

Give Yourself A Break Don't Break Yourself



Imagine a person working on a computer that has viruses. He is busy typing, but all that he is typing is being deleted in the background. A computer expert informs him, "Sir, you need to install an anti-virus." He responds curtly, "Don't disturb me; I am busy." The expert points out, "But Sir, your computer is not working; so all your work will be fruitless without the anti-virus" He retorts, "I will not be affected by your pessimism."



Could we be like this thoughtlessly busy person? The Vedic texts explain that we are spiritual beings; our physical body is like the hardware and the mind, the software. Often our mind gets infected by the viruses of irritation, depression, frustration, worry, hatred, envy, anger. When these negative thoughts take control of our mind, they make our system crash. Just as viruses prevent the user from accessing his own computer, these emotions block us from accessing our own intelligence. Just as a virus-infected computer produces hardly any worthwhile result, no matter how much the user types on it, a negatively infected mind can hardly do any clear thinking and effective functioning, no matter how much the person works.

These mental viruses infect us when we let ourselves become overwhelmed by excessive material desires for either the gross pleasures like smoking and drinking or the subtle gratifications of the ego. When we forget our spiritual identity and glory as beloved children of the Supreme Lord, we start thinking of such unnecessary material desires as necessary, resulting in a variety of negative emotions. All negative emotions are just permutations and

combinations of six primal negative drives, namely lust, anger, greed, envy, pride and illusion. In Sanskrit, these are called as *anarthas*. 'An' means not and 'artha' means value or meaning. So *anartha* refers to that which is valueless and meaningless.

This definition of *anartha* is significant for it indicates a major difference between computer viruses and mental viruses. We quickly recognize computer viruses as undesirable and want to get rid of them as soon as possible. But we are often slow to recognize the mental viruses as undesirable; we mistake them to be pleasurable and so hold on to them as long as possible. Worse still, many people even increase them in the hope of getting more pleasure; the popularity of pornographic websites is a sad fact. But the passionate pleasure that the *anarthas* offer are like delicious poisons, as stated in the Bhagavad-Gita (18.37). They offer momentary titillation which seems like nectar, but they eventually lead to anxiety, frustration and anger, which are like poison.

How do we remove the mental viruses? Due to our mistaken internal fondness for these viruses, installing the anti-virus package necessitates an internal change of consciousness. We need to discover happiness within ourselves, by which we will be able to reject as superfluous the external pleasures offered by the *anarthas*.

Therefore, installing the anti-virus program means reviving our awareness that we as spiritual beings, souls, can be self-satisfied, unaffected by material changes. This spiritual awareness is a natural result of meditation on the divine. Real meditation goes beyond physical postures and beyond mental adjustments. The essence of meditation is to take our consciousness off the changing and to fix it on the changeless, to focus our attention on God instead of material things. Vedic texts recommend that the easiest and best way to perform meditation in this age of Kali is mantra meditation, chanting the holy names like the Hare Krishna mantra.

Just as the sun dissipates darkness, the luminous presence of God invoked by meditation on his holy name dissipates all the dark negative emotions in our hearts.

Let us therefore say “No” to our instinctive tendency to say “No time” when we are reminded of the need for a spiritual break. Let us invest time for a meditation break and thus increase manifold our effectiveness in life.



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