Swami Ji has said that we should not hesitate to go all out to still the mind. We do not fully grasp that the mind takes everyone to his doom. It is like a thousand-faced snake, which is constantly with each being; it has a thousand different ways of destroying the person. The rich with riches, the poor with poverty, the orator with his fine speeches – it takes the weakness in each and plays upon it to destroy him.

(ruhanisatsangusa.org/serpent.htm)
Sant Kirpal Singh
Contents

1. Introduction

2. Lust

14. Envy

23. Pride/Vanity

34. Anger/Wrath

47. Sloth

57. Gluttony

66. Greed/Avarice
The Seven Deadly Sins is a classification of objectionable vices that have been used since early Christian times to educate and instruct followers. The currently recognized version of the list is usually given as Lust, Envy, Pride/Vanity, Anger/Wrath, Sloth, Gluttony, and Greed/Avarice.

These sins are considered deadly because they are seen as the origin of the other sins and vices.

In AD 590 Pope Gregory revised a previous list to form the current Seven Deadly Sins.

Each of the seven deadly sins now also has an opposite among corresponding Seven Holy Virtues. In parallel order to the sins they oppose, the seven holy virtues are: Lust/Chastity; Envy/Kindness; Pride/Humility; Anger/Patience; Sloth/Diligence; Gluttony/Temperance; Greed/Charity.

According to a 2009 study by a Jesuit scholar, the most common deadly sin confessed by men is lust, and for women, pride. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_deadly_sins)

Corresponding to the Seven Deadly Sins, Buddhism has The Five Hindrances. These are negative mental states that impede success with meditation and lead away from enlightenment. These states are:

Sensual desire/Cravings of the senses
Anger/Ill-will
Sloth/Boredom
Restlessness/Worry
Doubt/Mistrust

Hinduism has The Five Obstacles: Ignorance, Egoism, Desire, Aversion, Fear.

The Sikh Gurus, including Sant Mat, list Five Deadly Passions: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Egoism.
Lust

Lust is having a self-absorbed desire for an object, person, or experience. When we are in lust, we place the object of our desire above all things in our lives. It is often manifested in a self-destructive drive for some pleasure regardless of its value, merit, or legality. In common usage, the term stands for excessive passion for sexual pleasure.

Of all longings and desires none is stronger than sex.
Sex as a desire has no equal.
(Buddha)
Kam – Lust: The Path of the Masters
Julian Johnson

Kam, or lust, is a normal function, but when allowed to run into an abnormal demand, it becomes destructive, degrading. In its broader meaning kam includes all abnormal desires. It may include drugs, alcoholic drinks, tobacco or even tasty foods which are eaten simply for the sake of enjoying their tastes – any sort of appetite which seeks indulgence for the sake of enjoying a pleasant sensation. It is dominant over the vast majority of mankind. It holds them as if by iron chains. It drags them along all through life. Day and night it haunts and taunts them. At every turn it displays its attractions. It appears in the most alluring garb and it steps out in unadorned seductive abandon. It blinds the mind. It makes man forget every moral obligation.

The chief function of kam is to pull men and women down to the common animal level and keep them there. It obliges them to fix their attention upon that which is common to both man and brute.

If sex were used for its legitimate purpose, it need not become an instrument of degradation. But when we fall into the trap of self-indulgence, we begin to descend toward the animal plane. Nature has given us something which is necessary for the perpetuation of life upon this planet. It is within our control, or should be. But if we reduce it to an instrument of self-indulgence, we simply waste our energy and cloud our minds, ending at last in blank stupidity, like any ordinary animal. When sex controls the individual instead of him controlling it, the degeneration of that individual is already an accomplished fact.

Every single act of self-indulgence lowers one’s moral status and binds him to the world of sense. This is the worst poison for the spirit.

O Kam (lust), you land people in hell and make them wander through many births, entices all minds, sways all the three worlds and undoes one's meditation, austerities and restraint. The pleasure is ephemeral and you afflict high and low alike.

(Guru Arjan)

Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance.

(William Shakespeare)
Sant Kirpal Singh

The Lord cannot be realized as long as our hearts remain littered with lust, anger, jealously, recrimination, etc. Our soul lies dormant and defiled by these vices. Just as a magnet will not attract iron that is all covered with dirt, God within us will not pull the soul up until it is free of all blemishes.

You will find that whoever can withdraw from outside is not attached outside. Whoever is attached outside or is given up to outward pleasures and lives a sensuous way of living, such a man is not fit. There are five passions connected with the outgoing faculties, but two of them are the most dangerous: The first is lust. The second is anger. All are dangerous, but these are the most dangerous. And even between these two, the first is more dangerous.

The first thing needed is a life of continence. The rishis called having a life of continence observing brahmcharya. Brahmcharya means control of all the organs of sense. It does not mean mere control of animal passions. If a man controls only one organ and allows all others to have free play, he is bound to find his effort fruitless. “To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with your eyes, to taste stimulating food with your tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then expect to control the only remaining organ, is just like putting your hand in fire and expecting that it will not burn.”* (*Quoted from Mahatma Gandhi)

I was just speaking about the chastity of life, which is the most important part of the spiritual life. Spirituality cannot dawn on a mind which is driven or attracted through the outgoing faculties to the outward enjoyments. Out of the five outgoing faculties of eyes, ears, nose, touch and taste, three are most powerful. Lust attacks us eighty percent through the eyes, fourteen percent through the ears and the remaining six percent mainly through touch. So how to maintain chastity? that's the point. You have just to control your attention. The mind and outgoing faculties derive their power from the soul, and the outward expression of the soul is the attention. So if our attention is riveted at the center of the soul in the body and we make the best use of the outgoing faculties, we will not be affected by what we see or hear.
You might be looking at somebody but you need not be doing so with your full consciousness, even with your open eyes. Somebody might be relating long stories of vicious things to you. If you control your attention, even with your open ears you won't hear. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/chastity.htm)

Two very powerful forces are anger and lust. They rule over everything. If the attention dwells on lust, the soul falls very low; in anger, the ego expands. The soul cannot be linked with Naam until it withdraws inwardly and rises above the senses. Our attention has instead become like an image of the mind. We want to enjoy all the low, worldly things, yet we say we want the highest thing of all - the Nectar of Life! It is all wrong - how far do we think we will go? Do one thing at a time; but do not remain under this false impression. One Saint says, "Where there is Naam, there is no kam (lust) - where there is kam there is no Naam." Two cannot remain at once - light and darkness. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/listen.htm)

The delusion of the world affects us through the outgoing faculties of senses. When you start transcending the sensuous level, you would experience higher bliss on the inner planes. Then you will no longer be troubled by the lusts of the flesh and will be like an air-conditioned room that remains cool irrespective of the external temperature. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/grand-delusion.htm)

This is the main thing. "He who is affected by passions cannot obtain liberation." This is what Shankaracharya said. Not one, but each religion says so. We belong to one religion or the other; but we don't follow its teaching. "Fascination with the body is a great debt for him who is seeking liberation." I am quoting you these things from the scriptures. These aren't my words. They are there in whichever religion you belong to. Chinese philosophy tells us, "To be guileless and pure: this is the way to nourish the spirit. When lust and desires are deep, the springs of the heavenly are shallow." What more do you want them to tell you? What are we doing? These things are given great stress, but we people don't care. That's the pity. Buddha says: "I proclaim the annihilation of lust. I teach the doing away with lust. Nirvana means the subsiding of all human passions. When inner fires of lust are extinguished, then one enters into the Nirvana. This is the lesson of lessons." (ruhanisatsangusa.org/lust.htm)

Naam keeps the mind and body in a state of equipoise. Peace reigns supreme in its devotee; the ramifications of mind are done away with forever - all lusts cease to have their hold on the mind. The brain gets a soothing balm. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/jj/jj-intro2.htm)
With the chastity in food and drink will go another kind of chastity, the one that pertains to sex. One will not suppress all sexual desire, for repression can only breed neurosis and prepare the way for a downfall, but he will be ever seeking to sublimate it. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/col/col-5a.htm#The%20cornerstones)

You may go on meditating all through your life, but unless you practice chastity and forgiveness, it will not bear any fruit. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/chaste.htm)

You enjoy outside and unless you get more blissful enjoyment inside you cannot withdraw from outside. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/first see.htm)

One cannot possibly forsake the lusts of the flesh unless one comes to know by actual contrast, the real happiness in the life of the spirit which comes about by communion with the holy Word. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/guru-means.htm)

The mind is a lover of enjoyments, and in the Naam there is the Maha Ras - the most delectable Nectar one can ever taste. If only the mind would take one true sip, it would never again yearn for lower enjoyments. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/listen.htm)

As the Master is the embodiment of chastity, chastity radiates from Him and penetrates into the disciple the moment he thinks of Him. (The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v.2, 52,53)

So long as it (mind) does not take pleasure in the internal music, it must fly out to worldly pleasures. (The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 2, 22)

Mind is accustomed to roam about externally through ages. Unless it is offered something more joyous within, it cannot be controlled. (The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v.1, 8)

Even a little intoxication derived from steady daily practice will start to erase the taste for outer pleasures. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/thief of.htm)

When you come in contact with Light and Sound Power within, you have not to adopt any virtues, but everything, all virtues, will come within you of themselves. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/occupied.htm)

The work ahead of us is to earn the Naam. It should dwell in our hearts so much in evidence that it becomes apparent in us. We should be molded in it. It should be manifested inside and outside. The outcome of this will be when you become as the Shabd, humility will banish all lust, anger, and ego. Having the Nectar of Life, all taste for small things will fade away. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/jewel.htm)
Hazur Baba Sawan Singh

If you waste your energies in sex enjoyment, you cannot progress spiritually. (Spiritual Gems, 95)

Outward beauty, loveliness of form, charm of personality, whether it is yours or possessed by another, is of no lasting worth. Be not allured by this false show. Be not deluded by these transitory qualities. Handsome or ugly, fair or dark, delicate or coarse, exquisite or plain in appearance, all the forms that you behold are born of dust. They are dolls of clay. They are fleeting forms that will soon vanish and be no more. They are exactly like garments that we have purchased at the vanity-fair of this world, but which have to be discarded before we depart. Your aim in life should be to transcend them. (Discourses on Sant Mat, 288, 289)

It is only a really brave person who can refuse sensual pleasures when they are easily available. (Spiritual Gems, 23)

There is no entry within as long as there is no chastity of thought and action. (The Dawn of Light, 165)

So long as the student has no control over his mind and is a slave of his senses, he can get nothing even if he sits in meditation for eight hours every day. (Discourses on Sant Mat, 46)

Next begins a rigid system of self-control, enforcing the rule in every detail of life. We are constantly beset by five foes - passion, anger, greed, worldly attachments, and vanity. All these must be mastered, brought under control. You can never do that entirely until you have the aid of the Guru and are in harmonic relations with the Sound Current. But you can begin now, and every effort will be a step on the way. (Spiritual Gems, 339)

With the longing to go within and the hearing of the Sound Current becoming tasteful, the indulgence or play in sex decreases and ultimately becomes hateful, and is automatically given up, like other bad habits, such as anger, greed and so forth. (Spiritual Gems, 317)

Look upon all the women of the world either as your mother, sister, or daughter, so that you may make progress in your spiritual journey. (Spiritual Gems, 176)
A Multi-Faith Guide to Lust
(Beliefnet)

Buddhism:
Buddhism encourages renouncing sensual pleasures. Sensuous lust is considered one of Buddhism's five hindrances. The Buddha taught that lust is a result of desire, which must be abandoned to reach enlightenment. The Buddha formulated five precepts of Right Conduct. One of these is: "I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct."

Many Buddhist texts explain these teachings on lust. The "Discourses of the Buddha" states, "The pleasure and joy that arise in dependence on the eye: this is the gratification in the eye. That the eye is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change: this is the danger in the eye. The removal and abandonment of desire and lust from the eye: this is the escape from the eye."

The Dhammapada teaches, "Those who are infatuated with lust fall back into the stream, as does a spider into the web spun by itself. This too the wise cut off, and wander, with no longing, released from all sorrow."

Other Buddhist texts go further, to say that lust is evil. The Itivuttaka states, "Monks, there are these three roots of evil. What three? "Lust is a root of evil, hate is a root of evil, delusion is a root of evil. These are the three roots of evil."

And as Buddhaghosa wrote in the Visuddhimagga, "Of the divine state of love the near enemy is lust, because, like love, it sees good qualities. It is like a foe lurking near a man. Quickly it finds access. Hence love should be well protected from lust."

Christianity:
Christianity teaches that lust is sinful. In the New Testament, Jesus says that to lust after a person who is not one's wife is the same as committing adultery. In his Sermon on the Mount, he explains, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Other New Testament writers affirm the idea that sex should only occur within marriage, and that natural impulses outside of marriage only lead to trouble. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own..."
husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband."

Further evidence that lust is a sin in Christianity comes from 1 John, where lust is described as being ungodly: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world."

Some contemporary Christians understand lust as being sinful only if one acts upon the temptation, not merely if one is lured. But Christian denominations generally teach that lust is wrong. Catholicism considers lust a capital sin. The Catholic Catechism states, "Lust is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes."

Hinduism:
In Hinduism, renunciation of selfish desire leads to wisdom, and lust is one of the primary selfish desires. Avoiding lust is one of Hinduism's restraints that Hindus observe in following Hindu dharma.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that lust is a "mighty enemy, a selfish desire that must be overcome in order to reach realization."

