

Osho the Guest: Chapter 2: The time has come to be free
Fri, 27 April 1979 Buddha hall

Question 3: WHAT IS GREED?

sandesh,

GREED is an effort to stuff yourself with something - it may be sex, it may be food, it may be money, it may be power. Greed is the fear of inner emptiness. One is afraid of being empty and one wants somehow to possess more and more things. One wants to go on stuffing things inside so one can forget one's emptiness.

But to forget one's emptiness is to forget one's real self. To forget one's emptiness is to forget the way to God. To forget one's emptiness is the most stupid act in the world that a man is capable of.

But why do people want to forget? We are carrying an idea given to us by others that emptiness is death. It is not! It is a false notion perpetuated by the society. Society has a deep investment in the idea, because if people are not greedy THIS society cannot exist. If people are not greedy then who is going to be mad after money, after power? Then the whole structure of this power-oriented society will collapse. If people are not greedy, who is going to call Alexander 'the Great'? Alexander will be called 'the ridiculous' not 'the Great', 'the stupid' not 'the Great'. Then who is going to call the people who go on and on possessing things respectable? Who is going to give them respect?

They will be the laughing-stock! They are mad, they are wasting their lives. Then who is going to pay respects to the prime ministers and the presidents of the countries? Then people will think that they are neurotic.

And the world will be really beautiful when Adolf Hitler and Mussolini and Churchill and people like these are thought to be neurotic, when nobody pays any attention to them. The whole structure of politics will fall, because the politician is there only to get more and more attention. The politician is a child, he has not grown up. He wants everybody to be at his disposal, he wants everybody to look up to him, he wants everybody to go on being attentive, to pay attention to him.

Attention gives one intoxication; it is the greatest drug in the world. Just think of yourself passing through the whole town and nobody paying any attention, not even a dog barking at you; everybody ignoring you, even dogs; nobody taking any note, everybody thinking you are not! How will you feel?

You will feel very bad - nobody saying "Hi! Hello, good morning. Where are you going? How are you?" - people simply not looking at you. If you become invisible and you walk around, and nobody looks at you because nobody can see you, and nobody says "Hello!", nobody pays any attention, how are you going to feel? You will feel like a non-entity, a nobody, reduced to nothingness. It will look like death.

Hence people are in search of more and more attention. If you cannot get attention by being famous then at least you can get attention by becoming notorious. If you cannot get attention by being a saint you can get attention by being a murderer.

And psychologists say that basically many murderers commit murder not for any reason other than to get attention. When they murder their photos are on the front pages of newspapers, with their names in block letters. They are on the TV, on the radio, everywhere; they become somebody. At least for a few days they can enjoy that they are also famous; the whole world knows about them, they are not non-entities any more.

Just think of a world where people are not greedy - then the rich person will be thought neurotic, the politician will be thought neurotic. Then the people who are constantly hankering for attention will be thought retarded. And if people are not greedy we will have a totally different world, more beautiful. There will be fewer possessions certainly, but more joy, more music, more dance, more love. People may not have many gadgets in their houses, but people will be more alive. Right now we go on selling our life energies for gadgets. Gadgets go on accumulating and the soul goes on disappearing; machines go on growing and man goes on disappearing.

When the world is non-greedy, people will be playing on the guitar, on the flute. People may be sitting silently under trees, meditating. Yes, people will be doing things but only to the extent that is absolutely necessary. People will be fulfilling their needs, but needs are not desires; desires are unnecessary, needs are necessary. And desires never end. Needs are simple and can be fulfilled, but desires go on asking for more and more. They-go on desiring for even more of the same thing that you have. You have one car, the desire says have two; unless you have a two-car garage you are nobody. You have one house, desire says have two - at least one in the hills. And when you have two the desire says have three, one in the hills, one on the seashore, and so on, so forth.

Paddy was digging his garden one day, when he saw a little creature at his feet. He lifted his shovel up to kill it, but to his surprise it spoke.

"Paddy, I'm a leprechaun. Spare my life and I will grant ye three wishes."

"Three wishes? Done!" said Paddy, then thought: "Well, I am thirsty from all this digging. I would like a bottle of cold Guinness."

The leprechaun snapped his fingers and Paddy found he was holding a bottle of Guinness.

"That there," said the leprechaun, "is a magic bottle. It will never empty - it will pour forever." Paddy took a swig. Lovely. "What are your next two wishes, Paddy?" asked the leprechaun Paddy thought, "I think I would like two more of these, please."

Now it is of no use, but that's how it goes on.... You have a million dollars - already you have more than you can use but you are asking for more, and it is never ending. Needs are small: yes, you need food, shelter, you need a few things. Everybody's needs can be provided for; the world has enough to fulfill everybody's needs; but desires... it is

impossible. Desires cannot be fulfilled. And because people are fulfilling their desires millions of people's needs are not fulfilled.

But basically greed is a spiritual problem. You have been taught that if you don't have many things you are nobody, and you are also afraid. So people go on stuffing themselves. It does not help; at the most it gives you a temporary relief, but sooner or later you start feeling the emptiness again.

Then you fill it again.

And the inner emptiness is the door to God. But you have been told that the empty mind is the devil's mind or the devil's workshop; that is absolute nonsense that has been told to people. The empty mind is the door to God. How can the empty mind be the devil's workshop? It is in the empty mind that the devil dies completely. The devil means the mind, the empty mind means no-mind.

