

Healthy Body, Sick Mind

Anxiety, tension, stress, depression – these have become an integral part of modern life. The WHO has declared that mental diseases are going to be the greatest health hazard of the present century. Mental diseases gradually transform either into a variety of physical ailments known as psychosomatic diseases or into addictive drives for smoking, drinking, drug addiction, which



also destroy the body. Thus, the diseased mind poses an enormous threat to the entire human race.

When a bodily tissue causes pain to a person, it is considered diseased. Similarly when the mind is causing trouble to us, it should also be considered diseased. What makes the mind sick?

The Vedic scriptures of ancient India explain that the mind is a reservoir of thoughts, unfulfilled desires and past experiences. When the mind is filled with self-destructive desires, it is considered sick. Lust, anger, greed, pride, envy and illusion are like deadly germs that infect the mind. Among these six, the Bhagavad-gita declares lust, anger and greed to be the three gateways to hell. These not only lead a person to hell, but they create hellish existence for him even in this life. Let us see how.

1. Lust: It creates uncontrollable sexual urges, which destroy the intelligence of a person and compel him to bestial acts. Sex is a natural biological drive meant for procreation, but modern society with its obscene imagery has made it into an unnatural psychological compulsion. People bombarded from all directions with sexually suggestive stimuli live in a state of artificial sexual stimulation and perpetual mental agitation. People infected by lust can never be peaceful, because lust can never be satisfied. When lust is satisfied, it transforms into greed; when not satisfied it transforms into anger.

2. Greed: Modern society, with its constant emphasis on consumerism, fuels and fans greed within the hearts of people. A greedy person craves



for far more than what he needs in life. No matter how much he achieves or acquires, a person victimized by greed can find no fulfillment ever.

3. Anger: Anger makes a person speak words and perpetuate acts, which cause immense suffering to the people around him – to those whom he loves and even to himself. People savor scenes of ghastly violence in movies and then wonder why, in fits of anger, they lose control over themselves. Garbage in, garbage out.

Millions of people all over the world have been victimized by these mental enemies – including many talented, successful personalities. For example, Bill Clinton was disgraced by lust, Hansie Cronje by greed and Mike Tyson by anger.

If we want to regain our mental health, we need to first of all stop further infection of the mind. For that, we need to avoid or minimize exposure to:

1. Obscene or pornographic literature and imagery to avoid contamination by lust.
2. Consumeristic propaganda to avoid contamination by greed.
3. Scenes and situations involving needless violence to avoid contamination by anger.

Further, to destroy the germs already in our minds and to immunize ourselves from further infections, we need to take the spiritual medicine of mantra. *manas trayate iti mantrah* – a mantra is a sound vibration which is specially empowered to free the mind from anxiety. Among all the mantras described by the Vedic scriptures, the mahamantra Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Ram Hare Ram Ram Ram Hare Hare is the most potent.

The holy name is like a mental cleanser, which removes the unwanted influences of lust, anger, greed, etc. and thus creates mental hygiene and health. Millions of people all over the world have experienced the purifying potency of this mantra.



We can all be protected, healed and empowered by mantra meditation and thus lead peaceful, joyful and meaningful lives.

Should we not reclaim our right to mental health and serenity? 