The Gita continues, "Pleasures conceived in the world of the senses have a beginning and an end and give birth to misery, Arjuna. The wise do not look for happiness in them. But those who overcome the impulses of lust and anger which arise in the body are made whole and live in joy. They find their joy, their rest, and their light completely within themselves. United with the Lord, they attain nirvana in Brahman."

Hinduism also teaches that followers should live a life of brahmacharya, or divine conduct. This is usually interpreted as proper sexual conduct, or sexual purity. Being celibate when single, or maintaining a faithful marriage, are ways of practicing brahmacharya.

Islam:
The Qur'an and the hadith, sayings of the Prophet, prohibit lust. Lust can impinge on a person's path to Allah, as the Qur'an states, "Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve." People who act on lust are not among the believers, as the Qur'an says, "Allah doth wish to turn to you, but the wish of
those who follow their lusts is that ye should turn away (from Him), far, far away."

Muslims view the fast of Ramadan as a way of inhibiting lust. The month-long fast during daylight hours helps Muslims subdue feelings of greed and lust, as they are not permitted to eat or have sexual intercourse during the fast. Fasting is considered a way of "cooling sexual passion," as Bukhari reports in the hadith: "Young men, those of you who can support a wife should marry, for it keeps you from looking at women (lit., lowers your gaze) and preserves your chastity; but those who cannot should fast, for it is a means of cooling sexual passion."

Fornication is sinful in Islam, and the hadith explain that fornication is not just the act of intercourse. Similar to Christianity, lustful glances or thoughts are also wrong. As Abu Hurairah reports in Sahih Muslim, the Prophet said, "The fornication of the eyes is to look with lust; the fornication of the tongue is to speak lustful things; the fornication of the hands is to touch with lust; the fornication of the feet is to walk towards lust; the fornication of the heart is to desire evil."

Similarly, Abu Musa reported in Tirmidhi that the Prophet said, "Every eye is adulterous (when it cast glances with lust on strange women) and when a woman perfumes herself and passes a company, she is such and such" [meaning adulterous].

Judaism:
Jewish tradition teaches that lust is natural and that both men and women have a sexual drive. Lust is considered a result of the evil inclination, which is part of every human being: "were it not for the evil urge, a man would not build a house, take a wife, beget children, or engage in commerce." Lust, while stemming from the evil inclination, is necessary for sex, and sex is necessary for reproduction.

But reproduction is not the only reason to have sex, and Judaism teaches that sex for pleasure is a good deed, though this is traditionally as long as sex is part of a marriage. Sex should not take place to satisfy lust alone, however, as the rabbis teach that sex that is purely lustful, and not out of love, cannot build a successful relationship.

Love vs. Lust

So the difference between true love and lust is that true love cannot be broken even after leaving the body. This love is developed in the body but absorbed in the soul, not in the body and its environments. So this is called true love or charity. The other is called lust or attachment and there is a vast difference between the two. Love of God makes us free, makes us all joy, all happiness, all bliss. Lust or attachment enslaves us, it makes us very narrow minded. In the worldly way, if you love somebody, you will be envious if another person shares that love, but those who love God will also be loved by you, because they love God. So the love of God gives you love for all the world over. Love of the outside things will only make you narrow minded, close fisted, and the result is, one lives for God, the other lives for the world.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/vslust1.htm)

So love is innate in our soul and we are conscious beings. If it is directed to all Consciousness, it is true love. That will give you freedom, all bliss and all joy. If it is attached to the worldly things, the physical body, its environments, the enjoyments of outward faculties, then that is bondage and a sure way of coming again and again to the world where you are attached.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/vslust1.htm)

Love that arises from the body and ends in the soul: that is love. Generally all this love which ends in the body is called lust. What is that lust? Lust is love, your love, which arises out of the body and ends in the body.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lok/ojas.htm)

Love pursues the good of the other, with self-control, concern, reason, and patience. Lust pursues its own gratification, headlong, impatient of any control, immune to reason. (Simon Blackburn)

Love requires knowledge, reason, and time, combined with truth and trust. Lust, on the other hand, is symbolized by “a trail of clothing in the hallway” that represents a loss of reason, self-control and discipline… Living with lust is like living shackled to a lunatic. (Simon Blackburn)

Carnal lust rules where there is no love of God.

(Saint Augustine)
As a youth I had been woefully at fault, particularly in early adolescence. I had prayed to you for chastity and said, “Give me chastity and continence, but not yet.” For I was afraid that you would answer my prayer at once and cure me too soon of the disease of lust, which I wanted satisfied, not quelled. (Saint Augustine)

My will was perverse and lust had grown from it, and when I gave in to lust habit was born, and when I did not resist the habit it became necessity. These were the links which together formed what I have called my chain, and it held me fast in the duress of servitude. (Saint Augustine)

Fiery lust is not diminished by indulging it, but inevitably by leaving it ungratified. As long as you are laying logs on the fire, the fire will burn. When you withhold the wood, the fire dies, and God carries the water! (Rumi)

Desires go on increasing and burning more fiercely as they are fed. The more you yield to desire, the more dominant it becomes in your life. It does not matter the desire, the more you try to satisfy desire, the more you become captivated and enslaved by it. (Ramana Maharshi)

Indulging in one's desires in the hope of transcending them is like attempting to extinguish a fire by pouring kerosene on it. (Lakshmana)

Desire grows in strength if you follow it, but dies if you turn from it and abstain. Desire is slavery; renunciation is freedom. (Hermes)

Lust is to the other passions what the nervous fluid is to life; it supports them all, lends strength to them all - ambition, cruelty, avarice, revenge, are all founded on lust. (Marquis de Sade)

What a mistake to suppose that the passions are strongest in youth. The passions are not stronger, but the control over them is weaker. (Edward Bulwer-Lytton)

Pleasure is the bait of sin. (Plato)

Society drives people crazy with lust and calls it advertising. (John Lahr)

Hell has three gates: lust, anger, and greed. (Bhagavad Gita)

There are three all-powerful evils: lust, anger and greed. (Tulsi Das)

It is difficult to overcome one's passions, and it is impossible to satisfy them. (Marquerite De la Sabiere)
Discriminate and you will find that even the body of the most beautiful person consists of bones, fat, and other disagreeable things. Why should one give up God and direct one’s attention to such things? Why should one forget God for their sake? (Ramakrishna)

It is much easier to suppress a first desire than to satisfy those that follow. (Francois La Rochefoucauld)

The desire for perfection…is that desire which always makes every pleasure appear incomplete, for there is no joy or pleasure so great in this life that it can quench the thirst in our soul. (Dante)

In God alone is there primordial and true delight, and in all our delights it is this delight that we are seeking. (Saint Bonaventure)

When the one thought of God saturates your mind, naturally all other desires will disappear from it. (Papa Ramdas)

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Jesus Christ)

Of all the worldly passions, lust is the most intense. All other worldly passions seem to follow in its train. (Buddha)

But I say unto you, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Jesus Christ)

Full of the deadly sins and tormented by lusts of the flesh I cry, rescue me by Thy Grace, as best Thou may. 0 Great and Compassionate One! I am at Thy mercy, with austerities and penances one cannot escape, but with Thy glance of Grace, take Nanak out of the blind well. (Guru Arjan)
Envy

Envy is the desire for others’ traits, status, abilities, or situation. Envy resents the good others receive or even might receive. This transgression is the discontentment over another's superiority over us in possessions or some good fortune.

The vice of envy is always a confession of inferiority.  
(Theodore Roosevelt)
Jealousy is an emotion felt toward people and relationships. Envy is a negative emotion felt due to self-comparison of possessions. In simpler terms, envy is the wish to get what one does not have. Envy is often confused with jealousy, or the reaction of an individual who fears that his or her relationship, property, skills, etc., are being compromised or interfered with by an outside source.

Although jealousy originates from a positive attachment to another, envy stems from resentment and begrudging. Therefore, the components underlying envy include feelings of inferiority, ill-will, and possible guilt or denial. It is possible that envy is a stronger negative relational influence than jealousy, as it has fewer positive consequences to balance the negative. In an absolute sense, envy may lead to less positive feelings and communications in personal relationships than does jealousy. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Envy)

Envy is a propensity to view the well-being of others with distress, even though it does not detract from one's own. It is a reluctance to see our own well-being overshadowed by another's because the standard we use to see how well off we are is not the intrinsic worth of our own well-being but how it compares with that of others. Envy aims, at least in terms of one's wishes, at destroying others' good fortune. (Emmanuel Kant)

The Seven Deadly Sins
“The Sin No One Confesses”

- Proverbs 3:31; 14:30; 23:17; 27:4
- Galatians 5:16-26
- Matthew 20:1-16
A Multi-Faith Guide to Envy
(Beliefnet)

Envy is about much more than simply wanting your best friend's fancy car--or even your neighbor's wife. World religions agree that while envy includes longing for what someone else has, it is often interpreted as wishing someone else badly out of jealousy, not rejoicing in another's content or success, or appropriating property not one's own.

Buddhism:
Like greed, envy is a quality that keeps a person in a state of continual rebirths. Envy runs counter to the concept of giving. One who gives is freed from envy, as the Majjhima Nikaya states, “A person who gives freely is loved by all. It's hard to understand, but it is by giving that we gain strength. But there is a proper time and proper way to give, and the person who understands this is strong and wise. By giving with a feeling of reverence for life, envy and anger are banished.” Milarepa, the 11th-century Buddhist poet and sage, described envy as one of the six fetters of non-liberation.

Christianity:
Christians follow the Ten Commandments and heed the tenth, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.” The sin of envy is explained in the Gospel, as the book of Luke states: “Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist of his possessions.” Saint Thomas Aquinas defined envy as “sorrow for another's good.” In Catholic thought, envy runs counter to the supreme virtue, charity. Envy also may lead to other vices, including hatred and rejoicing over the misfortunes of others.

Hinduism:
Like avoidance of greed, avoidance of envy is one of the Hindu restraints. Hindu texts are also explicit about avoiding envy. “Among the profuse precious things a man may acquire, none surpasses a nature free from envy toward all,” the Tirukkural states. The Isha Upanishad warns, “Covet nothing. All belongs to the Lord. Thus working you may live a hundred years. Thus alone will you work in real freedom.” The Hindu legend of Prahlad teaches that the pursuit of physical pleasures leads to envy and anger and does not bring happiness.
Islam:
The Qur'an warns against envy, encouraging believers to be satisfied with their lot: “And do not covet what we bestowed upon any other people. Such are temporary ornaments of this life, whereby we put them to the test. What your Lord provides for you is far better, and everlasting.” The sayings of the Prophet reveal what Muhammad thought about envy. “The faithful believer emulates, but does never envy.” The 10th century Islamic philosopher Razi wrote that “envy is worse than miserliness: misers do not want to give anything of their own to others; envious people do not want others to receive anything, regardless of who owns it.”

Judaism:
In Jewish texts, envy is first mentioned in the Torah, with the 10th commandment: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.” Later Jewish writings expand on envy. The Proverbs state, “A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is the rottenness of the bones.”

Jewish texts explain that envy is not just wanting what one doesn't have. It includes these qualities: longing for another's possessions, discontent with one's possessions because one prefers those of another, and the appropriation of the property of another.

The Two Faces of Envy
Gerald Grow

Near the end of “Ways of Seeing”, John Berger describes advertising in terms of envy. Advertising “proposes to each of us that we transform ourselves, or our lives, by buying something more….Advertising persuades us of such a transformation by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result, enviable. The state of being envied is what constitutes glamour. And advertising is the process of manufacturing glamour.” Advertising, he concludes, is about the solitary happiness that comes from being envied by others.

In this sense, envy implies the admiration of others. This “envy” suggests that others might covet your possessions, looks, manner, etc., and want to be like you. Surely Berger is right in a way; advertisers must want us to want to be like those beautiful people in the ads.

But envy has a dark side which has largely been lost to twentieth-century thought. For at least a thousand years, a distinction has been made among envy, coveting, and jealousy. You are jealous to protect something you already have. You covet what you want but do not have. Coveting and jealousy are minor sins. But since medieval times, envy has been considered a major term for identifying the causes of human suffering. In many versions of the Seven Deadly Sins, envy took first or second place.

According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, from envy come “hatred, calumny, detraction, and many types of malevolent behavior.” In Purgatoario, Dante meets Sapia, whose punishment for malicious envy--she rejoiced to see her countrymen lose in battle--was to have her eyelids sewn shut with steel wire.

Modern writings on envy are rare, but the German sociologist, Helmut Schoeck, has produced a rich, scholarly volume on the subject: “Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior”. In his review of what great thinkers have said about envy, he quotes Nietzsche's compelling definition: “When some men fail to accomplish what they desire to do, they exclaim angrily, ‘May the whole world perish!’”

This repulsive emotion is the pinnacle of envy, whose implication is, “If I cannot have something, no one is to have anything, no one is to be anything!” Schoeck argues that envy is a universal drive that ranges from a spiteful malicious glee at another's misfortune to horrible acts of mutilation and murder for no other reason than that the perpetrator felt belittled by the accomplishments of the victim.
I covet when I want something I do not have; I can covet my neighbor's wife, car, house, talents, or achievements. Coveting, indeed, may be one of the virtuous vices of a competitive economy; but there is nothing virtuous about envy. Coveting says, "He has it; I want it." Envy, though, says: "If I can't have it, nobody can."

