

THE CONCEPT OF LESHYA (लेश्या)

The concept of “*Leshyā*” plays an important part in the Theory of *Karma*. This concept was briefly explained in the verses no. 37 and 38 of *Prashamarati* published in the last issue of this Journal. The following example increases the understanding of the same concept.

The Example of the six travellers and the *Jambu* tree:

There were six travellers going to a city and they lost their way in a forest. They became very hungry and fortunately for them, they saw a large *Jambu* tree whose branches were fully covered with bunches of its fruit. All the travellers were filled with the thoughts of eating the *Jambu* fruits.

The first man said: “Let us uproot this tree.” (This indicates that *Krishṇa* (black) *leshyā* – i.e. the worst of the three unholy varieties – as having taken hold of the man’s personality). The second said: “Let us cut only the large branches down.” (Here the *Nīla* (dark blue) *leshyā* is indicated). The third said: “Let us cut the small branches down.” (Here the *Kāpota* (grey) *leshyā* is indicated). The fourth said: “Let us bring down only the bunches of the fruit.” (Here the *Tejas* (yellow) – *leshyā* – i.e. the third best of the three holy varieties is indicated). The fifth said: “Let us bring down only the ripe *Jambu* fruits from the bunches” (Here the *Padma* (red) *leshyā* is indicated). The sixth and the last man said: “Our aim is to satisfy our hunger by eating the *Jambu* fruit; so why don’t we pick out and eat the ripe fruits that have fallen upon the earth.” (This indicates that *Shukla* (white) *leshyā* – i.e. the best of the holy varieties – as having taken hold of the man’s personality).

Acknowledgement and Source : This story is given in various commentaries on “*Shri Nawatattwa Prakaraṇa*” (श्रीनवतत्त्व प्रकरण). *Pujya Muni Shri-Pundarikavijayaji* was good enough to give me a Gujarati version; and *Pujya Muni Shri Tattvānandavijayaji* has gone through its translation. To both of them we are thankful.
