

## 3.4 Greed

### WISE SAYING

*Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.*  
(Lao Tzu)

### From Discourses of Sai Baba

#### BE AWARE OF GREED

The monkey that cannot pull out its clenched fist from the narrow neck of the pot lays the blame on the pot or the maker of the pot. But, if only it releases the hold of the peanuts it has grasped in that fist, it can easily take its hand out. The fault lies in itself. So too, man's greed is the reason for this want of time. No one thrust the hand into the pot; no one forced the monkey to grab the nuts. It has become the victim of its own rapacity, that is all.

Man too is suffering because he cannot rid himself of the greed for sense-objects and sense-pleasures. He knows that he has to give up whatever he earns and collects, sooner or later; but, yet his attachment waves instead of waning, as the years go by. If every man on earth could take with him on death, even a handful of mud from the earth, there would have been nothing much left and mud would have been rationed at so many ounces per head. When people forget the One and run after the Many, Dharma declines; for, there can be no love, no sacrifice, no detachment in human affairs then. (131264)

Do not harden your heart through greed and hate. Soften it with love. Cleanse it through pure habits of living and thinking. Use it as the shrine, wherein you install your God. Be happy that you have within you the source of power, wisdom and joy. Announce that you are unconquerable and free, that you cannot be tempted or frightened into wrong. So long as a trace of 'I-am-the-body' consciousness persists in you, you have yourself to search for God; you have to approach the mirror, the mirror will not proceed toward you, to show you, as you really are. Open the twin doors of lust and anger, remove the bolt of greed, then you can enter the sacred precincts of liberation, Moksha. (140170)

Evil thoughts cause ill-health. Anxiety, fear and tension also contribute their share. All these result from greed, greed to have more things, of power and of fame. Greed results in sorrow and despair. Contentment can come only from a spiritual outlook. The desire for worldly goods has to be given up. (300981)

Labouring under the delusion that the goal of life is to acquire gold, wealth, vehicles, mansions, and the like, man toils ceaselessly from dawn to dusk, to acquire and hoard such possessions beyond his needs. In the process he foregoes even food and sleep, thereby

endangering his health. In spite of knowing that all such possessions are temporary, he pollutes his mind by excessive greed and falls victim to untold suffering and sorrow. This is known as Greed Complex. **(250593)**

A farmer yearned to take up more land for cultivation and he went to the Thungabhadra area and the Naagaarjunasaagar area in search of land for cultivation. Finding that the price of land there was very high he went to Northern India. He learned that in a Himalayan state, good land was cheaper and easily available. So, he proceeded thither. The king promised to give him all the land he could walk around from sunrise to sunset on a single day. So, in his uncontrollable greed, he rose with the sun and, without wasting a minute for breakfast, he walked fast -- indeed, he ran very fast -- in order to cover as much land as he could. He never took a second's rest; he was happy that he could get a pretty vast area free; when the sun was about to set, he was within a few paces of the point from where he started. He was too exhausted to take even the few steps he needed; he fell down on the ground he coveted so much and breathed his last. His heart could not stand the strain of walking so fast, so long, with such hurry and tension. At last, he got only six feet of ground for his grave. Greed spelled his doom. In spiritual matters too people have this greed. They are immersed in worldly tumult for 23 hours and 55 minutes, and they remember God for five minutes only (when some fear overtakes them, it may be a few minutes more), but expect God to set right all their problems. To become pure enough to deserve Grace, you have to remember God, whenever you get the chance, wherever you get the prompting. **(SSS Vol.6 1966 201)**

### **GREED EMANATES FROM THE EGO**

Envy and greed also emanate from the ego and have to be carefully watched and controlled. Like the tadpole's tail, the ego will fall away when one grows in wisdom. It must fall away; if it is cut, the poor tadpole will die. So, don't worry about the ego; develop wisdom, discriminate, know the ephemeral nature of all objective things; then, the tail will no longer be evident. **(140165)**

The greed to possess things that you see is caused by egoism. "I must have this", "I must be the proud owner of this valuable thing", this is how egoism prompts. It is a strong cord that binds you to objects. Withdraw the mind and treat all as manifestations of the Lord's Glory. Love all things as expressions of His Glory, but do not delude yourself into the belief that possessing them will make you happy. That is an illusion. Do not dedicate your life for their sake; use them for your needs, as and when necessary, that is all. That kind of impulse activating you will be a great handicap in your progress towards liberation. Whatever you may acquire as property will have to be given up some day. You cannot take with you on that last journey even a blade of grass or a pinch of dust. Keep this fact ever before the mind's eye and then you can realise the Reality. **(Geetha V 201)**

Mankind has progressed much in exploiting the material resources of the earth in order to promote the standard of life. But, neither the individual nor the society has learnt the way to inner peace and contentment. Envy and greed have fouled the relations between nations and

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between persons, suppressing the awareness of the Unity that underlies all Creation. The main cause of this calamitous situation is rank egoism, each one tries to grab for himself whatever adds to power and comfort. The ego is making puppets of them all. The words and deeds of men reflect this tendency of selfish aggrandisement. Every move is decided by the needs of the self only. No step is taken that does not promote one's selfish interests. *(131481)*

## **GREED ARISES FROM ATTACHMENT**

Greed is the monstrous evil that drags man down. When Ravana lay dying, Rama directed His brother, Lakshmana, to go to him and learn from him the secrets of successful statecraft! Ravana taught him that the king eager to win glory must suppress greed as soon as it lifts its head, and welcome the smallest chance to do good to others, without the slightest procrastination. He had learnt the lesson through bitter experience! Greed arises from attachment to the senses and catering to them. Put them in their proper place; they are windows for knowledge, not channels of contamination. *(140170)*

Whatever he may earn, whatever he may achieve, the greedy man is incapable of renouncing anything. Such a one is ready to receive anything from anyone but is not willing to part with anything. Greed breeds the attitude in which one says: "What will you give me if I come to your house? What will you bring for me when you come to my house?" Greed promotes this sort of insatiable appetite for possessions. You have to give up an evil tendency of this kind.

The practice of giving up is known as Vairagya. The literal meaning of the word is "that which is opposed to Raga (attachment)". 'Raga' signifies attachment to the body. There is nothing wrong in attachment. 'Raga' includes: love for family and kith and kin. This attachment is not wrong. What should be noted, however, is that there should be limits to such attachments. *(110788)*

There is iron; there is, also, a magnet. The magnet will draw the iron to itself; that is the destiny of both. But, if the iron is covered with the rust, the grace of the magnet may not operate strong enough to draw the iron near. Greed for sensual pleasure will certainly act as rust! It acts as dust, which induces rust; the rust will ultimately burst the iron itself and change its innate nature. So, it has to be tested constantly and dusted. Then, when it contacts the magnet it too earns the magnetic quality and it gets rest from its quest. That achievement is the best, for both magnet and iron. The dust of sensual greed can be prevented by keeping good company, and putting into practice the axioms of good conduct that one can imbibe from it. *(110368)*

## **GET RID OF GREED**

Greed is another cause of human misery. Greed makes a man distant from every kind of happiness -- material, intellectual or spiritual. Greed accounts for the failure of Duryodhana and Dussasana to feel happy despite all their wealth and power. Hence people must banish greed from the heart. How is this to be done? When they foster the spirit of sacrifice, greed will vanish. With greed-filled hearts there is no room for joy. You cannot fill a tumbler full of water with milk. First empty the tumbler and then fill it with milk. Likewise, get rid of greed and fill your heart with sacrifice. A mind full of evil thoughts has no room for good thoughts. (230997)