Envy is frustrated desire turned destructive. Envy is what leads a child to break another child's favorite toy, or a boss to frustrate a talented employee. In the play and film, Amadeus, Salieri enacts a highly theatrical version of envy as he sets out to destroy Mozart for effortlessly writing music far greater than all Salieri's labors can produce. Impotent to attain the ideal, the envious person feels destructive toward it. Like despair, envy derives from the separation of the person from the object of desire, combined with a sense that one is powerless to attain what is desired. In envy, the urge to reach out becomes the urge to destroy.

Bombarded by commercial images that imply that using a certain product will cause them to become as suave and vivacious as the beautiful woman selling it, viewers have good occasion to develop destructively envious feelings toward these idealized and unattainable images. On the television documentary, Quest for Beauty, Nina Blanchard, "the most famous model agent in Hollywood," discussed the hostility professional models arouse: "There is anger about beauty....I think that beautiful women provoke anger when they walk into a room." A closer term might be "envy." If you feel immune from envy, think how satisfying it is when the cover of the National Enquirer shows one of those impossibly gorgeous celebrities caught looking like a drunken pig!

On the simplest level, "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful" is the model's plea to be free from the destructive envy of the viewer--the kind of envy that expresses itself in a range from catty remarks to the recent slashing of a model's face on a New York street. It echoes the plea of every person of beauty, talent, wealth, luck, or distinction--the plea for protection against the "leveling" violence of envy. It may even reflect the viewer's fear of being envied for becoming more beautiful. (http://www.longleaf.net/ggrow/Hate/Envy.html)

To an envious man nothing is more delightful than another’s misfortune, and nothing more painful than another’s success.
(Baruch Spinoza)
Wrong Understanding - Envy
Right Understanding - Gratitude

If we have been blessed with the gift of Right Understanding, we understand that the world operates according to a “well regulated system” which allows for no errors, accidents, chance, or luck.

“Nothing happens by chance. Every occurrence has its cause from which it follows by necessity.” (Democritus)

“Chance is a word void of sense, nothing can exist without a cause.” (Voltaire)

Baba Sawan Singh wrote to a disciple, “Rest assured that before you were born here, the arrangement of your livelihood was made. The pains and pleasures and general run of life were then determined. This was not by any haphazard process, but by a carefully regulated system.” (The Dawn of Light, 173, 174)

When this understanding becomes ingrained in our thinking, we will shun the vice of envy and embrace the virtue of gratitude.

The contemporary Tibetan Buddhist Lama Surya Das writes, “In the Buddhist view, there are no accidents. In very simple terms, the traditional Buddhist Law of Dependent Origination means that every cause has an effect, and every effect has a cause.”

One will not experience the emotion of envy when one realizes that every person’s good fortune has been earned and is justified. With the proper understanding of the law of karma, the emotion of envy will be impossible to assail us.

“Not in the heavens above, nor in the farthest reaches of the sea, nor by transporting yourself to the remotest valleys of the mountains, will you be able to hide from the consequences of your own evil actions. Likewise, certain are the blessings growing out of your good actions.” (Buddha)

“Whatever comes into our lives, sometimes good, sometimes not to our taste, is all due as a reaction of our past karma. What you have sown, you will have to reap. It is no fault of God, it is our own fault.” (Sant Kirpal Singh)
“The law of cause and effect is inexorable and unrelenting. You reap a harvest of suffering, poverty, pain and sorrow, because you have sown the seed of evil in the past. You reap a harvest of plenty and bliss owing to your sowing of seeds of good.” (Swami Sivananda)

With Right Understanding, the envy of others’ bounty is replaced by the sense of gratitude for our own blessings.

The Beloved Master Sant Kirpal Singh wrote, “There is much to be grateful for, if we only just count the manifold blessings granted to us by the Master Power. A healthy physical body, strong enough to attend to mundane obligations, and a sound mind purified by meditations in the Holy Naam are perhaps the superb blessings.” (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/wayof.htm)

“…We should be contented with what we have and be grateful for them. Ingratitude is the greatest evil. What has God given us? All that we need and much more. Have we ever offered a thanks-giving prayer for what He has done and the bounteous gifts supplied by Him? If we fulfill these conditions of truthfulness and contentment with a sense of gratefulness, He would not deny us anything for which we may happen to wish.”
(Sant Kirpal Singh, ruhanisatsangusa.org/search4truth.htm)

Envy is an expression of ingratitude. Envy focuses on what we feel we are lacking and shuts us off from the benefits of gratitude.

“When we are grateful for the good we already have, we attract more good into our life. On the other hand, when we are ungrateful, we tend to shut ourselves off from the good we might otherwise experience.” (Margaret Stortz)

A contemporary spiritual writer suggests, “If the thought of lack has become part of who you think you are you will always experience lack. Rather than acknowledge the good that is already in your life, all you see is lack. Acknowledging the good that is already in your life is the foundation for all abundance.”

One reason envy is counted among the deadly sins is because envy is an expression of our deluded self and our meanest nature. Living our lives from the position of thankfulness and gratitude for the many blessings God has given us allows no room for the smallness and meanness of envy.
Of the seven deadly sins, only envy is no fun at all. (Joseph Epstein)

Pride, envy, avarice - these are the sparks have set on fire the hearts of all men. (Dante Alighieri)

The flower which is single need not envy the thorns that are numerous. (Rabindranath Tagore)

The wicked envy and hate; it is their way of admiring. (Victor Hugo)

Keep yourselves far from envy; it eateth up and taketh away good actions, like as fire eateth up and burneth wood. (Muhammad)

How rare, men with the character to praise a friend’s success without a trace of envy. (Aeschylus)

To withstand the assaults of envy, you must be either a hero or a saint. (Publius Syrus)

Envy is stronger than greed. (French saying)

When men are full of envy they disparage everything, whether it be good or bad. (Tacitus)

When envy is in your heart, your neighbor’s hens will look like turkeys, and your neighbor’s cabin like a castle. Envy enlarges everything. (Fred Van Amburgh)

If you believe that God pervades everything that He has created, you must believe that you cannot enjoy anything that is not given by Him and seeing that He is the Creator of his numberless children, it follows that you cannot covet anybody’s possessions. (Mohandas Gandhi)

Envy is simply being angry at being left out of the happiness of others. (Hans-Ulrick Rieker)

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s. (The Ten Commandment - # 10)
Pride/Vanity

Pride or vanity is considered the original and most serious of the seven deadly sins, and the source of the others. It is identified as a desire to be more important or attractive than others, failing to acknowledge the good work of others, and excessive love of self.

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs)
"The Master unites us in a true relationship, which can never be broken." This relationship is with God Himself, who is manifested in the human form. It is such a relationship that can never be sundered, even after death, not to speak of during life. But we, with our poor understanding, assert ourselves with pride, ego, and low habits, desiring to be recognized. Consequently, we succeed only in heaping more misery upon our heads.

If you lose this golden opportunity, you have no idea when you will be given another. Give up pride, cunning, and other worldly habits, and cease wandering in vain from one attraction to another. You will never get another like the Guru you have got.

Pride and ego do not let us progress - when we make mistakes we will not admit them. In our hearts we have the thought, "There is none greater than me." Self-respect and praise are both food for the mind. Caught up in this failing, we at times push the Guru aside, saying, "What does the Guru know."

We may have been given human birth many times, but pride and ego killed us again and again, ruining all our good work and causing us to return to the same scene, time and again. In the past it was our ruination, and it is winning the present also. Do not obey your mind - obey the words of the Guru, which will bring you great joy; whereas obedience to the mind will give you unending distress - the mind ever gave birth to trouble.

Forget all pride and vain-glory. One person may have pride of knowledge; another may have done a little meditation and wishes the world to acknowledge him as a great devotee. The consequences are that whatever little a person has gained will be lost, and one will be left lamenting. Always remember that all spiritual progress is solely due to the Guru's grace - be grateful, not prideful. If a million rupees or dollars are placed in a treasury, why should the treasurer feel proud? Whatever comes, whatever goes, it is all due to the will and pleasure of the Guru; and the receiver should feel neither a sense of pride nor a sense of loss. Humility is a very beautiful adornment.

Attachment and pride keep us chained to the outer environments. Pride and the love of praise - "I am learned, I am great, I am powerful, there is no one like me!" - and attachment stops you from going ahead. Real progress starts when you break all attachment and ego.
Hold back your mind from pride, for pride only comes from ignorance. The man who does not know thinks that he is great, that he has done this or that great thing; the wise man knows that only God is great, that all good work is done by God alone. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/gemsq.htm)

False pride of worldly possession or pelf, assumed superiority because of spiritual knowledge or intellectual attainments, vanity of earthly things and status may turn astray the mind of the spiritual aspirant, yet in course of time all these vanish into thin air. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/7paths.htm)

A man may strive to be humble, but for all his efforts, may become all the more proud. There is such a thing as the pride of humility; it is a very dangerous thing, for it is too subtle to be discerned by the inexperienced. There are some who will take great pains to be humble; they make humility impossible. How can a man be humble who is all the time thinking of how best he can be humble? Such a man is all the time occupied with himself, but true humility is freedom from all consciousness of self, which includes freedom from the consciousness of humility. The truly humble man never knows that he is humble. The truly humble man accepts everything as coming from the hands of God. He knows that in him there is nothing praiseworthy. All the good that is in him is from God, and the praise that men give him belongs to God. When the young man called Jesus "Good Teacher," Jesus quietly said, "Why call me good? There is none good but God." (ruhanisatsangusa.org/humility.htm)

Who can comprehend Reality? Kabir says that one who has rid himself of all the above three vices (egotism, avarice, cunningness) would then see everything in its true color. First, egotism. Some are swayed by the intoxication of power. Some are proud of their learning and knowledge. Some take pride in their wealth and think that they can do anything. So the Great Teacher says that such people cannot get to Reality at any cost. Further, they never seek the nearness of a man of intuition or realization because of their vanity. As such, elimination of egotism is a must. Only then would you develop right understanding and correct vision. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/grand-delusion.htm)

The more you come in contact with the Light and Sound Principle within you, you'll slowly see your doership and ego lessen. Doership will slowly die out. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/personal.htm)
A Multi-Faith Guide to Pride  
(Beliefnet)

The concept of pride is similar in many religions. Most view it as focusing too much on the self, and not enough on God. Often, doing away with the ego is considered a prerequisite for true belief in God.

Buddhism:
Buddhism stresses the importance of shedding the ego, the sense of a self-identity. Pride is seen as not letting go of this sense of self.

Buddhism also warns against not taking pride in one's learning or one's advances on the road to enlightenment. This kind of pride causes one to expect special status and homage. As the Dhammapada states, "Only for his ruin does renown come to the fool. It ravages his bright fortune and rips his head apart. He would want unwarranted status, preeminence among monks, authority among monasteries, homage from lay families."

The Sutta Nipata tells a similar story: A questioner asked the Buddha: "I would like to know about the state of peace, the state of solitude and of quiet detachment. How does a person become calm, independent, and not wanting to grasp at anything?" "A person does this," replied the Buddha, "by eradicating the delusion of 'I am.' By being alert and attentive, he begins to let go of cravings as they arise. But whatever he begins to accomplish, he should beware of inner pride. He must avoid thinking of himself as better than another, or worse or equal, for that is all comparison and emphasizes the self."

Christianity:
Pride is often considered the foremost vice in Christianity, since it is contrary to love of God. C.S. Lewis wrote, "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."

Christianity teaches that there are many different manifestations of pride. They include boasting, doing something from selfishness or conceit, and refusing to be subject to one another.
Hinduism:
Hinduism teaches that one must renounce the ego in order to understand the Self and reach ultimate reality. Pride inhibits renunciation. One can only come to a state of true knowledge by letting go of pride and one's "ego-sense." As the Bhagavad Gita states, "Those who know truly are free from pride and deceit."

One who does not focus on oneself sheds all pride and is able to understand ultimate reality. Krishna says later in the Bhagavad Gita, "Living beyond the reach of I and mine and of pleasure and pain, patient, contented, self-controlled, firm in faith, with his heart and all his mind given to me-with such a one I am in love."

Islam:
Islam teaches that pride is what caused the downfall of Iblis, the devil in Islam, when he refused to obey God's commandment to prostrate himself before Adam. This kind of pride, pride against Allah, is considered the worst type of pride, because it is essentially a rejection of faith. Islam also warns of the sin of pride against others, or arrogance.

Many verses from Islamic texts demonstrate these Muslim beliefs about pride. The Qur'an explains in several verses that Allah disapproves of arrogance. "And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster," it states.

Several sayings of the Prophet, teach that pride is wrong. As Sahih Muslim reports, the Prophet said, "God has revealed to me that you must be humble, so that no one boasts over another, or oppresses another." Another says, "He is a bad man who is proud and puts on airs and forgets the Most Great and Sublime One."

Judaism:
Judaism teaches that arrogance stunts spiritual growth, and that people should take pleasure, and not pride, in their accomplishments.

Judaism also warns against taking too much pride in one's knowledge or wisdom. The Talmud teaches, "Who is a wise person? The one who learns from all people." Pride can also be harmful physically. As Rabbi Joseph Telushkin has written, the rabbis warned about pride deterring people from asking for something when they are in need, such as money when one is in poverty. This kind of pride is also a sin because it can cause a person to harm oneself.

In a thousand little ways pride insinuates itself into our daily actions, and robs our lives of their joy and meaning. When we are too proud to look stupid, we do not ask questions and do not learn. When we are too proud to look incompetent, we do not tell our supervisor that we cannot handle our work load, and many important things go undone. When we are too proud to admit our failings, we try to hide our faults even from our own Guru and thus close ourselves off from the blessings of grace.

