



Photo: Balaram Das

About Anger and Love

MASTER OF ABUSE

MAHARAJJI REACTED in a variety of ways to those of us plagued by anger; and all of those ways sooner or later brought the anger to the surface and helped us begin to let go of it. Sometimes a devotee would become the object of a continuous barrage of abuse from Maharajji. The abuse, coupled with the underlying love, was a great panacea for even the most hidden and deep-seated anger. For others it seemed as if situations just developed around Maharajji that forced anger to the surface like a badly inflamed boil. And at just the right moment, Maharajji would be there with the necessary word or glance to release the anger—and the necessary cup of milk to soothe the soul after surgery.

For two years, Maharajji made Dada do many things as part of the temple management that he avoided at home. And throughout, Maharajji would abuse him to his face and behind his back, from morning until evening. In the course of this training Dada learned to control his anger. After two years Maharajji asked Dada's wife if he got angry anymore, and she replied, only very rarely.

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Maharajji told Dada that if he were Dada's wife, he would have thrown Dada out a long time ago.

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Maharajji turned to Dada and said, "You are a fool." Dada agreed. Then Maharajji said, "You are not a fool." Dada agreed.

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That Dada had become quite philosophical about Maharajji's abuse of him is evident from a conversation between them. There was a constant sound of gunfire nearby and Maharajji asked, "What is that?"

Dada answered, "They are just firing blanks, Baba."

"What do you mean, blanks?" Maharajji asked.

"That's what you do, Maharajji," Dada answered.

"Oh," said Maharajji, "I also go on firing blanks," he said delightedly.

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"Dada is a master of arts," said Maharajji.

Dada replied, "And you are a master of abuse."

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When Maharajji was so bad that he made the Ma's cry, he said to them, "Only if you are strong enough to hear my abuses can you face the world."

**THE PERSON WHO IS CLOSE TO ME
CAN BE SCOLDED.**

A SAINT NEVER GETS ANGRY.

**I COULD NOT GET ANGRY WITH YOU, EVEN
IN A DREAM**

One day when we Westerners had been sent to the rear of the temple grounds, as was usual during the day, I decided (for sentimental reasons) to go upstairs in the building I had lived in in 1967 and sit in my old room. One of the windows of this room looked over the wall into the front part of the temple, which was otherwise not visible from the back. As I idly looked out one of these windows, my attention was caught by a sight that transfixed me at the window but also made me stand well back, so that I could not be observed from outside.

Down below, at the window of Maharajji's room, a devotee who worked in the temple and served often as our translator was crying profusely. He was obviously talking to Maharajji. Then he got up and walked back toward the rear of the temple, still in tears. When he was gone from view, Maharajji appeared in his doorway and came out into the courtyard. He stood looking like a mad lion or elephant, and though I couldn't hear him it was obvious that he was yelling and turning this way and that with great fury. Everyone in the front courtyard seemed to be covering. It didn't seem "dharmic" to me. Maharajji had, after all, specifically said to me that a saint never gets angry.

Feelings of betrayal rushed through me, for here was Maharajji obviously in a rage. So he wasn't a saint either. What kind of guru was this? He said one thing and did another. I myself now became enraged and felt, for the first time since 1967, my heart turning cold toward Maharajji; and the thought came to me that apparently I'd have to leave Maharajji and go it alone. I stumbled back downstairs, deeply disappointed, and sat with the others but said nothing. Later I learned that right after the scene that I had witnessed, Maharajji apparently walked back into his room, called Dada, and in a very conversational tone asked, "Did Ram Dass see me get angry?" Dada said he didn't think so. But Maharajji insisted that I had and sent him back with a message.

When Dada found me sitting sullenly, he said, "Maharajji wants to know if you saw him get angry."

"Yes," I said.

"Well, he said to tell you that if you have any questions they will be answered later." And he left.

A few moments later the crying devotee appeared, bag in hand, to tell us that he had been banished from the temple, supposedly, as we later learned, for letting forty pounds of potatoes go bad in the storeroom. He said tearful good-byes and left. Now this fellow was not particularly competent, and though he was sweet he was rather a nuisance. Normally I would not have been unhappy to see him go, for he was constantly trying to ingratiate himself with the Westerners. Under these circumstances, however, I suddenly felt compelled to

support the underdog. I got up and followed him out to the front of the temple. Just going out to the front unbidden was already an act of insurrection. And as this crestfallen fellow was leaving the temple gate I purposely went up to him, embraced him, and gave him some money and a note with my address in Delhi if he needed anything. Then as he left I walked defiantly back through the temple, like the showdown scene from the movie *High Noon*. Everyone realized that I had sided against Maharajji.

