

Throughout the world there is production of large-scale industrial and agricultural products. However despite such productive capacities there is scarcity because the world population is full of thieves. The Vedas explain- men are transformed into thieves when they plan economic development for sense gratification.

At the root of so-called scarcity and need is exploitation of one nation by another, driven by rampant consumerism. It seems we are insatiable for more and more technological marvels, for gas-guzzling cars, exotic foods, the latest in fashion, and yet another pair of shoes. But do we really need all this? Can it ever make us truly happy?

One-day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live.

They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked. "Oh yeah," said the son. "So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end.

We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve

others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us; they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

So it is the endless stream of material desires and our vain attempts to satisfy them that destroy our peace of mind, impelling us to excessively exploit the earth for her precious resources. Thus we create an imbalance which in turn creates poverty for so many.

The fact is that human life has a higher purpose and by minimising our material needs we simplify life and free time for spiritual practice. By such practise we reduce our desires and become peaceful.