Pride is not a simple, straightforward, and easily recognizable foe. This enemy is flexible and tricky, a master of many disguises. If it fails to prevent us from experiencing our own divinity, it does not give up. Our pride will try to seduce us into appropriating even our most profound spiritual experiences into the service of our egos. It is ironic and sad that pride is one vice that seems capable of actually feeding off of and gaining strength from our merits. Its action, as it leaches energy from our spiritual work, may be so subtle that we are at first unaware of what is happening. But there are signs. When we begin on the spiritual path, it is pride that makes us feel more distant from other people. If we feel proud that we are doing practices “to dissolve our egos,” rather than feeling a new openness and love, we feel judgmental, separate, lonely. We get the unpleasant experience of the truth expressed by Benjamin Franklin: “To be proud of virtue is to poison yourself with the antidote.”

Nor is pride likely to be left behind us on the spiritual path! It will shed old disguises and take on ever new and seemingly engaging ones, and time and again insinuate itself as our dear companion. There will be times when we receive some gift of knowledge or experience through the Guru’s grace, and rather than becoming inspired to learn more, we become proud. This very pride then becomes a barrier, a prison that we dwell in and that bars us from further learning.

It is sobering to remember the story of the angel Lucifer. He was a close servant of the Lord, a luminous being, highly evolved and resplendent with blessings. But the very greatness of his attainments gave monstrous strength to his pride, and on the very last stages on the path to perfection, this highest of all angels fell to the lowest rung. It is this very boldness of pride to challenge the Divine that makes it such a difficult enemy to overcome. Boethius said, “All the other vices flee God; pride alone rises up against Him.”
In any moment that we feel our pride damning us to the icy hell-realm of our own elemental separation, in that very moment we can reach out to the warming rays of grace. Bit by bit, if we monitor our state and engage in self-inquiry, the habit of pride can be recognized and countered, at least to some extent. As we ponder our lives more deeply we inevitably become aware of our dependence of grace: our dependence for every good thing on that pure love which is the form of God’s presence, dwelling in all hearts, including our own.

Without cutting through our petty pride, we will never experience the real greatness and beauty that are inside. As Thoreau said, “Humility like darkness reveals the Heavenly Lights.”
Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real. (Thomas Merton)

When the proud man thinks he is humble his case is hopeless. (Thomas Merton)

If I only had a little humility, I would be perfect. (Ted Turner)

Pride attaches undue importance to the superiority of one's status in the eyes of others; and shame is fear of humiliation at one's inferior status in the estimation of others. When one sets his heart on being highly esteemed, and achieves such rating, then he is automatically involved in fear of losing his status. (Lao Tzu)

The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts. (Psalms)

Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. (Jesus Christ)

When a proud man hears another praised, he thinks himself injured. (Thomas Fuller)

God cannot be realized if there is the slightest trace of pride. (Ramakrishna)
Whoever has in his heart so much as a rice-grain of pride cannot enter into Paradise. (Mohammed)

The intelligent man who is proud of his intelligence is like the condemned man who is proud of his large cell. (Simone Weil)

If you are discouraged, it is a sign of pride, because it shows you trust in your own powers. (Mother Teresa)

The truest characters of ignorance are vanity, and pride and arrogance. (Samuel Butler)

We are so vain that we even care for the opinion of those we don't care for. (Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach)

We should not deny people their pride; it is their only compensation for their misery. (Charles Nodier)
Too much learning makes one proud. One must bend one’s head realizing the limitations of reason. It can only take you to the gate and it has to be left behind when you enter the realm of the Spirit. You have to unlearn what you have learnt and become as simple and guileless as a child. (Papa Ramdas)

A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. (Henry W. Beecher)

It is of great advantage that man should know his station, and not erroneously imagine that the whole Universe exists only for him. (Moses Maimonides)
Whenever you hear someone inflating his ego by speaking of his good works, walk away quickly and do not encourage him any more. (Ronald Beesley)

Pride is a negative virtue; it exists to glorify humility. (Swami Sivananda)

Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves; vanity, to what we would have others think of us. (Jane Austen)

One will rarely err if extreme actions be ascribed to vanity, ordinary actions to habit, and mean actions to fear. (Friedrich Nietzsche)

In general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes. (John Ruskin)

Pride, envy, avarice - these are the sparks have set on fire the hearts of all men. (Dante Alighieri)

If you see any thing in yourself which may make you proud, look a little further, and you will find enough to make you humble. (Wellins Calcott)

The pride of the body is a barrier against the gifts that purify the soul. (George Eliot)
Anger is a feeling of tension and hostility, usually caused by anxiety aroused by a perceived threat to one's self, possessions, rights, or values.

Anger is momentary madness.
(Horace)
Sant Kirpal Singh on Anger

When you have no desire, there is no question of anger. What is anger? When you want to do something or have something and someone appears to be standing in the way - either directly or indirectly - that impediment to the achievement of your desire causes anger.

Anger is flared up through the ears. How can you control it? Leave the place. The more you hear, the more your anger is flared up; and you won't talk slowly. You will go on talking loudly; and what will be the result? There will be foam in your mouth, and you will not be able to speak.

(http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/lust.htm)

The place where fire burns becomes heated first and then transmits its heat to the atmosphere around. So is the case with the fire of anger.

An imagined or supposed wrong keeps rankling in the mind like a thorn. When one cannot bear its intensity, one bursts forth into flames of hatred and contempt (begins abusing right and left), loses his balance of mind, and like a canker keeps emitting a malign odor that virtually goes on polluting the atmosphere around.

Most of our injuries and wrongs are the outcome of our own process of thinking, and such thoughts breed countless others, multiplying in geometrical proportion. We can get out of this vicious cycle only by changing our attitude towards life.

Why sacrifice our natural equanimity for mere trifles, for passing bubbles and vapory nothings that are things of no consequence? Instead of brooding over these supposed and imagined wrongs, it would be better by far to contemplate on the higher aspects of life, the divinity within and the divinity without, for this world is verily of the Divine and Divinity resides therein. If we really wish for God and aspire to attain to the Godhead, we must learn to love His creation, for God is nothing but Love. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/7paths.htm)

You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger. (Buddha)

Consider how much more you suffer from your anger and grief, than from the very things for which you are angry and grieved. (Marcus Aurelius)
A Multi-Faith Guide to Wrath
(Beliefnet)

Buddhism:
A Buddhist precepts insists, "Don't be angry." Buddhism teaches that anger is a result of attachments. One of the most important Buddhist texts, the Dhammapada, devotes an entire chapter to anger. Anger is a fetter, an attachment that keeps one in a cycle of rebirths. "Abandon anger," the Dhammapada says. "Be done with conceit, get beyond every fetter. When for name and form you have no attachment--have nothing at all--no sufferings, no stresses, invade."

The Sodhanna Sutra teaches that becoming angry is the best way to please one's enemy, since anger brings about seven things that are pleasing to an enemy. For example, a person overcome with anger, says the sutra, is ugly, sleeps badly, has a poor reputation, and has other qualities pleasing to one's enemy.

Christianity:
Anger itself is not always a sin in Christianity, but anger can be especially harmful if one commits further wrongs while one is angry. "In your anger do not sin," Paul cautions.

Jesus preached love and forgiveness instead of anger, and reconciliation over vengeance. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus denounced anger: "But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire."

The New Testament's Epistle of James contains one of the most explicit Christian condemnations of anger. "My dear brothers," James says, "take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

Jesus rebuked his disciples for leaning toward vengeance when they were angry, instead of toward reconciliation. When James and John ask Jesus, about the unbelieving Samaritans, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" the Gospel explains, "Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village."
Hinduism:
Hinduism teaches that anger is one of the qualities that results in rebirth and inability to reach Brahman. As the Bhagavad Gita says, "Life after life I cast those who are malicious, hateful, cruel, and degraded into the wombs of those with similar demonic natures. Birth after birth they find themselves with demonic tendencies."

As it further explains, renouncing anger is necessary to reach life's ultimate goal. The Gita continues, "There are three gates to this self-destructive hell: lust, anger, and greed. Renounce these three. Those who escape from these three gates of darkness, Arjuna, seek what is best and attain life's supreme goal. Others disregard the teachings of the scriptures. Driven by selfish desire, they miss the goal of life, miss even happiness and success."

The Tirukkural warns: “Forget anger toward all who have offended you, for from anger springs a multitude of wrongs. The face's smile and the heart's joy are slain by anger. Does there exist a greater enemy than one's own anger?”

Islam:
While examples of the wrath of God are common in the Qur'an, other Muslim texts show that anger is not allowed among the believers themselves. Several Muslim texts caution against anger. The hadith extol people who are able to control their anger. The Prophet said, “The strong man is not the good wrestler; the strong man is only he who controls himself when he is angry.”

Another Muslim text cautions against anger in a warning against all types of extreme emotion. “Anger that has no limit causes terror. Kindness that is inappropriate does away with respect. So do not be so severe with others, as to terrify them; and do not be so lenient with others, as to make them take advantage of you”.

Judaism:
Though the God of the Torah is often depicted as wrathful, Judaism encourages believers themselves to be slow to anger. “Better to be slow to anger than mighty, to have self-control than to conquer a city,” the book of Proverbs states.

The Talmud states, similarly, “Do not get angry easily”. Not only is anger sinful, but it can be detrimental to the person who becomes angry. “Anger deprives a sage of his wisdom, a prophet of his vision,” the Talmud states.

While desire and the wanting mind are seductive, the opposite energy of anger and aversion is more clearly unpleasant. At certain times we might, for a short while, find some enjoyment in it, but even then it closes our heart. It has a burning, tight quality that we can’t escape. As the opposite of wanting, it is a force that pushes away, condemns, judges, or hates some experience in our life. The demon of anger and aversion has many faces and guises, and can be found in forms such as fear, boredom, ill-will, judgment, and criticism.

Like desire, anger is an extremely powerful force. We can easily become caught up in it, or we can be so afraid of it that we act out its destruction in more unconscious ways. Unfortunately, too few of us have learned to work with it directly. Its force can grow from annoyance to deep fear, to hatred and rage. It can be experienced toward someone or something that is present with us now or that is far away in time or place. We sometimes experience great anger over past events that are long over and about which we can do nothing. We can even get furious about something that has not happened but that we only imagine might happen. When it is strong in the mind, anger colors our entire experience of life. Anger can be a source of tremendous suffering in our own minds, in our interactions with others, and in the world at large.

As we listen (to the arising of anger), we can sense the origins of anger. Almost always the roots of anger are in one of two different states, which arise just before the anger appears. We become angry either when we are hurt and in pain or when we are afraid. Pay attention to your own life and see if this is true. The next time anger and irritation spring up, see if just before they arose you felt fear or hurt. If you pay attention to the fear or pain first, does the anger even appear?

Anger shows us precisely where we are stuck, where our limits are, where we cling to beliefs and fears. Aversion is like a warning signal that lights up and says, “Attached, attached.” The strength of our anger reveals the amount of our attachment. Yet we know our attachment is optional. We can relate more wisely. Our anger, conditioned by our viewpoint on that day, is impermanent; it’s a feeling with associated sensations and thoughts that come and go. We do not have to be bound to it or driven by it. Usually our anger is based on our limited ideas of what should happen.
Escaping the Anger Prison
(Dr. Phil McGraw)

Do the smallest things set you off? If you're experiencing uncontrollable rage, then in order to stop long term, you've got to get to the root of your anger.

1. Identify the emotion your anger covers:
Anger is nothing more than a cover for hurt, frustration or fear — or all three. Try talking about what you're really feeling without using the word "anger." Instead, try saying, "I am hurt/frustrated/afraid of ..."

2. Identify the true source.
What is the real source of your anger? Who is the real culprit? Chances are it's not the people or situations you are lashing out at.

3. Identify the unfulfilled need.
If you are experiencing uncontrollable rage, you have unfulfilled needs that should be addressed. Maybe you need to forgive yourself for the way you've behaved while angry. Perhaps you need to forgive others for their actions. Whatever the case, you need to know what your needs are before you can fill them.

4. Identify the constructive alternative action.
Instead of raging against people, figure out what you can do that is constructive. If you need to resolve an issue with a person you are really angry with, the constructive alternative behavior would be to resolve it. If you need to forgive yourself or someone else, the constructive action would be to forgive.

5. Take specific action.
Once you have identified your constructive alternative action, it's important that you take that specific action, as uncomfortable as it may be, and move on. Claim your right to resolve the source of your anger and reclaim your life.
(http://drphil.com/articles/article/224/)

Anger and hatred are the materials from which hell is made. (Thich Nhat Hanh)

There is no sin or wrong that gives a man such a foretaste of hell in this life as anger and impatience. (Saint Catherine of Siena)
Negative Judgments Give Rise to Anger

This is a story of a middle aged businessman who had a tendency to judge others critically and to quickly feel angry when life didn’t conform to his wishes. He had a history of anger management problems and stress-related health issues. His wife and children encouraged him to seek guidance in dealing with his impatience and anger.

Our businessman took his loved ones advice and enrolled in an eight-week stress reduction/anger management class where he was learning to observe his negative judgments, impatience and anger as they arose and to monitor his thoughts and feelings in order to identify the triggers which set his mind racing and his heart pounding.

One day, after attending the class for some weeks, he stopped for groceries on his way home from work. He was in a hurry and a bit irritated as usual.

