

Thus a man's faith, is known by the food he takes.

'Duḥkhaśokāmayapradāh'—Such foods, produce pain, grief and disease. When a person eats such food, he experiences pain and a burning sensation, in the throat, tongue and palate etc. He is not pleased, but is rather grieved after eating such foods and these cause sickness, in the body.



यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

yātayāmaṁ gatarasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat
ucchiṣṭamapi cāmedhyaṁ bhojanaṁ tāmasapriyaṁ

That which is, half-cooked or half-ripe, insipid, putrid, stale, polluted and impure, is the food, dear to the tāmasa. 10

Comment:—

'Yātayāmaṁ'—It means half-cooked, half-ripe, overcooked and overripe food and off-season fruit and vegetables etc., kept usable through refrigeration etc.

'Gatarasaṁ'—The fruits etc., which lose their juice due to exposure etc., of which the essence has been taken out through machinery are 'Gatarasaṁ'.

'Pūti'—Putrid foods, are those of which the smell is offensive, these are onion and garlic etc. Moreover wine etc.,* which are

* In the scriptures a drunkard has been called a great sinner—He who steals gold, he who drinks wine, he who has sexual intercourse with his preceptor's wife and he who murders a Brāhmaṇa—these four are great sinners and the fifth great sinner is he who keeps their company. It means that drinking is one of the worst evils, worse than even the non-vegetarian diet.

The holy water of the Ganges purifies everything. But the goblet is not purified even with it. So how much impure a drunkard is—one can't imagine.

Its preparation involves a lot of violence. It kills the germs of righteousness i.e., the feelings and impressions of righteousness are destroyed by drinking wine and a man has a downfall.

rendered foul, through fermentation, are also putrid.

'Paryuṣitam'—Cooked food, such as vegetables and 'Capātīs', prepared by mixing water and salt, in them which has been kept overnight, is stale. But sweets, prepared from milk, butter, ghee and sugar do not get stale, as they do not get spoiled, when allowed to stay overnight.

'Ucchiṣtam'—Food left over on a plate after a meal or food which is either seen, or smelt or partly eaten, by a cow, a cat, a dog or a crow is called polluted (Ucchiṣtam).

'Amedhyam'—Meat and eggs etc., are impure food, so impure that a man has to take a bath, even if he touches them. The Lord, does not want, even to name articles, of impure food.

'Api ca'—This expression, conveys that besides the above-mentioned foods, all other articles of food forbidden, by the scriptures—such as turnip and carrots etc., are prohibited according to one's stage of life or social order etc., are also included in the tāmāsika food.

'Bhojanam tāmāsapriyam'— Such food is dear to a tāmāsika person. Thus a man's faith is known, by the food, which is dear to him.

Even if sāttvika food, is eaten having attachment for it, becomes rājasika. If it is eaten in excess, it becomes tāmāsika. Similarly, dry or stale food offered to a beggar, is rājasika or tāmāsika. But if the same food is offered to God, with devotion and it is eaten, less than the appetite* by chanting the name of the Lord, it becomes sāttvika.

An Important Fact Pertaining to the Topic

In this context, it seems as if there is a description of three types of food. But actually, it is a description of a person's inclination, which can be judged by the nature of food, which

*The quantity of the food should be moderate, neither more nor less.

is dear to him. The following points, clarify it.

(1) In the seventh verse of this chapter, the Lord uses the term 'Sarvasya', to indicate that all human beings, like three kinds of food, according to their inclination. That inclination, decides a man's conviction. The term 'priyaḥ' (dear), has also been used in the eighth and tenth verses, and 'Iṣṭa' (dear) in the ninth verse, which indicate a man's inclination, or taste. Had there been a context of food, the Lord, instead of using the term 'priyaḥ' (dear) or 'Iṣṭa', would have said, that these are Sāttvika foods, or the tāmasika ones etc.

(2) The second argument, is that while mentioning the sāttvika food, the Lord first explained the result of taking sāttvika food, and then sāttvika food. It is so, because a sāttvika person, thinks of the consequences of eating a particular food or performing an action, before he eats food, or performs an act.

A rājasika person, first eats food and then thinks, of its adverse effect. So in rājasika food, first there is a description of food and then its result, in the form, the pain, grief and sickness.

As far as the effect of the tāmasika food, is concerned, the Lord has not even mentioned it. It is so, because a tāmasika person, out of delusion does not think of the adverse effect, of the food eaten. He does not think—whether it is earned by fair means or foul, whether it is pure or impure, whether it is sanctioned by scriptures or not. He eats the food, like an animal. It means that he, who eats sāttvika food, possesses a divine nature, while he, who eats either rājasika or tāmasika food, possesses, a demoniac nature.

(3) Had the Lord described the food, He would have described the food in more details, such as that livelihood, should be earned by honest means; the food should be cooked by wearing clean clothes in a well cleaned and pure kitchen; it should first be offered to God, and then eaten by thinking of Him, and chanting His name. This sort of food, is sāttvika.

