

INSTINCT OF GREED (SHIVOKTI 5)

Extract from Shivas Teachings - 1 (Discourse 10)

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People want to assimilate various entities of the physical world, psychic world and spiritual world. **This desire for assimilation is sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious.**

When they want to assimilate in the spiritual realm, in the very process of assimilation they **lose their individual selves** by merging in the very same Entity which they wanted to assimilate. We can compare it to a river running swiftly towards the ocean, anxious to gain something from the vastness of that ocean. Ultimately the river attains the ocean as its own, and in this very process of attainment, all its wants and desires reach their final fulfillment. On merging, the river becomes the ocean itself.



When the mind wants to assimilate something of the **intellectual world**, it remains engrossed in an unusual state. Though not completely forgetful of the practical world, people in this state remain somewhat oblivious to it. This is the reason great scholars become somewhat **removed from practicality**: their existential awareness soars into the realm of intellectuality. Though they are not completely forgetful of hard realities, they tend to ignore them - they prefer to remain in oblivion. They may or may not be able to forget, but they want to forget. And in their conscious endeavor to remain oblivious to reality, they do somehow succeed in forgetting it temporarily.

Bhule tháká

Se to nay bholá

Vismrtir marme basi'

Rakte mor diyecho ye dolá.

[Remaining in oblivion

Is not to forget completely.

Sitting in the heart of oblivion,

You have stirred my blood.]



It often happens that whatever one assimilates, one considers to be one's own achievement, and the ego becomes inflated like a croaking frog. Just as a frog considers itself to be bigger than others - just as the frog, in its vanity, to demonstrate its size, tries to inflate itself more and more until it bursts - so those who have assimilated only a little of the psychic world become puffed up with vanity and thereby invite their own ruin.

When the tendency towards acquisition in the **physical world** is extremely strong, people's tendency to assimilate spiritual or intellectual things is usually noticeably weaker. In that condition, their thirst for the material world becomes very intense. "We will distribute the wealth of the world equally among all people' or 'Let all work according to their capacity and receive according to their necessity' - I will support this principle." Philosophies such as this ultimately

encourage hostility between people: they disturb not only the collective peace, but also individual peace. Separated by the iron walls of suspicion, people cannot trust each other. The present-day materialism has brought humanity to this predicament. Its consequences are dreadful.

The irrational thirst for acquisition of material things is termed "greed"; whereas the endeavor to assimilate things in the **spiritual world** is harmless and blameless. And the attempt to assimilate something in the **psychic world**, if it is directed towards the **welfare of humanity**, is also harmless. Otherwise, it pollutes the minds of people and makes them intolerant: it leads to conflicts between dogmas and theories and degrades people to the level of animality.

In the past, the world has witnessed many struggles between dogmas, which have caused much bloodshed; this was a regular occurrence in the Medieval Age. And in the present day also, we witness clashes between one theory and another, which cause no less bloodshed; rather the bloodshed is greater than before. The degree of intolerance has increased immeasurably. People have lost faith in

their fellow human beings; one state has lost faith in other states. In all spheres of life these days, people think one thing, say another thing, and do something entirely different. That is, **hypocrisy** is now at its peak.



Now the question is: **What is the motivation behind this?** It is the tendency to assimilate ideas without the spirit of welfare - and, still more than this, the tendency to acquire the objects of material enjoyment in ever-increasing quantities.

So whether in the material world or in the intellectual world, the predominant tendency that makes today's people, both individually and collectively, rush headlong without control, is the **instinct of greed**. The propensity of greed, if not controlled by **rationality, or benevolent intellect, or spiritual practices**, will lead to premature death. Nothing can save human beings from this. This instinct of greed has brought the present humanity to such a state that people no longer consider anything as sinful. Rather, they consider the "sin psychology" as a mental weakness, and the worst of sins are being glorified as the height of intellect, not only indirectly, but also openly.



The omniscient Shiva observed the rampant expansion of materialism and its dangerous consequences and clearly stated, *Lobhah pápasya hetubhútah* ["Greed is the root cause of all sins"].

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