

conduct, such as chanting the Lord's holy names and meditating on Him, does not lead to salvation, unless the striver renounces them, because they are the root causes of sins (Gītā 3/37).

It is because of desire, anger and greed that righteousness and ethical propriety of the society are lost; which is very harmful for the world. The men of demoniac nature are steeped in desires, anger and greed. They perform virtuous actions such as religious sacrifice and offer charity for mere ostentation, not for salvation. But the strivers of divine nature, instead of being overpowered by desire, anger and greed, perform virtuous actions for their salvation, which naturally involves the welfare of the world. The men of demoniac nature are envious of such strivers and they think them to be senseless (foolish); but these strivers take pity on those men of demoniac disposition and pray to God to provide them with good sense (moral sense).



Link:—Those, who practise what is good for them, attain the Supreme Goal. But, what happens to those, who act according to their own sweet will, and cast aside the ordinance of scriptures. The Lord, answers in the next verse.

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥

yaḥ śāstravidhimutsrjya vartate kāmakārataḥ
na sa siddhimavāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim*

He, who having cast aside the ordinances of scriptures, acts in an arbitrary way, according to his sweet will, attains, neither perfection, (purity of inner sense) nor happiness, nor achieve the Supreme Goal. 23

Comment:—

'Yaḥ śāstravidhimutsrjya vartate'—Those people, perform

* The theme of the twenty-eighth verse of the seventeenth chapter is almost the same.

actions, such as sacrifice, offer charity and do good to others in an arbitrary way, according to their sweet will* disobeying the ordinances of scriptures. The reason, is that they attach importance only to the seemingly good activities. They do not bother to get rid of their evil feelings.

Though they have evil feelings, yet they are proud of their outward good actions. It is because, of their pride, that their virtues are transformed into evil, their glory into blame, and their renunciation into attachment, and pleasure, which lead them to their downfall and ruin. It is because of their internal evil feelings, that they act in an arbitrary way, according to their own sweet will.

A patient, intends to discard unwholesome diet, and plans to take wholesome food. But out of attachment, takes unwholesome diet, which worsens his disease, similarly, people from their own view-point, make an attempt to perform good actions. But evils—desire, anger and greed take them under their sway and they act in an arbitrary way, disregarding the ordinance of scriptures and are thus, damned.

'Na sa siddhimavāpnōti'—Those, possessing demoniac nature, perform supposedly good actions, such as religious sacrifice etc., casting aside the ordinances of scriptures. Thus they may attain benefits, like wealth, and honour etc., but they do not attain perfection, in the form of purity of heart.

'Na sukham'—They do not attain Sāttvika happiness because

* (A) Here in the verse the expression 'Kāmakārataḥ' denotes one's own unrestrained self-will while in the expression 'Kāmakāreṇa' used in the twelfth verse of the fifth chapter there is desire for pleasures. The former looks at the actions while the latter looks at the fruit of the action. But 'Kāma' (Desire) is the root in both of them.

(B) Here a point needs attention that in this chapter from the seventh verse to the twenty-third verse the term 'Kāma' (Desire) has been used nine times in the context of the demoniac nature (16/8, 16/10, 11, 12, 12, 16, 18, 21, 23) (in 12 verse two times each). It means that desire is the root of the demoniac nature.

in their hearts the burning feeling of desire and anger, etc., persists. They may derive pleasure, born of contact with objects, which are only sources of sorrow (Gītā 5/22).

'Na parām gatiṁ'—They do not attain the Supreme Goal, because firstly they do not believe in it. Moreover, their actions, performed out of desire, anger and greed, are not conducive to attainment, of the Supreme Goal.

Their acts are good. So they can attain perfection, happiness and the Supreme Goal. But they do not attain these, because they possess evil propensities, such as desire (lust), anger, greed and pride, which are stumbling blocks, in their attainment. It is because of these evil propensities, that their good actions, generally convert into evil and vice. Therefore, they do not get all these things. Had their activities been evil, by nature, then there would have not been any question of their attaining, perfection, happiness and the Supreme Goal.

Appendix—People of demoniac nature, because of their pride, regard themselves as perfect and happy—'siddho'haṁ balavānsukhī' (Gītā 16/14) but actually they are never perfect and happy—'na sa siddhimavāpnoti na sukhaṁ'. Their hearts burn with the fire of pride and malice.



Link:—Those, who cast aside the ordinances of scriptures, attain neither perfection nor happiness, nor the Supreme Goal. So what should a man do? The Lord, answers the question, in the next verse.

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

tasmācchāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau
jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ karma kartumihārhasi

Therefore, let the scripture be the authority in determining,