my spouse. I am not going to victimise my in-laws, or anyone; I am not going to victimise myself either.” It is clean as a whistle. It is not correct to victimise oneself either. We need to be intelligent. We need to handle this intelligently.

Welcome the anger

You welcome anger. When it comes, you do not victimise anyone, but you do not reject the anger either. It is easier with some help. You can help yourself and you can ask your own family for help, and thus convert a dysfunctional home into a functional one. Make it functional by telling everybody, “In this house, hereafter, nobody is going to victimise anyone because of his or her anger.” It means that when you are angry, you say, “I am angry now, I will talk to you later.” Tell the others also, “When you are angry, say that you will talk later.” Empower them by saying, “Whenever I am angry, please remind me that I am angry, so that I will not victimise others.” Tell this to your children; they will remind you before you get anywhere near anger. They know. “Dad, you are somewhere near getting angry.” They know; they can remind you. They also cannot victimise anyone. Make the home functional. You cannot hand over a better inheritance to your children than an honest home, a clean home where there is understanding. The growth, self-growth is in the home. What kind of a home is it where the self is crippled? What kind of a home is it where, the children scamper to their own rooms or wherever they can hide themselves, because father is coming?” The ‘father’s coming’ is like a warning, like a tiger’s coming. Except the dog, everybody goes inside. There are some people from whom even the dogs go away. It is not right. This is not intelligent living. We need to be intelligent. I say, we need to be intelligent.

The recognition of an unconscious is a breakthrough. Therefore you do not blame yourself. No child is responsible for all that has happened. It is absolutely innocent. It does not mean, however, that the parents are to blame. They have their own unconscious to deal with. There is no need to blame anyone; if they had cared a little more, they would have done much better, but they did not know. The result is that you have pain and anger is the outcome. With this understanding, you can create a home, a functional home, without traces of the old problems. There is dialogue; there is fairness. Even a small hut becomes heaven when there is dialogue, when there is understanding. You can be honest only when there is no shame. You need not be ashamed of anger because you understand that it is not wrong; that it is the expression of the unconscious. This is how you change.

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