When he took his cart to check out, there were long lines. He noticed the woman in front of him had only one item but wasn’t in the express line. She was carrying a baby and talking to the cashier.

Then she passed the baby to the cashier and the cashier spent a moment cooing over the child.

The man witnessed the situation before him and noticed he was becoming more irritated. His impatience was growing, and the voice in his head was observing how inconsiderate the woman in front of him was acting.

He told himself that she was in the wrong line, talking, holding everyone up. How selfish and rude!

Because he had been practicing observing his thoughts and emotions, he started to become aware of the heat and tightness in his body. He could feel his impatience and anger growing.

The man thought of the calming techniques he was learning and began breathing deeply and thinking positive thoughts to soothe his agitated mind.

“She’ll be done shortly” he thought. “I don’t need to get all excited because this lady is inconsiderate” he told himself.

As he reached the cashier he said, “That was a cute little boy.” “Oh, did you like him?” she responded. “That’s my baby. His father was in the air force, but he was killed last winter. Now I have to work full time. My mom tries to bring my boy in once or twice a day so I can see him.”
The previous story illustrates a fundamental principle of self-transformation which is very important to understand: Your feelings and emotions are not triggered by what happens to you but by what you tell yourself about what happens to you.

When the business man in the story thought he was the victim of inconsiderate, self-centered behavior, he began to react with feelings of hostility and anger. When he realized that he was witnessing a sensitive moment of love and bereavement, his reaction changed to compassion and tenderness.

Things are not good or bad, but thinking makes them so.

(William Shakespeare)

The following story illustrates the same principle of how our self-talk determines our feelings and emotions:

One early morning a young man was walking down a city street, pleasantly enjoying the spring weather while observing the budding trees and the singing birds. There were few pedestrians sharing the street, and the man momentarily diverted his attention to admire an old gray-stone building across the street. Suddenly the man was bumped to the ground in a sudden collision with another man.

The young man’s immediate thought was that he was the victim of thoughtless, irresponsible behavior. His immediate reaction was one of anger and indignation. “You stupid idiot!” the young man yelled, “Why don’t you watch where you’re going!”

As the young man got up from the ground, he noticed another man still on the ground and a cane beneath his feet. When the young man realized that he had bumped into an old blind man, his anger immediately turned to sorrow and regret. As the young man helped the blind man to his feet, his apologies and pleadings for forgiveness accompanied his feelings of remorse and compassion.

Whenever I wish to move or speak, first I shall examine my state of mind, and firmly act in a suitable way. Whenever my mind becomes attached or angry, I shall not react, nor shall I speak; I shall remain mum and unmoved like a tree.

(Shantideva)
A Bigger Container
(Charlotte Joko Beck, Everyday Zen)

In order to put our lives into perspective, we stand back and take a look. Now Zen practice is to do this. It develops the ability to stand back and look. Let’s take a practical example, a quarrel. The overriding quality in any quarrel is pride. Suppose I’m married and I have a quarrel with my husband. He’s done something that I don’t like – perhaps he has spent the family savings on a new car – and I think our present car is fine. And I think – in fact I know – that I am right. I am angry, furious. I want to scream. Now what can I do with my anger? What is the fruitful thing to do? First of all I think it’s a good idea just to back away: to do and say as little as possible. As I retreat for a bit, I can remind myself that what I really want is to be what might be called A Bigger Container. To do this is to step into another dimension – the spiritual dimension, if we must give it a name.

Let’s look at a series of practice steps, realizing that in the heat of anger it’s impossible for most of us to practice as the drama occurs. But do try to step back; do and say very little; remove yourself. Then, when you’re alone, just sit and observe. What do I mean by “observe”? Observe the soap opera going on in the mind: what he said, what he did, what I have to say about all that, what I should do about it…these are all a fantasy. They are not the reality of what’s happening. If we can (it’s difficult to do when angry), label these thoughts. Why is it difficult? When we’re angry there’s a huge block that stands in the way of practice: the fact that we don’t want to practice – we prefer to cherish our pride, to be “right” about the argument, the issue. And that’s why the first step is to back away, say little. It may take weeks of hard practice before we can see that what we want is not to be right, but to be a Bigger Container. Step back and observe. Label the thoughts of the drama: yes, he shouldn’t do that; yes, I can’t stand what he’s doing; yes, I’ll find some way to get even – all of which may be so on a superficial level, but still it is just a soap opera.

If we truly step back and observe – and as I said, it’s extremely difficult to do when angry – we will be capable in time of seeing our thoughts as thoughts (unreal) and not as the truth. Sometimes I’ve gone through this process ten, twenty, thirty times before the thoughts finally subside. When they do I am left with what? I am left with the direct experience of the physical reaction in my body, the residue, so to speak. When I directly experience this residue (as tension, contraction), since there is no duality in direct experience, I will slowly enter the dimension which knows what to do, what action to take. It knows
what is the best action, not just for me but for the others as well. In making A Bigger Container, I taste “oneness” in a direct way.

We can talk about “oneness” until the cows come home. But how do we actually separate ourselves from others? How? The pride out of which anger is born is what separates us. And the solution is a practice in which we experience this separating emotion as a definite bodily state. When we do, A Bigger Container is created.

What is created, what grows, is the amount of life I can hold without it upsetting me, dominating me. At first this space is quite restricted, then it’s a bit bigger, and then it’s bigger still. It need never cease to grow. And the enlightened state is that enormous and compassionate space. But as long as we live we find there is a limit to our container’s size and it is at that point that we must practice. And how do we know where this cut-off point is? We are at that point when we feel any degree of upset, of anger. It’s no mystery at all. And the strength of our practice is how big that container gets.

If I can observe my mind and body in an angry state, who is this “I” who observes? It shows me that I am other than my anger, bigger than my anger, and this knowledge enables me to build A Bigger Container, to grow. So what must be increased is the ability to observe. What we observe is always secondary. It isn’t important that we are upset; what is important is the ability to observe the upset. As the ability grows first to observe, and second to experience, two factors simultaneously increase: wisdom, the ability to see life as it is (not the way I want it to be) and compassion, the natural action which comes from seeing life as it is. We can’t have compassion for anyone or anything if our encounter with them is ensnarled in pride and anger; it’s impossible. Compassion grows as we create A Bigger Container.

He who angers you, conquers you.
(Elizabeth Kenny)

Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret. (Ambrose Bierce)

Expressing anger when you feel angry nearly always makes you angrier.
(Carol Tavris)
A Samurai’s Lesson

A big, tough samurai once went to see a little monk. "Monk," he said, in a voice accustomed to instant obedience, "teach me about heaven and hell!"

The monk looked up at this mighty warrior and replied with utter disdain, "Teach you about heaven and hell? I couldn't teach you about anything. You're dirty. You smell. Your blade is rusty. You're a disgrace, an embarrassment to the samurai class. Get out of my sight. I can't stand you."

The samurai was furious. He shook, got all red in the face, was speechless with rage. He pulled out his sword and raised it above him, preparing to slay the monk.

"That's hell," said the monk softly.

The samurai was overwhelmed with the compassion and surrender of this little man who had offered his life to give this teaching to show him hell! He slowly put down his sword, filled with gratitude, and suddenly peaceful.

"And that's heaven," said the monk softly.

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be. (Thomas a’ Kempis)

Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but you have increased a habit, added fuel to a fire. (Epictetus)

Every angry thought makes it a little easier to get angry the next time, and a little more likely. (Eknath Easwaran)

Anger comes to us because we lose contact with God. When we keep in constant contact with God, there is no room for us to be angry. Anger means lack of love. (Papa Ramdas)

Anger is a brief period of lunacy; the most practical way of dealing with anger is to avoid people when they are angry; the worst possible reaction to anger is to respond with anger. (Shantidasa)
Surrender: The Antidote to Anger

Mystics call the acceptance of life as it is to be living in the state of surrender. Those who have surrendered their individual ego dominated will to the Will of God, or to the Will of their Master who is the mouthpiece of God, operate within a limitless container, to use Charlotte Joko Beck’s metaphor. Such people never experience anger because they embraces the principle – “I am always content with what happens; for I know that what God chooses is better than what I choose.” (Epictetus)

Hakuin, the Zen master of the following story, is a model of one with a limitless Big Container.

Is That So?

The Zen Master Hakuin was praised by neighbors as one living a pure life.

A beautiful Japanese girl whose parents owned a food store lived near him. Suddenly without any warning, her parents discovered she was with child.

This made her parents angry. She would not confess who the man was, but after much harassment at last named Hakuin.

In great anger the parents went to the Master. "Is that so?" was all he would say.

After the child was born it was brought to Hakuin. By this time he had lost his reputation, which did not trouble him, but he took very good care of the child. He obtained milk from his neighbors and everything else the little one needed.

A year later the girl-mother could stand it no longer. She told her parents the truth – that the real father of the child was a young man who worked in the fish market.

The mother and father of the girl at once went to Hakuin to ask his forgiveness, to apologize at length, and to get the child back again.

Hakuin was willing. In yielding the child, all he said was: "Is that so?"
Anger begins in folly, and ends in repentance. (Pythagoras)

The best response you can give to anger is silence. (Shantidasa)

Anger is the wind which blows out the lamp of the mind. (Robert Ingersoll)

Strong negative emotions like anger, irritation, and indignation usually indicate that our weak spot has been touched consciously or unconsciously. (Fritz Kunkel)

Human nature is so constituted that if we take absolutely no notice of anger or abuse, the person indulging in it will soon weary of it and stop. (Mahatma Gandhi)

There is nothing more galling to angry people than the coolness of those on whom they wish to vent their spleen. (Alexandre Dumas)

A thought of anger or hatred sends arrows from the mental factory towards the person aimed at, hurts the individual, sets up discord and disharmony in the thought-world, and comes back again to the sender and harms the sender also. (Sivananda)

Frequent fits of anger produce in the soul a propensity to be angry, which oftentimes ends in a bad temper, bitterness, and morosity; then the mind becomes ulcerated, peevish, and grumbling, and is wounded by the least occurrence. (Plutarch)

There is no passion that so shakes the clarity of our judgment as anger. Things will truly seem different to us when we have quieted and cooled down. (Michel Montaigne)

If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow. (Chinese proverb)

If you do not wish to be prone to anger, do not feed the habit; give it nothing which may tend to its increase. At first, keep quiet and count the days when you were not angry: “I used to be angry every day, then every other day: next every two, next every three days!” And if you succeed in passing thirty days, sacrifice to the gods in thanksgiving. (Epictetus)
Sloth is the avoidance of physical or spiritual work. It is the desire for ease, even at the expense of doing what should be done. The slothful person is unwilling to put forth the necessary effort to fulfill worldly obligations and/or achieve self-transformation and spiritual growth. The slothful person wastes life’s precious opportunities for growth and service.

Up, sluggard, and waste not life; in the grave will be sleeping enough.

(Benjamin Franklin)
Why Sloth is Considered a Deadly Sin
(by Advisor to “Psychology Advice”)

I did an interview recently for an upcoming documentary entitled “The Science of Sin.” Not surprisingly, I talked about sloth. Why it’s considered sinful is worth some reflection.

Among the questions raised for me in terms of sloth and sin specifically were:
1) Is sloth simply a concern of the Christian tradition?
2) Why is sloth considered a sin?

The answer to the first question is fairly straightforward. No. Each of the major religions seems to have something akin to sloth, with similarly negative connotations.

Whether it be Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Judaic or Muslim traditions, sloth is, at the very least, a hindrance or obstacle in life. In addition, blame is cast on the slothful individual.

Why is sloth a sin?:
Borrowing from ancient Greek thought, sloth is a sin because it contributes to the individual’s failure to achieve his or her true self-expression. In particular, sloth is a sin in this regard because time is of the essence. We are temporally-limited creatures. We live. We die. In the time in between, we are called to be our “true selves.” This may be considered to be in the likeness of God, whatever that may mean to you. However, we need not go this far theologically to see why sloth is a sin. Even an atheist might see how the temporal limit on human life leads to the notion that “time is holy.”

To sum it up, time is holy because we have so little of it. Life is short. Time is precious. To waste it, to squander it through sloth – laziness, procrastination, task avoidance, lack of motivation, desultory or dilatory behavior – is a sin against life itself. This is a general commonality of the “sin” of sloth.

With procrastination, the scientific answer consistently points to self-regulation failure. We fail to regulate ourselves to engage in our intended actions even though this failure to act has the potential of being self-defeating. Acting now is in our best interest, we know this, nothing is stopping us from acting, but we still somewhat irrationally voluntarily delay our actions.
It’s not a new story. William James addressed this in his early psychological writings on the “obstructed will” as he denounced the “schemers and deadbeats” of the world. There was no mistaking the moral failing of the obstructed will. Modern psychology continues to investigate the failure of will. We continue to acknowledge that sloth is not the best route to take. Indeed, we call it self-regulation “failure.”

Praise and Blame:
Sin necessarily begins with the assumption of agency, of free will. We are free to choose, and it is on the basis of this choice that we are open to praise or blame. This is the key common feature of the nature of sloth across belief systems as well. Sloth begets blame, the ultimate blame in fact, as sin.

We work for praise and to avoid blame. We do our best to foster self-regulatory skills in our children and ourselves to make the right choice. We struggle with weakness of will. We seek forgiveness in our own way, and we try again.

Sloth is a sin in the sense that we feel the weight of the moral blame for not living up to our commitment to ourselves to act as we intend. It falls into the category of sin, as opposed to some less important moral failing, because it contributes to a failure to live life fully.