All day I waited, but no clarification was forthcoming. As usual, we were not called to the front of the temple until a few minutes before the departure of the last bus. At the time one of the couples was having some marital difficulties, and Maharajji spoke directly to them. He said they must see God in each other and give up their anger. I sneered inside, remembering the scene I had just witnessed. Then he paraphrased the words of Kabir: “Do what you do with another person, but never put him out of your heart,” and as he spoke he looked directly and forcefully at me. The words burned into my heart and I heard them in a moment as applying to the married couple, to Maharajji’s behavior with the devotee, and to my own reactions to the scene I had witnessed. Once again I had gotten caught in the mellow drama and had forgotten to remember the illusion—and behind it, the love. He never said anything else about this incident, which made what he did say all the more powerful. (R.D.)

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At times Maharajji’s behavior reminds me of a story Ramakrishna tells of a saint who asked a snake not to bite but to love everyone. The snake agreed. But then many people threw things at the snake. The saint found the snake all battered. “I didn’t say not to hiss,” said the saint.

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I was getting so angry at Maharajji because I was sick of hearing him say that I was good. I was so tired of the words, “Bohut accha.” Once he went on for ten minutes telling this man how good I was, and I just got up and left. I could hear him screaming this “bohut accha” like a mantra as I walked away.

I went back and sat by the havan, and Maharajji later came back there and called me over. I was still angry. I was thinking, “Why can’t he leave me alone; I want to sit here by myself!” But I went over anyway. And he said,

“Oh, no. She’s angry. She has to drink some milk.” So he had some milk brought and I had to drink it.

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Whenever I would get very angry, Maharajji would have someone bring me warm milk, or sweets, or some cardamom pods to chew. He said these things soften anger.

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I once found myself becoming very angry while at Maharajji’s temple. Most of the anger was directed against my fellow Western devotees. Although there were perhaps some justifiable reasons for the anger, the fever pitch to which it had risen at the end of the two weeks was surprising, even to me. It was at that point that I walked to the temple and arrived late.

All the Westerners were sitting in the usual row on the porch, on the opposite side of the ashram courtyard from where Maharajji was sitting. From here they could watch him from a distance while they were taking prasada (lunch in this case). When I arrived and sat down, one of the Westerners brought over a leaf plate of food that had been saved for me. And at that moment the fury broke and I took the leaf plate and threw it. From across the courtyard, Maharajji watched.

Almost immediately I was summoned to his presence, and I crossed the yard and knelt before him.

“Something troubling you?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said, looking over at all the Westerners. “I can’t stand adharma (those behaviors which people manifest that take them away from God). I can’t stand it in them (pointing to the Westerners), and I can’t stand it in me. In fact, I can’t stand anybody at all except you.” And as I looked at him, I felt that he was my only safe harbor in this darkness of my soul, and I began to cry. No, not just to cry but to wail. Maharajji patted me vigorously on the head and sent for milk, and when I could see through my tears, I saw that he was crying, too.

He fed me the milk and asked me if I loved him. I assured him that I did. Then, when I had composed myself sufficiently, he leaned up close and said, “I told you to love everybody.”

“Yes, Maharajji, but you also told me to tell the truth. And the truth is that I just don’t love everybody.” Then Maharajji came even closer, so that we were practically nose to nose, and he said, “Love everyone and tell the truth.”

The way he said it left no doubt about the way it was to be. For a fleeting moment I had an image of a casket—apparently symbolic of my death—but it was shaped in a way that was unlike my body. It seemed representational of this conversation in which, in effect, I was protesting that, who I thought I was could not love everyone and tell the truth, and Maharajji was saying, “When you finish being who you think you are, this is who you will be. When you die you will be reborn to love everyone and tell the truth.”

Then he said, “Sometimes the most anger reflects the strongest love.”

