

The Dynamics of Desire

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“**Desire begets Desire**” is how Eastern Sages describe the dynamic behind our longings, cravings, greediness and the myriad of other such aspects of desire. Accordingly, their wisdom tells us that desire must be identified, taken by its roots, & ultimately culled from our psyches if we are to attain ultimate ‘peace’ & freedom in our oft turbulent & troubled lives. But what in actuality is desire? And how & where does it come from? Is it an innate part of us and therefore immutable or is it born of our experiences while in human form & therefore transmutable into a positive, more supportive aspect of our being.

Need vs. Greed

At a transpersonal or collective level, we all experience desire both consciously and unconsciously. Desire emerges & grows through the process of evolution as well as through the workings of ‘freewill’, that special gift which we as Human Beings enjoy. In one sense, certain desires are innate and necessary to our being yet, many other desires that arise from choices we make are not only unnecessary, but also outright harmful to our being.

An example of an innate, unconscious desire is the will to live, which both in the human & animal kingdoms is termed the ‘survival instinct’. As such, we don’t wake up each day and consciously choose whether we want to live or not. Rather, it is simply a part of us, that inexplicable spark which even in our darkest moments keeps us from calling it quits! However as human beings, through the exercise of our freewill, we have taken something as fundamental as our ‘need’ for self-preservation and turned it into something much more disturbing – **greed!**

In the animal kingdom, an animal consumes only that which it needs in the moment – no more and no less. Should you offer it a second helping, it will not accept it as its needs have been sufficiently met & it is content. We on the other hand have become insatiable in our appetite for material possessions as we lust after money and material pleasures in an attempt to be more secure, happy & free. Often, we live in future time & become obsessed with feeling secure. Ironically, this very insecurity & attendant fear usually render us even more insecure, possessive & miserable. And in the process, we end up harming, both consciously & unconsciously, all of those who stand in the way of our desires being fulfilled.

In the corporate world, the powers that be depend on this dynamic to fuel their greed. We are encouraged to be ‘ambitious’ or ‘motivated’ in order to be successful & thus more secure. For me, this is synonymous with stopping at nothing to get to the top! The unfortunate consequence of all this however is that ultimately, the ensuing loneliness & isolation that we experience through harming others becomes underscored by our own attendant hurt. Inevitably, our apparent ‘victories’ soon become hollow & meaningless, compelling us to seek out something ‘more substantial’ and thus, the cycle of ‘desire begetting desire’ continues ad infinitum. And when the pain of hollowness becomes unbearable, rather than going within, we then turn to ‘substance’ abuse through developing addictions to drugs, sex & alcohol for our edification!

Desire or Love - Which is it?

Our quest for fulfillment through relationships provides yet further fertile ground for exploring the dynamics of desire. As with material cravings, our entanglement in the web of desires for another also never finds fulfillment as by its very nature, desire begets desire. The Ego gladly hosts & sustains our desires & leaves no room in our heart for the soul to enter and illuminate our being in unconditional love. Instead, our desires take root within the heart & take expression in the form of our infatuations, our lust & our greed. We become self-centered in our neediness & ultimately dependant & possessive, as opposed to being centered in ourselves & thus connected & self-illumed in our worth. Lust for another diminishes our spirit by creating separation & suffering, rather than unity & joy. It narrows down the scope & flow of life rather than being expansive & free; & it generates a craving of the senses as it ‘**seeks**’ fulfillment whereas love is an expression of the light of spirit & is the actual ‘**experience**’ of fulfillment.

Certainly our inborn longing & need to be loved is not only valid but also necessary for the nourishment, growth & the ultimate blossoming of our being. However in order to achieve such a state, we must consciously recognize the difference between the energy of actual love, and its shadow, desire. We must identify and remove through a process of **'unwinding'**, all the blocks which ego based desire has placed in our path under the guise of legitimacy & naturalness. In the final analysis, the more our desires are indulged through their expression, the more we become enslaved by their self-entwining nature – much like a stick around which layers and layers of twine are wound.

Desirelessness & Enlightenment

On a practical level, in order to reach a state of desirelessness, we must pursue a path of action that includes the practices of meditation, selfless service and devotion to a higher source that embodies essence over form. Rather than being lofty principles, these practices will reconnect you with the source within you, which is self-illuminating & pure. This will eliminate over time your ego based desires which are a mere shadow of the light of spirit. By exercising your free will to ultimately free yourself from the bondage of desires, you will free yourself from the misery, self-pity, anger, jealousy and the countless other progeny of a heart filled with unfulfilled desires, and become instead secure, tranquil & perhaps even enlightened!