(http://www.psychology-advice.net/why-we-consider-sloth-a-deadly-sin)
Sant Kirpal Singh

Success awaits those who lose their heads in the pursuit of God. Living in ease and comfort, sleeping long and getting up when you will, meditating fifteen and twenty minutes at your convenience, and making up excuses for your lapses are not the means by which you reach Him. (Sat Sandesh, July 1988, 23)

It is by hard effort and strict spiritual discipline that the human body is purified of the impurities of the mind and thus can remain attuned to the holy Naam at the eye center.

New Year has come. Be new, leave the sloth of the old. Implicitly follow what is required of you. You failed to do so this year and you suffered. The mistakes are not to be repeated. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/msg-xmas.htm)

Rise early every day and do your meditation. Rise before sunrise and repeat the Naam; All negative effects will be mitigated, O Nanak. Early morning is the most beneficial time for meditation. Supreme oneness of thought upon the True Naam is had at the ambrosial small hours before dawn. So, rise early and shake off all feeling of sloth. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/chaupar.htm)

So we are to leave off this sloth and laziness, putting things off till tomorrow. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/whole-system.htm)

If a life of ease and merriment led to God, would anyone be without Him? (Guru Amar Das)

So fixed are our spirits in slothfulness and cold indifference that we seldom overcome so much as one evil habit. (Thomas a Kempis)

The very soul of the slothful does effectually but lie drowsing in his body, and the whole man is totally given up to his senses. (Sir Roger L'Estrange)

We excuse our sloth under the pretext of difficulty. (Marcus Fabius Quintilian)

Awake, my soul, and with the sun thy daily stage of duty run; shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise, to pay thy morning sacrifice. (Thomas Ken)
The Sin of Sloth: What the Couch Potato and the Workaholic Have in Common

(Leon Suprenant)

When many of us think of sloth we think of unshaven Joe Sixpack lying on the sofa all weekend, not lifting a finger except to open another cold one.

This is a fairly apt image of the vice of sloth or its synonyms such as boredom, acedia, and laziness. Boredom refers to a certain emptiness of soul or lack of passion; acedia refers to the sadness that comes from our unwillingness to tackle the difficulties involved in attaining something good; laziness more generally refers to the torpor and idleness of one who is not inclined to exert himself.

Sloth encompasses all these ideas and more. The late Jesuit John Hardon defined sloth as “sluggishness of soul or boredom because of the exertion necessary for the performance of a good work. The good work may be a corporal task, such as walking; or a mental exercise, such as writing; or a spiritual duty, such as prayer.”

One might have the impression that sloth is not a typically American sin. The virtues of diligence and industriousness are deeply ingrained in our nation’s Protestant work ethic. Our youth learn early on that the way to get ahead is by working hard. The early bird catches the worm. Early to bed, early to rise. In a competitive, dog-eat-dog business world, everyone is looking for an “edge,” and that typically comes from outworking the competition.

And even apart from an employment context, when we want to communicate that our lives have been normal and healthy, we report that we’ve been “keeping busy.”

Sloth is a sin against God, and not against the time clock or productivity. The fact is that it’s possible to work too much, in a way that’s not in keeping with our dignity and ultimate good. The essence of sloth is a failure to fulfill one’s basic duties. Surely one such duty is the human vocation to work. Yet another such duty is the enjoyment of leisure, to take time for worship. The gentleman lying on the sofa may be a more popular image of sloth, but the workaholic, who’s on the job 24-7 and in the process neglects God and family, is the more typical manifestation of sloth in our culture.
Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn put it this way: “In the United States the difficulties are not a Minotaur or dragon—not imprisonment, hard labor, death, government harassment, and censorship—but cupidity, boredom, sloppiness, indifference. Not the acts of a mighty, all-pervading, repressive government, but the failure of a listless public to make use of the freedom that is its birthright.”

We in the west have largely lost the sense of God, leading to a loss of our own sense of purpose or mission. This has inexorably led to the societal emptiness and lack of passion that Solzhenitsyn saw so clearly decades ago. A striking correlation exists between the rise of secular atheism and boredom, as the reduction of human existence to the merely material divests it of its intended richness and meaning.

The most typical way of dealing with this tragedy is by not dealing with it, so as a society we tend to flock to entertainments. Certainly, these things are not bad in themselves, but excessive recourse to them reveals a flight from the depths of the human condition to the comfort of shallow pastimes. These pursuits are rightly called diversions, because they divert us from facing a life from which the living God has been excluded. For some, these diversions may be sports, television, or the Internet, among other possibilities. For others, work becomes a diversion, an escape. When it does, it ceases to be a manifestation of virtue and instead feeds the vice of sloth.

In addition, modern man tends to define himself by what he does and what he has. Yet, leisure isn’t about producing and owning, but about being—in other words, resting in God’s presence. We often fail to recognize the immense God-given dignity and value we have simply by being who we are, which is prior to anything we might accomplish in life. In Augustinian terms, without allowing for leisure, our hearts are forever restless, and our sense of worth gets tied to what we’re able to produce. This utilitarian mindset not only drives us to overwork, but it also negatively affects how we value others. That’s one reason why our society has such a difficult time valuing the elderly and the infirm in our midst.

Further, as the pursuit of success, acclaim, or riches becomes the source of our personal worth, these human goods in essence take the place of God in our lives. Few of us probably set out to become idolaters, but that’s what we’ve become if our choices and work habits are ordered toward serving mammon, not God. (http://www.cufblog.org/?p=286)
World religions view sloth as more than simply lying on the couch for an entire afternoon. Though sloth today usually means physical laziness, in the original seven deadly sins, sloth was sadness, or depression. The word for sloth, acedia meant "spiritual sloth." In many religions, sloth is seen as inhibiting or preventing virtuous conduct. It is considered sinful or wrong because inaction, in both the spiritual and worldly realms, can be just as bad as wrong actions. Sloth does include being a couch potato, but it is also often interpreted as wasting precious time, not doing enough to help the world, and avoiding a rigorous spiritual journey.

Buddhism:
In Buddhism, sloth and torpor are known as one of the five hindrances. These are the qualities that inhibit humans' ability to see the truth.

People who are unfamiliar with Buddhism might mistake meditation as a form of sloth, since it appears to be an idle activity. Instead, Buddhists believe meditation actually overcomes sloth and torpor. The concentration necessary for meditation is the opposite of sloth.

The Dhammapada uses the example of a lazy animal to warn against sloth. "When torpid and over-fed, a sleepy-head lolling about like a stout hog, fattened on fodder: a dullard enters the womb over & over again." Thus, a slothful life results in rebirth.

Christianity:
Sloth and idleness are forbidden in Christianity. "Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord," says Romans 12:11. "So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises," according to Hebrews 6:12.

The Gospel of Matthew's parable of a man who entrusts his servants with money is often interpreted as a warning against sloth. A master gives each of his three servants a certain amount of money. Two return more than they were given, while one buries the money and returns only the original amount. Jesus denounces the servant for not doing anything to increase his wealth: "You wicked, lazy slave,...at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest (Matthew 25:26-27 )."
Catholicism condemns spiritual sloth as not wanting to work or exert oneself for spiritual goods. It is considered a sin because slothful people refuse to expend the energy necessary for leading a virtuous life.

Orthodox Christians similarly view sloth as a spiritual idleness. This story from the Desert Fathers explains this view: "A beginning monk, who went to a certain elder to confess, posed, among others, this question: 'Why, Father, do I fall so often into sloth?' 'You lack the faith which makes you see God everywhere; for this reason you can be careless and lazy about your salvation,' the discerning elder wisely explained."

Hinduism:
Hindu philosophy urges Hindus to put effort into their lives. Human endeavor is seen as the opposite of sloth. Sloth is considered one of the five troubles or obstacles. The Yogatattva Upanishad, one of the minor Upanishads, lists sloth among other obstacles, including grief, anger, greed, boastfulness, and bad company. Unless these obstacles are overcome, the text warns, a person may lead a life of despair.

The Maitri Upanishad, a later text than the classical Upanishads, explains that one cannot reach the ultimate realization by leading a life of sloth. "When a man, having freed his mind from sloth, distraction, and vacillation, becomes as it were delivered from his mind, that is the highest point."

Other Hindu texts back this theme up. The Tirukkural warns against sloth and laziness: "Procrastination, forgetfulness, laziness and sleep--these four form the coveted ship which bears men to their destined ruin; Seldom do men possessed by sloth achieve anything special, even when supported by the earth's wealthy proprietors; The lazy ones, inept in noble exertion, invite sharp scoldings and must endure the shame of scornful words."

Islam:
Several Hadith demonstrate the Muslim view of sloth. Abu Hurairah reported, "Allah likes sneezing and dislikes yawning. When any one of you sneezes and says 'praise be to Allah', it becomes obligatory upon every Muslim who hears him to respond with 'may Allah have mercy on you'. Yawning is from the devil. When one of you feels like yawning, he should restrain it as much as possible, for the devil laughs when one of you yawns." Yawning is seen as a sign of sloth.
Judaism:
Jewish tradition teaches that time should be highly valued, and Judaism sees sloth, and its expression in laziness or procrastination, as impinging on the value of time. Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, teaches Jews to treat time itself as holy, something that should not be wasted. Time is holy because there is so much to do in a very limited timeframe. Honoring time, avoiding procrastination, and performing tasks at the proper time are all seen in Judaism as ways of sanctifying life. (http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/2002/08/The-Spiritual-Side-Of-Sloth.aspx?p=3)

Diligence overcomes difficulties, sloth makes them. (Benjamin Franklin)

Heaven never helps the man who will not act. (Sophocles)

Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing. (Theodore Roosevelt)

A wrong-doer is often a man that has left something undone, not always he that has done something wrong. (Marcus Aurelius)

Very few people are capable of sustained effort, and that’s the reason why we have comparatively few outstanding successes. (Roger McDonald)

We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort. (Jesse Owens)

Excess is not the only thing which breaks men in their health, and in the comfortable enjoyment of themselves; but many are brought into a very ill and languishing habit of body by mere sloth; and sloth is in itself both a great sin, and the cause of many more. (Bishop Robert South)

The men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed. (Lloyd Jones)

Those who seek the easy way do not seek the True Way. (Dogen)

Hope is effort, not wish; effort to make it so; not wish that it may be so. (George Gurdjieff)
We forget that every good that is worth possessing must be paid for in strokes of daily effort. We postpone and postpone, until those smiling possibilities are dead. (William James)

The worst thing one can do is not to try, to be aware of what one wants and not give in to it, to spend years in silent hurt wondering if something could have materialized – and never knowing. (David Viscott)

Regret for the things we did can be tempered by time; it is regret for the things we did not do that is inconsolable. (Sydney Harris)

The real tragedy is the tragedy of the man who never in his life braces himself for his one supreme effort, who never stretches to his full capacity, never stands up to his full stature. (Arnold Bennet)

Hell begins on the day when God grants us a clear vision of all that we might have achieved, of all the gifts which we have wasted, of all that we might have done which we did not do. (Carlo Menotti)

We must all suffer from one of two pains: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons. (Jim Rohn)

For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: “It might have been!” (John Greenleaf Whittier)
Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than one requires. We usually think of a glutton as someone who indulges excessively in eating or drinking. Gluttony does mean eating or drinking too much, but it connotes far more than that. Overeating is but a symptom of a larger problem of over indulgence, lack of self-control, boredom, or anxiety.
Sant Kirpal Singh

We attach too much importance to the well-being of the body--hence the misery. This place has no permanent happiness for us. We eat, we drink--in the end the food eats us. Excessive enjoyment through the senses will result in the senses enjoying us! We will become incapable of enjoying--satiated. It is easily apparent that those who overeat get bad livers, stomachs, etc. The ancient Rishis related that the food god went to Lord Vishnu with the complaint that people were eating him mercilessly. Lord Vishnu solved his problem by advising, "Those who eat you unnecessarily--you eat them!" So, enjoyment in excess loses its power of enjoyment. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/worldplay.htm)

The stomach should also remain partly empty. Let half of the stomach be full with food, one fourth with water and let one fourth remain vacant, so that digestion will not be difficult. The more your stomach is clear, the more concentration you will have.

No overfeeding should be indulged in. Eat when you really feel hungry, not every time putting in something. Two meals a day are enough, though you may have a little breakfast in the morning.

Men do not die only of hunger, but also from overfeeding. This creates diseases. So eat as much as you require when you are really hungry. Don't for formality say, "Now we should have something to eat." This is the usual course with most of us, children and adult.

If you have a simple diet and eat only that much which can be digested, you will be healthy. If you eat more than can be digested the result is you cannot sit, you cannot think clearly, you cannot devote time, you feel lazy.

Do not overfeed. Overfeeding will make you lazy and slothful. You will always be procrastinating. You will say, "No I will do it later, let me rest." This is because the stomach is not well.

Eat only as much as you need and leave the table still a little hungry. These are the things to be followed which will make you active in all your affairs, whether in meditation, physical work, or anything else. (ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/naturaldiet.htm)
A Multi-Faith Guide to Gluttony
(Beliefnet)

Nearly all religions have strong injunctions against gluttony and overeating, and don't often make much distinction between the two. A 1998 Purdue University study found that religious people are more likely to be overweight than other Americans. The Purdue researcher called overeating the overlooked sin in religion, compared to other fleshly sins like lust or adultery.