Looking across the yard at those Westerners, toward all of whom I self-righteously felt anger, I saw suddenly that the anger was at one level, while immediately beneath that, at a slightly deeper level, was incredible love—two planes of relationship in which a person might say, “I love you but I don’t like you.” And if Maharajji’s instructions were to be carried out—and there was no doubt that they were, for he was my guru for better or worse—the anger would have to be given up to make way for the love.

Then Maharajji offered me a bargain: “You must polish the mirror free of anger to see God. If you give up a little anger each day, I will help you.” This seemed to be a deal that was more than fair. I readily accepted. And he’s been true to his end of the bargain.

It is now twenty-three years since that day. The impurities haven’t fallen away as quickly as I would have liked, but slowly, verrrry slowly, the mango boon is coming to pass. (R.D.)



I was once very angry at another devotee in the ashram, and I went directly to Maharajji, who was sitting on a stone by the roadside, for help. I knelt before him and put my head at his feet. He placed his hand on my head and kept me in that position for the entire darshan. When it was time to go, he helped me up. My knees were bruised and deeply marked from the coarse gravel I had been kneeling on. I had not felt it the entire time. My anger was gone.

*FORGIVENESS IS THE GREATEST WEAPON,
BECAUSE A SAINT SO ARMED IS UNPERTURBABLE . . .
HE CAN GIVE UP ANGER IMMEDIATELY.*

A young fellow once came and Maharajji asked him how he was, and he said, "Oh, Maharajji, I've overcome anger." Maharajji said, "Oh, very good!" and kept praising him.

At the time, there was another fellow present who had been asking Maharajji for many years to come to his house, but Maharajji had never come because the boy's father didn't believe in sadhus or saints. But now Maharajji turned to this boy and said, "Do you still want me to come to your house?"

The boy said, "Yes, but let me arrange it with my father." Maharajji said, "Go and then we will all come." The visit would mean, of course, that the place of honor in the house would be given to Maharajji so the father would have to sit someplace else.

Finally, the whole party went and Maharajji sat on the tucket belonging to the boy's father. Then Maharajji leaned over and looked the father in the eye and said, "You're a great saint." But in Hindi he used the very personal form, which you use only to very intimate friends and to people in the lower caste. So it was really an insult to use that form to the old father. The old man got upset but held himself together. A little time passed and Maharajji leaned over again and said, "You're a great saint." By this time the father's face got red and he was getting worked up, but he still kept control. A few minutes more went by and Maharajji leaned over and said the same thing again. This time the father completely lost it. He got up and started screaming at Maharajji, "You're no saint, you just come in and eat people's food, you take their beds, and you're a phony."

At this point the young fellow who had overcome anger leaped to his feet, grabbed the father by the collar, and started shaking him, saying, "Shut up, you don't know who you're talking to. He's a great saint; if you don't shut up I'll kill you."

At this point Maharajji got up, looked around bewildered, and said, "What's the matter, what's the matter, don't they want me here? We should go—they don't want me here." So he got up and started walking out, and he turned to the young fellow as he was going out and said, "It's very difficult to overcome anger. Some of the greatest saints don't overcome anger."

The fellow said, "But Maharajji, he was abusing you."

"That's right, he was abusing me. Why were you angry?"

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

MAHARAJJI LOVED TO have the Sunderakand chapter from the *Ramayana* read aloud. At one point in the story, a message is brought to Sita (wife and devotee) from Ram (husband and God), from whom she has been separated. Ram is telling of his torment in being separated from such a pure devotee: “One’s agony is assuaged to some extent even by speaking of it; but to whom shall I speak about it? For there is no one who will understand. The reality about the chord of love that binds you and me, dear, is known to my soul alone; and my soul ever abides with you. Know this to be the essence of my love.” When this section was read, tears would roll down Maharajji’s cheeks, and often he would become immersed in a state of bliss.

It was just this quality of love that bound us to Maharajji. Within and beyond the apples, the kindnesses, the kidding, the comings and goings, the abuses, was the love. Now and then he spoke of love, but always, he *is* love.

One devotee said, “He knows the language of our hearts.”

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Maharajji would quote Kabir: “It is easy to dye your cloth, but it is hard to dye your heart.”

