

## Lesson 12: Desire

**Objective:** To stimulate thinking about the difference between what we need and what we want and strengthen the ability to choose more carefully.

### **Silent Sitting:**

**Discussion:** Lord Krishna identifies the six-fold enemies with the mind as desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy. These enemies cause discomfort and sorrow to oneself and others. They also hold back one's emotional growth and maturity. To overcome these enemies we have to first recognize their presence in the mind.

### **Enemy Number 1 – Desire**

- Can be a desire to possess or acquire something \*or\* a desire to avoid something
- If your happiness depends on fulfilling a desire – you will be unhappy till that desire is fulfilled such desires are called binding desires. These desires bring disappointment and sadness.
- One need not eliminate all desires to be free.
- Not all desires are bad – without desire, one would not be able to perform any action!
- Krishna taught Arjuna with a desire that he would understand. But such a desire had no power over him – he would not get frustrated if Arjuna had failed to understand!
- One should give up binding desires to become wise
- Put a 'ceiling' on desires.

**Story:**

*There was an old woman who lived in a shoe  
She didn't have very much housework to do.  
She enjoyed making jam with fresh fruits from the trees.  
She had milk from the cow and honey from the bees.*

She was happy for a time until her cousin from the town visited her and showed her photos of what seemed to the old woman a fine large residence, When her cousin went home the old woman began thinking and comparing her shoe to her cousin's home.

"Of course I wouldn't want a big place like that," she thought. "But I wouldn't mind something a little bit bigger than this."

The more she thought about it, the more she started becoming restless, until one day she began to look out for a bigger place to live. She wished she could have a box to live in, instead of the shoe. In time someone told her of some boxes nearby, one of which was empty, so she left her shoe and moved into the box.

The box was much bigger than the shoe, so there was more housework, and it was further to walk to the cow for her milk, but she still had plenty of time and reasoned that the exercise would do her good, so for a while she was happy with her new box. Until, one day, hearing she had more room, her cousin from the town came to visit bringing a friend along. The old woman enjoyed their company. She found them great fun with their bright clothes and laughter. She liked her cousin's friend, although she was a little condescending. She was quite well off and had a big detached house.

After a week, her cousin and friend went home. Again the old woman became restless and was dissatisfied with the box.

"This is not much of a box for me to be living in," she thought. "I felt quite ashamed of it, when my cousin's friend showed me a picture of her lovely house. I don't want much, but I wish I could just have a nice cupboard to live in. Then I would be happy."

And so she worried and wished and wished and worried until eventually she got a cupboard. At first, she was happy with the cupboard. She cleaned and painted it and made new curtains. It really was rather nice, although it was a lot of work. She had no time to make jam now. But she was quite proud of the cupboard.

She lived in the cupboard happily for a year or two and then she had a letter from her cousin saying she was moving into a big house near her friend. Suddenly her cupboard did not seem so big.

"This cupboard really is not big enough," she thought to herself angrily. "I do not really like it in here. I would prefer something outside in the garden. A small shed perhaps. Yes! That would make me happy."

Again she moved. This time into a lovely shed in a small garden with a pond, a beautiful lawn, flower beds, a herb garden and big, shady trees.

"Oh, this is heaven!" she thought. "This is what I've always wanted. I'll train the red roses round the door. It's so pretty, I'll be happy for the rest of my life."

And for a while she was. She trained the roses round the shed door and had to admit she was pleased with herself. It was a lot of work keeping the shed clean and, with the extra gardening, she no longer had time to

get honey. But she didn't mind, as she was very pleased with the beautiful shed. She admired the garden with its pond, lovely lawn, flower beds, fragrant herbs and trees. Then, one day, when she was taking tea on the lawn, her eyes began to look to the far end of the garden at the fine stone house and she became discontented with her shed.

"I want a house. I'm tired of this gloomy shed. Why shouldn't I have a house like some others have?"

She again became restless and brooding. Time went by and she got a house. She was delighted with it and busied herself making it beautiful. She soon found that the leisurely life she had been used to, was over, as she now had to go out to work to earn extra money for the upkeep and maintenance of her new home. Now she came home tired in the evenings. There was a lot of housework and with the extra expense of a bigger house, she could not afford to pay anyone to help her. But at least she had a house like her cousin.

Then one weekend, while she was out taking a walk, she saw in the distance a beautiful mansion. "I'd love to live in a mansion. Then my life would be complete. I'd want nothing more." Eventually she did live in a beautiful mansion.

"This is the life," she cried with joy. "I'm so happy. I'll never want more again."

But the day-to-day business of running a mansion, with so many callers coming and going, so many people staying there, meant she never had a moment's peace. "Out of all the places I've lived in, I'm most unhappy here. It's a beautiful place - to visit. But I don't feel at home. I can't afford the rent and I'm in debt. If only I'd been contented and stayed in the shoe, or even the box or cupboard. How foolish I have been. I've wasted my life worrying about what I hadn't got, instead of enjoying what I had. How I wish I was back in the shoe. I used to love picking fruit and making jam. I had free milk and honey. I shall work to pay off my debts and I shall go back to the shoe."

*There was an old woman who lived in a shoe she didn't have very much housework to do.*

*She enjoyed making jam, with fresh fruit from the trees, she had milk from the cow and honey from bees.*

*Like us, the old woman who lived in a shoe, when plagued by desires, what could she do*

*But give them full rein, but the pleasure was short, and she never found the peace that she sought.*

*But then the old woman who lived in a shoe, took up silent sitting and knew what to do!*

*Controlling her senses, and with inner view, She found peace and contentment, Perhaps you can, too!*

**Activity: Ball-toss game, expressing our needs and our desires, emphasizing the differences**

**Activity: Scrapbook page for Desire**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 12 Homework

1. What is the difference between something you need and something you desire?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Why is it important to limit our desires?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---