Buddhism:
Buddhism encourages avoidance of sensory excess. The third Buddhist precept is the avoidance of excess of sex, but many Buddhists interpret this precept as avoiding gluttony in all areas. Buddhists try to transcend the senses but this is not necessarily achieved through suffering.

Though overeating is not proper, the Buddha warned that complete lack of eating is not proper either, and advised appropriate attention to the body's needs. The Buddha said: "You should lose your involvement with yourself and then eat and drink naturally, according to the needs of your body. Attachment to your appetites--whether you deprive or indulge them--can lead to slavery, but satisfying the needs of daily life is not wrong. Indeed, to keep a body in good health is a duty, for otherwise the mind will not stay strong and clear."

Christianity: General
The book of Proverbs states, "Be not among winebibbers, or among gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags."

Christianity: Catholic
Catholic doctrine urges temperance as a way of respecting one's body and to "moderate attachment to this world's goods." According to the Catechism, "The virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine." Gluttony is seen as the opposite of self-restraint and living uprightly.

Catholicism teaches that gluttony is a sin when excessive eating or drinking impairs one's health or mental capacities.
Christianity: Eastern Orthodox
Orthodox Christianity emphasizes self-control in humans, and restraint in eating is seen as one of the foremost indications of self-control. Gluttony is considered a capital, or mortal, sin. The consensus of the early church is "stop eating while you are still hungry and don't allow your stomach to be filled to satisfaction," according to the 4th-century saint John Cassian. Overeating is associated with the dulling of intelligence and a decreased ability to guard against temptations. Orthodox Christians believe that, as humans fell initially through eating (when Adam and Eve took the apple in the Garden of Eden), people must have a proper relationship with food to restore themselves to union with God. Orthodox Christians also abstain from certain foods during fast periods to gain strength in self-control.

Hinduism:
Hinduism teaches the importance of avoiding excess in several areas of life, including food consumption. The Hindu text the Tirukkural warns against overeating: "The thoughtless glutton who gorges himself beyond his digestive fire's limits will be consumed by limitless ills."

Islam:
While members of other religions often fast for a day at a time to strengthen their resistance to gluttony, Muslims fast for an entire month. The fast--no eating or drinking--during the holy month of Ramadan lasts from sunrise to sunset. Other prohibitions during the month include smoking and sex. The fast and other laws in Islam help Muslims eschew gluttony. As the Qu'ran says, "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may learn self-restraint." (beliefnet.com/News/2002/03/Thou-Shalt-Not-Overeat.aspx?p=4)
Gluttony is the physical sign of the most raging and significant appetite. When someone falls into temptation of gluttony, he or she does not only want to eat without limits, but to devour the whole universe, assimilating and possessing immeasurably, everything exterior; reducing the surroundings to oneself. (http://www.geektoyscollectibles.com/gluttony.php)

He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. (Henry David Thoreau)
The Forgotten Sin
Eric Sammons

Each culture emphasizes, both in its practice and denunciation, different sins. For example, in our own American culture, pride has been elevated to a good, while lust and greed are celebrated yet paradoxically also vigorously condemned. Envy and wrath are seen as evils, although little understood, and sloth appears to have little chance of gaining a serious foothold in our over-worked society.

That leaves gluttony. There is no question that this sin is popularly indulged, as we are the most obese nation in the history of the world, yet how often have you heard any condemnation of gluttony from the pulpit or popular culture?

Because we are so obese, we are obsessed with weight loss, but this is not due to a rejection of gluttony but instead is based in pride and envy (and vanity): we don’t want to appear unattractive, so we indulge in every weight loss program that can be created in order to look good. Yet we want a diet that does not fundamentally change our inordinate desire for food; in fact, a diet often reflects a person’s obsession with food.

Like any sin, gluttony’s most serious danger is that it places something in the created order - in this case, food and drink - above the Creator. There is nothing wrong with enjoying food, but when the enjoyment of food becomes the priority (over the subsistence that food gives us) and when we persistently overindulge in food beyond our needs, then we have begun to fall into the sin of gluttony.

Gluttony has never been considered a minor sin but instead it has been seen as a “deadly” sin: it can kill us spiritually. Just like sex, a disordered desire for food can become an obsession that consumes our lives.

(Wise temperance of the stomach is a door to all the virtues. Restrain the stomach, and you will enter Paradise. But if you please and pamper your stomach, you will hurl yourself over the precipice of bodily impurity, into the fire of wrath and fury, you will coarsen and darken your mind, and in this way you will ruin your powers of attention and self-control, your sobriety and vigilance. (Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov)
Gluttons: Their kitchen is their shrine, the cook their priest, the table their altar, and their belly their God.  
(Charles Buck)

Physical appetites are an analogy of our ability to control ourselves. If we are unable to control our eating habits, we are probably also unable to control other habits, such as those of the mind (lust, covetousness, anger) and unable to keep our mouths from gossip or strife. We are not to let our appetites control us, but we are to have control over our appetites. The ability to say “no” to anything in excess—self-control—is one of the fruits of the Spirit.  (gotquestions.org/gluttony-sin.html)

The chief error about gluttony is to think it only pertains to food. It is about an excess of anything. Because gluttony is generally a sin of the flesh, the flesh limits it. If we consume too much food or drink, our body (usually) lets us know, either by gaining weight or illness. The cure for gluttony lies in deliberately reducing our use of pleasurable things, not in eliminating them. When eating, quit before feeling stuffed. When snacking, don't just keep stuffing, but quit after a while.  (http://whitestonejournal.com/index.php/gluttony)
Gluttony is not a secret vice. (Orson Welles)

Gluttony is a lust of the mind. (Thomas Hobbes)

A full belly makes a dull brain. (Benjamin Franklin)

Gluttony kills more that the sword. (George Herbert)

Take twice as long to eat half as much.

Glutton: one who digs his grave with his teeth. (French Proverb)

Gluttony is an emotional escape, a sign that something is eating us. (Peter De Vries)

We live off half of what we eat, and the doctors live off the other half.

Most illnesses which befall men arise either from bad food, or from immoderate indulgence in food, even of the wholesome kind. (Moses Maimonides)

Worthless people live only to eat and drink; people of worth eat and drink only to live. (Socrates)

Gluttony and lust are the only sins that abuse something that is essential to our survival. (Henry Fairlie)

Gluttony is the source of all our infirmities, and the fountain of all our diseases. As a lamp is choked by a superabundance of oil, a fire extinguished by excess of fuel, so is the natural health of the body destroyed by intemperate diet. (Robert Burton)

Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. (Proverbs 23:21)

It is a curious fact that no man likes to call himself a glutton, and yet each of us has in him a trace of gluttony, potential or actual. I cannot believe that there exists a single coherent human being who will not confess, at least to himself, that once or twice he has stuffed himself to the bursting point for no other reason than the beastlike satisfaction of his belly. (M. Fisher)
Geshe Ben’s Conscience

Once in Geshe Ben’s later years, many learned abbots and scholars were invited to pray and receive offerings at the home of a wealthy patron in Penyul in southern Tibet. Geshe Ben was seated in the middle of the long row of monastic sages, all ranked according to seniority.

In those days, it was the custom for tea, food and other offerings to be handed individually to each of the seated lamas. Attendants proceeded along the line, starting from the oldest at the head and continuing to the youngest at the end. Geshe Ben noticed that the yogurt being doled out was of excellent quality, and he feared it might be gone by the time it reached him.

Then he caught himself having such a grasping, unseemly thought. Exclaiming, “Glutton! Foodaholic!” Ben immediately reached out and turned his wooden bowl upside down on the table before him.

When the attendant monk carrying the clay yogurt pot reached Ben and asked him to right his overturned bowl, Ben refused. “My greedy mind has already enjoyed its share,” Ben explained.

In this way, practitioners like Geshe Ben vigilantly guard every thought, word, and deed, incorporating all activities into the spiritual path.
Greed/Avarice

Greed, or avarice, is an excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves, especially with respect to material wealth. Greed - like lust and gluttony - is a sin of excess. Greed is inappropriate expectation.

Nothing is enough to the man for whom enough is too little.
(Epicurus)
The function of greed is to bind us to material things, and so cloud our minds to all higher values. It ties us to the baser things of earth. As lust binds us to the animal plane, so greed binds us to the mineral plane, one step lower. Hence greed is even baser than lust. It makes for us a god of gold and silver and jewels. It identifies us with them by fixing our attention and affections upon them. The end is slavery to them. Wealth then becomes master, instead of servant. Like all the other passions, it slowly forges its chains about us. (Julian Johnson, The Path of the Masters, 295)

What is greed? A Sikh Perspective

Greed is the intense desire to possess material items like money, goods, gadgets, properties, cars, jewelry, etc to an extent that is far beyond ones real needs and requirements. A greedy person is the result of a foolish and feeble mind; is happy just thinking about his or her wealth; will continuously be occupied in this desire to possess material items.

Greed makes an individual selfish and self-centered. It takes a person away from peace; from his or her religious, moral and social duties. A person can become blind with greed if an effort to control the desire for unlimited worldly possessions is not extinguished.

An unstoppable desire to gain wealth, possessions, assets, or other material things; especially when there is no need for there items; the desire to own items purely because others own them; the desire to own material items that belong to others – are all examples of greed.

Sikhs do not believe that it is wrong to enjoy the good things in life, to be wealthy or to be admired by others. The Gurus taught that human beings should make the most of everything that God has given. However, if a person’s actions and thoughts are predominantly focused on possessing material things in life he or she can no longer focus on God then they are moving further and further from liberation. (http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Lobh)

Greed is a fat demon with a small mouth and whatever you feed it is never enough. (Janwillem van de Wetering)
Sant Kirpal Singh

If you are always reading about money and thinking that such and such a person has become a millionaire, or listen to talks about such things, you will develop greed within you… If you have the society of someone who is very wealthy and you are always in that society, then you will want that very thing for yourself. Greed will develop within you… If you think of a man who has more money than you do, greed will develop within you… If you will just listen quietly, you will find that most people are talking of women or gold. If you have got a good companion, all the better, otherwise remain all alone with your own self, with the Master or the God within you. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/mt/impediments.htm)

There are many vices lying hidden in the mind including those of falsehood and greed. These are the dormant latencies of the mind and require a strenuous effort for eradication… Greed is equally (as falsehood) a strong fetter. It should be overcome by renunciation. Greed breeds hatred and feeds fat the latent ego. It blinds the inner eye and thickens the dark veil. A spiritual aspirant should always feel grateful for the manifold blessings, which are granted to him by the grace of the Master. If we awake to the sacred Truth and comprehend the grandeur of the Holy Naam granted by the Master, we will be dumbfounded with its divine ecstasy. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/dsos.htm)

Dadu Sahib has said that a true Sadhu is he who does not stretch out his hand to gold and women. One must rise above all enjoyments and not be ruled by greed and lust, for while one remains under their influence no real progress can be made. The quicker we withdraw, the quicker will be our progress; even daily promotion can be achieved. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/re_mind.htm)

Man is enveloped by flames of passionate desires, anger, greed, attachment, and vanity. One can escape himself from delusion only by contacting the Word within. The most important task before us, therefore, is to withdraw our attention from outside and get attuned with the Divine Melody within. Then comes eternal peace in the form of the Word. Whosoever has accomplished this essential task is really successful in life. (http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/purpose.htm)
Take any one virtue; others will follow. If you come in contact with the Sound Principle, the Light Principle, within you, all virtues will come to you. Swami Ji (Shiv Dayal Singh) tells us: "Those who are thieves--those who do not devote time to the practices--always fall into the passions of lust, greed, anger and egotism." These things naturally come up. And the more you come in contact with that inner Sound and Light, the more all virtues will come up. Guru Nanak says, "If you begin to hear the Sound Principle continuously, you will become the abode of all virtues." One is interlinked with the other.

(ftp://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/living-up2it.htm)

Desires are the root cause of all our troubles. What the mind wishes is a kind of desire. When we feel, rightly or wrongly, that there is some hurdle in getting our desire fulfilled, we often get angry. The more there is delay in getting the thing desired, the more we long and pine for it. This is called greed. When once, by fair or foul means, we get hold of the thing desired, we hug it and do not want to part with it. This is termed attachment or infatuation. When the thing desired is in our possession, we begin to gloat over it and ascribe the success to our own endeavors. This connotes egotism, for one claims the thing in his own right and refuses to be thankful to God - the Giver of all gifts. I-ness and my-ness coupled with extreme selfishness are the essence of egoism and egotism, both being born from ego. This is styled as victory of the little self in us. In this way we are, all the time, engaged in getting and spending, unconsciously doing shameless deeds of rapine and snobbery. (ftp://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/reality.htm)

From the Sikh Scriptures
(Guru Granth Sahib)

In love with duality and maya, one's mind wanders unfocused. The love of maya has displaced all understanding; making mistakes, one lives in regret. But if one meets the true Guru, then he obtains the essence of reality; the Name of the Lord comes to dwell in his mind. The one who dies in the Shabd and subdues his mind in it obtains salvation. He erases his sins, and eliminates his anger; he keeps the Guru's Shabd clasped tightly to his heart. The one who attunes to the Truth, remains balanced and detached forever. Subduing his egotism, he unites with God.
I have seen the world being destroyed by greed and egotism. Only by serving the Guru, God is realized and the true gate of salvation is found.

Filled with greed, one constantly wanders around; he does not do any good deeds. O Nanak, the Lord abides within the heart of the one who follows the Guru.

