

Take a reality check on your desires

ET economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/vedanta/take-a-reality-check-on-your-desires/articleshow/5174774.cms

All human beings have desires. Desires running amok is the cause of human suffering. When the desires function independent of discrimination, it causes immense stress. Few ever stop to take a reality check on their desires. Being carried away with what we want, we do not bother to see the ground realities. The mind (mana) and intellect (buddhi) become divorced entities. The mind is the desire. The intellect is rationality, discrimination. These two do not function in tandem. This discord is the base of human suffering. One example of this lies in bad choices. A girl falls in love with a boy. She has many dreams of what the marriage will turn out to be. The mind fantasises. Goa in monsoon, romantic cruises. There is nothing wrong so far. But if the intellect does not scrutinise the dreams in view of the ground realities, she will be disappointed. She may get too carried away in her own imagination to see what he is really like, to check if her dreams are justified.

All human beings have desires. Desires running amok is the cause of human suffering. When the desires function independent of discrimination, it causes immense stress. Few ever stop to take a reality check on their desires. Being carried away with what we want, we do not bother to see the ground realities.

The mind (mana) and intellect (buddhi) become divorced entities. The mind is the desire. The intellect is rationality, discrimination. These two do not function in tandem. This discord is the base of human suffering.

One example of this lies in bad choices. A girl falls in love with a boy. She has many dreams of what the marriage will turn out to be. The mind fantasises. Goa in monsoon, romantic cruises. There is nothing wrong so far. But if the intellect does not scrutinise the dreams in view of the ground realities, she will be disappointed. She may get too carried away in her own imagination to see what he is really like, to check if her dreams are justified.

After marriage the hard reality strikes. He hates anything to do with water. Monsoon and cruises alike! And is too busy for romance! And has no money anyway! She may berate the stars, or him. But what she is facing is the consequences of her own choices, her own actions. Once an action is taken, the consequence will have to be faced. Hence it is very important to make a choice correctly. There is no use crying later.

So too is it with business decisions. There is a tendency to get carried away by the dreams rather than see the realities. That explains why so many people lose so much in business, in the stock market. It is difficult to keep one's head because the desires are so forceful. The greed, the fancies, are all powerful motivators. It is easy to go along with them blindly and live in a world that does not exist. But reality catches up sooner or later. It is called consequences.

One solution is to call in outside experts. The theory is that they will be able to look at the matter more objectively. So basically we pay huge sums because our desire is out of our control. Would it not be wiser to gain more objectivity ourselves? Studying Vedanta trains us in gaining this objectivity. Reflecting on Vedantic truths fortifies the intellect to be the controller of the mind and its dreams.

- Dr. Janki Santoke