

## Material Satisfaction, ↓ ↑ Spiritual Dissatisfaction

*“If you become too spiritual, you will become too satisfied and lose your ambitiousness.”* Less-informed people often discourage aspiring spiritualists with such wise-sounding warnings.



However what they call as ambitiousness is often nothing but plain greed. 3bhk flat, row-house, bungalow, mansion, villa ... when does the project of making it big on the social scene end? Never. All that we get is endless labour and perpetual dissatisfaction. Worse still, our self-worth (happiness?) depends entirely on unpredictable, uncontrollable externals. The neighbour gets a jazzier mobile than what we have; the shares we have invested in may crash... And worst of all, struggling to achieve our self-created (“society-imposed” describes it better) goals leaves us with no time for our spiritual nourishment. Greed, stress, envy, worry, spiritual starvation – where is happiness?

Therefore spiritualists recommend that instead of “ambitiously” chasing the mirages of material pleasures, we become spiritually ambitious. This will enable us to rediscover our spiritual peacefulness and joyfulness, re-awaken our



innate love for God and return back to his abode – our original home – to become eternally happy.

Our present existence is two-dimensional: we are souls, spiritual beings, animating material bodies, just as drivers animate their cars. Ambassador, fiat, Maruti, Mercedes ... there are certainly different kinds of cars. But imagine two persons: One person has a posh Mercedes, but is lost, not knowing the way home (not knowing there is a home even) and is spending all his time just furnishing and polishing his car. The other person has a simple fiat, but knows the way home and is heading straight there. Who's better off? To help us get our perspectives and priorities right, the Bhagavad-gita (5.21) delineates the two-point formula to real happiness, "Detached from external sense pleasures, concentrating on inner spiritual happiness, a spiritualist progressively becomes situated on the spiritual platform and attains imperishable happiness." In our cultural context, this two-point formula can be explained as:



**Materially** see those who are below us, having lower salaries, smaller houses, lesser or simpler gadgets – and be satisfied with what we have.



**Spiritually** see those who are above us, having more bhakti (divine love) – and follow in their footsteps.

← 2-point formula →