Mortal's fickle mind is entangled in a dream. Mortal does not even understand that someday he shall have to depart; he has gone crazy with Maya. Mortal is engrossed in the delight of the flower's color (Maya); he strives only to indulge in corruption. Hearing about greed, he feels happy in his mind, and he runs after it. Wandering and roaming all around, I have endured great pain, but now, I have come to the door of the holy. Granting His Grace, the Supreme Lord Master has blended Nanak with Himself.

Meditate and listen to the Name of the Lord. In this way, the filth of lifetimes of karma shall be removed and egotistical pride shall vanish from your mind. Sexual desire and anger shall not seduce you and greed will depart.

The waves of greed rise within him and he does not remember God. He does not join the company of the holy, and suffers in terrible pain through countless incarnations.

O mind, why have you gone insane? Your life is made worthless with greed. The body, which you believe to be your own, and your beautiful home and spouse, none of these is yours to keep. Realize this and understand it. You have wasted the precious jewel of this human life; you do not know the Way to meet God. You have not loved God, even for a second. Your life has passed away in vain. Says Nanak, one is happy who sings the glorious praises of God. The rest of the world is enticed by maya; they fail to achieve the fearless state.

The greedy people serve others instead of the Lord, even though they loudly announce their reading of scriptures. They are burnt to death by their own corruption; they are not at home, on either this shore or the one beyond. Attached to materialistic things, they have forgotten the Father, the Cherisher of the World. Without the Guru, all are unconscious; they are held in bondage by death.

His heart is filled of greed, and he does not understand that the Messenger of Death is hovering over his head. Whatever one does in this world will come to face him in the afterlife; what can he do at the very last moment?
A Multi-Faith Guide to Greed

(Beliefnet)

Greed may be big in the news now, but the major religions have been dealing with the problems caused by greed for centuries. Most religions eschew greed, though for different reasons.

Buddhism:
Buddhists believe they must keep themselves from clinging to material things. Attachment to material possessions keeps a person in state of continual rebirths. One must overcome desire for and attachment to material things in order to stop the cycle of rebirths.

Greed is seen as the opposite of this renunciation of material things. Buddhist texts warn specifically against greed. As the Buddha says in the Sutta Nipata, "Greed, I say, is a great flood; it is a whirlpool sucking one down, a constant yearning, seeking a hold, continually in movement; difficult to cross is the morass of sensual desire. A sage does not deviate from truth, a brahmana stands on firm ground; renouncing all, he is truly called 'calmed.'" Those that have reached a calm nature and have renounced material things are free from this world of difficulty and constant yearning.

Buddha spoke elsewhere about greed: "Greed is an imperfection that defiles the mind."

Buddhists also believe in the "ten fetters of existence," which bind people to the cycle of rebirths. Greed is an important part of the list of fetters, both greed for or attachment to a higher material existence and greed for immaterial existence are included among the ten fetters.

Christianity:
Both Western and Orthodox Christians believe greed was instilled in human beings after the Fall, and the Ten Commandments inherited from Judaism include not one but two prohibitions against covetousness, often interpreted by Christians as greed.

Jesus is famous for living in poverty and warning against having or wanting too much money. The Gospel states, "Then he [Jesus] said, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Luke 12:15)."
Both Catholicism and the Church of Latter-day Saints have strong positions against greed. Catholicism defines greed, or avarice, as excessive love for riches. Greed can become so overwhelming that the pursuit of money becomes a primary purpose of life. Basic desires, such as wanting food when hungry or clothing when cold are not in themselves sinful; it is when these desires become the overwhelming force of a person's life, or when they cause a person to want what is not rightfully theirs, that they are considered sins. The Catholic Catechism states, "The tenth commandment forbids avarice arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power," and "Detachment from riches is necessary for entering the Kingdom of heaven - 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'"

Hinduism:
Hindu teachings about greed are similar to those of Buddhism. As in Buddhism, Hindus regard greed as dangerous and believe that it results in a cycle of rebirth. The law of karma, furthermore, says that greed is one of the primary causes of suffering in the world. Avoiding greed, therefore, is one of Hinduism's restraints that Hindus observe in following Hindu dharma.

"A person is what his deep desire is. It is the deepest desire in this life that shapes the life to come," the Chandogya Upanishad says, warning that greed influences future rebirths. The Bhagavad Gita also warns against greed: "For the man who forsakes all desires and abandons all pride of possession and of self reaches the goal of peace supreme."

Avoiding greed helps a person lead a virtuous life in this lifetime. The Holy Kural, a first-century Hindu text, teaches that the virtuous shun greed, among other qualities. "Virtue is living in such a way that one does not fall into these four: Envy, anger, greed and unsavory speech." The Kural also says, "Do not seek the fortune that greed gathers, for its fruit is bitter in the day of enjoyment. To protect his own prosperity from decline, one must not crave the property held by others."

Islam:
Greed is seen as a distraction from God. The Qur'an states, "The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things)." At the same time, Islam, like Catholicism and Judaism, understands that some material things are necessary—it is only when they mislead that they become harmful.
Judaism:
There is no direct admonition in Judaism about being greedy, though the Torah includes many prohibitions against obtaining money wrongfully.

Money, as long as it helps one secure a living and aid others less fortunate, is a good thing. But desire for money becomes problematic when one is greedy for property that is not one's own. As the Ethics of the Fathers, says, "Let your fellow's property be as dear to you as your own." Instead of being greedy, Judaism teaches it is better to be happy with what one has, as Ben Zoma said, "Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his lot."


The soul by reason of desire had become the principal accomplice in her own captivity…Desires are only the lack of something: and those who have the greatest desires are in a worse condition than those who have none or very slight ones. (Plato)

Desire tells us, each time, “Now get thou this, and then you shall be happy.” The fact is, desire is a bottomless pit which can never fill up, or like the all-consuming fire which burns the fiercer, the more we feed it. (Lakshmana Sarma)
America’s Disease is Greed

(Andrew Greeley)

The most serious spiritual problem in the country today is reckless and untrammeled greed. Greed caused the disgraceful corporate scandals that fill our newspapers. Greed is responsible for crooked cops and crooked politicians. Greed causes the constant efforts to destroy unions that protect basic worker rights.

Greed has produced rash tax cuts that have given money to the rich and in effect taken it away from the poor. Greed has led to the immigration policy in which hundreds of poor men and women die every year as they struggle across the desert for the jobs. Greed accounts for the efforts to take profitability out of the pensions and health insurance of working men and women. Greed is responsible for the fact that so many Americans have no health insurance and the fact that the recent reform of Medicare was a fraud. Greed causes newspapers to overestimate their circulation.

Greed is responsible for the obscene salaries of CEOs. In the ‘90s the ratio of CEO compensation to average workers’ compensation was 250 to 1, meaning that the boss earned on his first day of work during a year as much as the worker did in a whole year. In European countries the ratio is closer to 100 to 1. Recent estimates put the current ratio at 500 to 1 – the boss makes as much before lunch as the worker does all year. Greed is the cause of the high wages paid to the bosses even if the company is failing.

Greed is responsible for the endless stress and ruthless competition of the workplace and the strains and tensions of professional class marriages. Greed (in this instance another name for relentless ambition) explains much of the cheating on college campuses. Greed is responsible for outsourcing, which is incapable of comprehending that the employees who lose their jobs are also the consumers who sustain the economy. Greed generates the reckless ventures that in part caused the bubble of the late ‘90s. Greed causes expensive wars that shatter the budget. Greed is the reason that only the wealthy are benefiting so far from the economic upturn that is allegedly happening. Greed drives loan sharks. Greed is responsible for the success of big box stores that tax the poor with low wages to provide bargains for affluent suburban shoppers. Greed is the reason poor white Appalachians, poor African Americans and poor Native Americans must fight the wars that the wealthy start. Jessica Lynch joined the Army so she could go to college. Her Native American roommate, killed in action, joined so, single mother that she was, she could support her children.
Greed is the reason why the country is being run by those whom the president has described, however inelegantly, as the "haves and the have mores."

No one said during the bizarre deification of President Reagan that he taught us that greed is good and that we should feel good about our greedy country. Greed is the reason that the country is being run by the insurance, pharmaceutical, weapons and petroleum industries. Greed causes worldwide sex slavery of women and children.

Greed drives the murders of the narcotics world. Greed is responsible for the exploitations of teen sports stars by colleges and for the mess in the pro sports world. It is also the cause of the use of performance drugs by young athletes. Greed is responsible for the bad advice lawyers gave the Church years ago to beat victims of sexual abuse into the ground. It is behind the scam artists who steal from the elderly.

Greed may have been a more serious problem for Americans, say, in the era of the robber barons. But the Morgans and the Carnegies were a small bunch of men. Now their greed has seeped down to a much larger segment of the population.

The Catholic Church speaks of four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance. Two are cheating workers out of wages and exploiting widows and children. Both happen every day in our greedy country.

Ambition is not evil within limits. The struggle for success is not bad within limits. Hard work and fair rewards are good within limits. It is not good to take from the poor and give to the rich, and that's exactly what this country is doing today. (http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views04/0820-09.htm)

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Jesus Christ)

The love of money is the root of all evil. (Saint Paul)

We are told that the love of money is the root of all evil; but money itself is one of the most useful contrivances ever invented: it is not its fault that some people are foolish or miserly enough to be fonder of it than of their own souls. (George Bernard Shaw)
Three Forms of Greed

1. The Greed of Power:

In this form, earthly goods are chiefly a means to an end. The money, real estate, cars are simply things used to achieve, wield and display personal power. These things can be used to intimidate or bribe others, reinforce one's own illusions about what is important or to build up a feeling of success.

The real problem here is more the desire for power than the actual greed. A common thread for sin in general is that it is often borne out of fear. A fear of helplessness or loss of control can turn into a lust for power as a way of preventing an undesirable situation.

2. The Greed of Fear:

Fear is a poor motivator for virtue, but an excellent one for greed. Sometimes, greed is simply a desire to have so much that we can't possibly run out. The stock market could crash, we could lose our jobs or health, we could be sued. If we acquire enough stock, real estate, or T-bills, we think we will be safe from want. This is an illusion. There is no perfect preventative for want, but even if there was it would stand in opposition to the trust in God to which we are called. Trust in God frees us from a need to build a massive buffer against poverty.

3. The Greed of Acquisition and Enslavement:

This is slavery, plain and simple. We can reduce ourselves to a small and cold desire to accumulate more electronic gear, trading cards, antiques or other collectibles. It is far beneath the dignity of human beings to enslave themselves to objects of their own making. It is well said that our possessions in some ways may come to own us.

The obvious cure is to divest oneself of as much as possible, but another suggestion might be to consider the grave. When we die, we take nothing with us. If we are bound by "disordered attachments" to worldly goods, the separation forced upon us by death will be even more painful. If we are destined for eternal glory, the temporary enjoyment of trinkets in this life is simply absurd. Meditation on this begins to loosen the grip of objects on the heart.

(http://whitestonejournal.com/index.php/greed)
Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction. (Erich Fromm)

The ignorant mind, with its infinite afflictions, passions, and evils, is rooted in the three poisons. Greed, anger, and delusion. (Bodhidharma)

He who is greedy is always in want. (Horace)

To greed, all nature is insufficient. (Seneca)

We are all born brave, trusting and greedy, and most of us remain greedy. (Mignon McLaughlin)

The greed of gain has no time or limit to its capaciousness. Its one object is to produce and consume. It has pity neither for beautiful nature nor for living human beings. It is ruthlessly ready without a moment's hesitation to crush beauty and life out of them, molding them into money. (Rabindranath Tagore)

Greed's worst point is its ingratitude. (Seneca)
The futility of greed – you can never get enough of what you don’t really want.

There is nothing so characteristic of narrowness and littleness of soul as the love of riches. (Cicero)

The Worship of Mammon
(Evelyn De Morgan)

For money, people sell their soul. (Sophocles)

To have enough is good luck, to have more than enough is harmful. This is true of all things, but especially money. (Chuang Tse)

Money can help you to get medicines, but not health. Money can help you to get soft pillows, but not sound sleep. Money can help you to get material comforts, but not eternal bliss. Money can help you get ornaments, but not beauty. (Sivananda)

Money is the cause of good things to a good man, and evil things to a bad man. (Plato)
King Midas

The story of King Midas is a myth about the tragedy of greed and narrates what happens when true happiness is not recognized. The story invites us to think about and realize the consequences of acting on our unwholesome desires.

King Midas was a very kind man who ruled his kingdom fairly, but he was not one to think very deeply about what he said. One day, while walking in his garden, he saw an elderly satyr asleep in the flowers. Taking pity on the old fellow, King Midas let him go without punishment. When the god Dionysus heard about it, he rewarded King Midas by granting him one wish. The king thought for only a second and then said I wish for everything I touch to turn to gold." And so it was.

The beautiful flowers in his garden turned toward the sun for light, but when Midas approached and touched them, they stood rigid and gold. The king grew hungry and thin, for each time he tried to eat, he found that his meal had turned to gold. His lovely daughter, at his loving touch, turned hard and fast to gold. His water, his bed, his clothes, his friends, and eventually the whole palace was gold.

King Midas saw that soon his whole kingdom would turn to gold unless he did something right away. He asked Dionysus to turn everything back to the way it had been and take back his golden touch. Because the king was ashamed and very sad, Dionysus took pity on him and granted his request. Instantly, King Midas was poorer that he had been, but richer, he felt, in the things that really count.
May your soul be happy;
journey joyfully.
(Rumi)

Kirpalct@yahoo.com

For more booklets go to: kirpalsingh.org