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One evening in Kainchi one other devotee and I were sitting with Maharajji. The other devotee was reading the newspaper to Maharajji in a dull monotone. I thought to myself, “Maharajji, how can you bear this boring man? Why do you put up with him at all?” Slowly, I began to experience the most incredible love welling up in my being, greater and greater love until I felt my heart would burst. Just then Maharajji simply put his hand on my head, and the sensation stopped. When I tried once more to recapture it, I couldn’t. I looked up at Maharajji and he was smiling at me, filled with compassion. I felt like weeping.

THE HEART NEVER GROWS OLD.

I desired to have Maharajji come to visit my home but kept putting off asking him. I had told Dada of my desire, hoping that he could help me to invite Maharajji. I had just met Maharajji for the first time a few weeks before. One day I was standing outside the window where Maharajji was, when he called me in. Just he and Dada were in the room. As I entered, I felt myself transcend into some other state of consciousness and was aware mostly of a great opening in the region of my heart chakra—but it was as a gaping, empty blackness. I could barely see with my eyes or hear with my ears, and I'm sure my mouth was hanging open. My eyes went unblinking.

The two were talking. Maharajji would look at me and speak to Dada, and Dada would translate what was said. Maharajji was saying he couldn't come visit me because the people in the village where I was staying were all very wicked and they had no love for him. Then he sent me out of the room. Afterward, when I returned to my more habitual consciousness, I felt as though Maharajji meant that he could not come visit my heart, as it was filled with worldly desires and had no room for love of him—and that as a result of that darshan, he had cleared out my heart so that he indeed could come flooding in.

CLEANSE THE MIRROR OF YOUR HEART
AND YOU WILL SEE GOD.

EVEN IF A PERSON HURTS YOU, GIVE HIM
LOVE. THE WORST PUNISHMENT IS TO
THROW SOMEONE OUT OF YOUR HEART . . .
YOU SHOULD LOVE EVERYONE AS GOD, AND LOVE
EACH OTHER. IF YOU CANNOT LOVE EACH
OTHER, YOU CANNOT ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.

KUMBHAK (RETENTION OF BREATH) CAN BE
ATTAINED THROUGH BHAKTI (DEVOTION)
ALSO. WHEN THE EMOTION REACHES CLIMAX,
THE BREATH STOPS AND THE MIND
BECOMES FIXED.

Such peace and love I never got from anyone in the whole world, not from mother, not from father, not from wife, not from anybody. Extraordinary.

NEVER HURT ANOTHER'S HEART.

A SAINT'S HEART MELTS LIKE BUTTER. NO. IT MELTS EVEN MORE THAN BUTTER. BUTTER ONLY MELTS WHEN YOU PUT IT NEAR THE FIRE, BUT A SAINT'S HEART MELTS WHEN ANYONE ELSE'S HEART COMES NEAR THE FIRE.

—MAHARAJJI QUOTING KABIR

When asked to relate some stories of Maharajji, a devotee said, "I've been with him only a short time (twenty-eight years), so I don't know any stories. What therefore can I tell? All I know is that he gave my family a special kind of love, which, because it lies beyond words and form, cannot be expressed.

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"Why do you love me?" Maharajji asked a woman.

"I don't know, Maharajji."

Maharajji repeated his question again and again. Finally he said, "You love me because I love you ॥".

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A devotee asked, "Will our love for each other interfere with our love for you?"

Maharajji replied, "If love is pure, it interferes with nothing."

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A Western devotee of Maharajji went to have the darshan of Deoria Baba, a renowned and respected saint of north India. When the devotee returned to Maharajji, she told him that the saint had said Maharajji was an incarnation of love.

"Why, that wicked man! What does he know? Who does he think he is?" shouted Maharajji in response to the compliment.

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Said one devotee, "Maharajji was love incarnate. No religion, only love."

*LOVE IS THE STRONGEST MEDICINE. IT IS
MORE POWERFUL THAN ELECTRICITY.*

A devotee asked, "What do we do if we feel darkness or separation?"

*"If you love God enough, there will be no separation," replied Maharajji.
"If you love all, there can be no demon."*

*LOVE ALL MEN AS GOD, EVEN IF THEY HURT YOU OR
SHAME YOU. BE LIKE GANDHI AND CHRIST.*

What if you fear God more than you love him?" asked a devotee.

"Fear of God is just another kind of love," answered Maharajji.

*I COULD HAVE BEEN SUCH A GREAT SAINT
IF I WEREN'T SO COMPASSIONATE.*

KEEP ME IN YOUR HEART.