And greed is one of the most fundamental problems to be encountered. You have to see why you are greedy: because you want to keep yourself occupied with things. Possessing more and more you remain occupied, engaged. You can forget all about your inner world, you can go on saying to it, "Wait! Let me have this much more, and then I am going to turn towards you."

And it is always death that comes before your desires are fulfilled. Even if you live for a thousand years your desires are not going to be fulfilled.

In India we have a very beautiful story.

A great king, Yayati, was going to die. Death came.... It is an ancient story; in those days things were simple and the other world was not so far away. Death came and knocked on the door. Yayati opened the door and he said, "What? I have lived for only a hundred years, and here you are - and with no notice! At least some time should be given. I have not fulfilled my real desires yet. I have been postponing: tomorrow, tomorrow; and now you are here, and there will be no tomorrow. This is cruel! Be kind!"

Death said, "I have to take somebody, I cannot go empty-handed. But seeing your misery, your old age, I will grant you a hundred years more. But then one of your sons has to go with me."

Yayati had one hundred sons - he had one hundred wives - so he said, "That is simple!"

It was not so simple as he had thought. He called his hundred sons and asked one to go. "Save your old father's life! Many times you have said, 'Father, we can die for you.' Now the time has come to prove it!"

But these things are always said; they are polite nothings. The sons started looking at each other.

Somebody was seventy, somebody was seventy-five, somebody was sixty; they themselves were getting very old. The youngest was just twenty.

The youngest son stood up and he said, "I am ready to go." Nobody could believe it! His ninety-nine brothers could not believe it; they thought he was a fool. And he had not lived yet, not at all. He was only twenty, just on the threshold of the beginning. Even Death felt compassion.

Death took the young man aside, whispered in his ear, "Are you a fool? Your older brothers are not ready, they have lived long. Seventy-five years somebody has lived - he is not ready. And you are ready? Your father does not want to die. He is a hundred years old, and you are only twenty."

The young man said something very beautiful, something of tremendous import. He said, "Seeing this, that my father has lived one hundred years and he has ALL that one can have, and he is still not satisfied, I see the futility of life. What is the point? I may live one hundred years and the situation will be the same. And if it was only my father then I would have thought, 'Maybe he is an exception.'

But my brothers - seventy-five, seventy, sixty-five, sixty - have also lived long. They have enjoyed every kind of thing; now what else is there to enjoy? They are getting old and they are not satisfied.

So one thing is certain: this is not the way to become satisfied. Hence I am ready, and I am coming with you, not in any despair but in tremendous understanding. I am coming with you with great cheerfulness that I have not to pass through this torture, these one hundred years of torture which my father has had to suffer. He has not yet become able enough to go with you."

And the story continues. One hundred years again passed; they came and were gone, nothing was noticed. Again Death knocked. When Death knocked, only then did Yayati become aware again that one hundred years had passed. He said, "But I am not ready!"

And this went on happening, and each time a son went with Death, and for one thousand years Yayati lived. This is really a symbolic story. After one thousand years Death came, and Death said, "What do you think now?"

Yayati said, "I am coming. Enough is enough! I have seen that nothing can ever be fulfilled here.

Desires go on growing; you fulfill one desire and ten others arise. It is a process ad infinitum. Now I am coming willingly, and now I can say that my first son who went with you and was only twenty years old had intelligence. I was stupid. It took one thousand years for me to see it and he could see it when he was only twenty. That is intelligence! "

If you are intelligent you will see the futility of greed. If you are intelligent you will start living rather than preparing to live. Greed is preparing to live. And you can go on

preparing, and the time to live will never come. If you are intelligent you will not miss today for tomorrow. You will not sacrifice this moment for another moment, you will live this moment in its totality. You will squeeze the whole juice out of this moment.

Jesus says to his disciples, "Think not of the morrow." He is simply saying, "Don't be greedy" - because whenever you think of the morrow you become greedy. It is greed that thinks of the morrow.

Jesus says to his disciples: Look at the lily flowers in the field. What is their secret? Why are they so beautiful? Even Solomon attired in all his grandeur was not so beautiful. What is their secret?

Their secret is simple: they think not of the morrow, they live in the moment. This moment is all and all. There is nothing behind, nothing ahead. They enjoy this moment with their total being.

Greed means postponing your life for tomorrow.

Try to see your greed. It can take so many forms: it can be worldly, it can be other-worldly. Beware!

It may take the form of: "This life is not worth living so I will prepare for another life. This earth is not worth living on, I will prepare for paradise." But this is greed!

Of your so-called saints ninety-nine percent are greedy people, far more greedy than the people you will find in the marketplace. The greed of the people who live in the marketplace is not that great, their greed is very ordinary. They are asking for more money - that is very ordinary. Your saints, your mahatmas say, "This is temporary. We ask for something permanent, we want something eternal.

We will sacrifice the temporal for the eternal." There is a great motivation; out of the corner of their eyes they are waiting for paradise. There they will enjoy and there they will show these fools who were rushing in the marketplace, "Look, we had told you before, we had warned you. Now you have to suffer in hell, and we will enjoy all the heavenly joys." But this is greed, and wherever greed is, there is no heaven. Greed is hell; it may be worldly, it may be otherworldly.

See the stupidity of greed. I am not saying "Renounce" - watch my words - I am saying see the stupidity of greed. In that very seeing it disappears, and your energy is free. Your consciousness is no longer entangled, entrapped, by things - money, power, prestige. Your consciousness is free.

And the freedom of consciousness is the greatest rejoicing.