Similarly, He would have described the rājasa food. Livelihood should be earned by fair means or foul, having predominance of pride and selfishness. The food should be eaten for taste and fashion, and it should be eaten by having attachment, to it. This food is rājasika.

In the same way, food is earned by foul means, such as falsehood, fraud, theft and robbery etc., without any sense of purity and cleanliness, in an impure atmosphere, the food items, may be meat and egg etc., no attention is paid to how the food is cooked. One who takes food, does not wash his hands and feet and takes it with his shoes on. No cleanliness is maintained and it is eaten, in an impure atmosphere. Such food is tāmasika.

But here the Lord, has described the foods, which are dear to the sāttvika (good), the rājasika (passionate) and the tāmasika (ignorant), so that their inclinations, or faith could be known.

(4) Besides this, in the Gītā where there is description of food, there is reference only to the eaters, as 'others restrict their food', (4/30), 'Yoga is not for him, who eats too much, but for him who is temperate, in food' (6/16-17), 'Whatever thou eatest' (9/27) and 'He who eats, but little' (18/52).

Similarly, in the seventh verse of this chapter, the term 'tathā (also), denotes that a man performs sacrifice and austerity, and offers charity according to his sāttvika, rājasika or tāmasika, temperament. Similarly, in this chapter from the eleventh verse to the twenty-second verse, also there is description of the nature of those, who perform sacrifice and austerity, and offer charity.

An Important Thought Over Food

In the Upaniṣads, (Parts of different branches of Vedas) it is mentioned 'As is the food, so is the mind'. As the food, a man eats, so is his mind. So a man should eat pure food, because it purifies his mind. The place, seat, scene and atmosphere where he eats, the food should be pure and holy, as these also effect

the mind. Moreover, feelings and thought of a cook should be pure, and good.

Before, having a meal, a person should wash both the hands, both the feet and the mouth. He should sit on a clean and pure seat, with his face towards the east or the north. Then he should offer food to the Lord, by reciting verses—"Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, that offering of love, of the pure of heart I accept" (Gītā 9/26). After this, he should take a little water, on his palm and reciting a verse, "The act of offering is God, the oblation is God. By God, it is offered into the fire of God. God is verily to be attained by him who always sees God in action" (Gītā 4/24), one should drink it. Then, he should put the first morsel of food into his mouth by chanting the name of the Lord. While chewing a morsel, he should recite the sacred mantra (hymn), of sixteen words 'Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare' (or chant the name of his favourite deity), two times. Thus he chews a morsel thirty-two times, because there are sixteen words in the sacred hymn (formula). Thus, the food becomes digestible and nourishing and one remains absorbed, in the adoration of the Lord by chanting His names, which purify, the food.

If a person, while having a meal has evil propensities, such as hatred, envy, jealousy, fear and greed, his food is not digested well, and he suffers from indigestion. So, while eating food, he should be free from all these evil propensities, and should remain calm and pleased. It is heard, that a dog is allowed to run after a calf before a cow is milked. The cow grows angry, after seeing the dog. That milk is offered to soldiers, so that they may become cruel.

An experiment was made on some horses. Some of them were fed with milk of cows, while others were fed with the milk of buffaloes. The former could cross a stream, while the latter

could not. Similarly, if there is a fight between a bullock and a buffalo, the buffalo defeats the bullock. But if both of them draw a cart in the heat of the sun, the bullock is more active. The reason is that milk of the cow contains sāttvika nourishment.

As good and evil feelings, have their effect on food, so have looks. If an evil person or a hungry dog, has a look at food, it becomes impure. So what to do? He who wants to eat that food, should think that Lord Himself in that form has come to eat the food. So, first he should offer a part of it to Him, and then eat the remaining food himself. By doing so, the food is purified.

Secondly, those who take a share of the calf from the milk of a cow, make the milk impure. If they milk the cow, after the calf has been well-fed, the milk is pure.

The feelings of a person, who eats, and of the person, who offers food, have also their effect, on food. (i) Food which is offered with great pleasure, is of superior quality. (ii) The food offered with pleasure, but the eater thinks that he has saved some money, by receiving free food—it is considered of medium quality. (iii) Food offered with a feeling of compulsion, that he has been forced to offer the food, because someone has arrived, and the eater eats the food having the feeling of selfishness—that food is, of an inferior quality.

In the Gītā it is mentioned, that good persons are devoted to the welfare of all beings (5/25, 12/4). It means that the things and actions of persons, who are devoted to the welfare of other beings, are pure and holy.

The following verses, should be recited when a meal is over—

"All beings come forth from food, food is produced from rain, rain ensues from sacrifice and sacrifice, is born of action. Action has its origin in Brahma (Vedas), and the Vedas spring from the Imperishable (God); therefore the all-pervading (Brahma), ever rests in sacrifice" (Gītā 3/14-15).

Then, in order to digest food he should recite "Becoming the

fire which dwells in the bodies of living beings, and mingling with the upward and downward breaths, I digest the four kinds of food" (Gītā 15/14), and move the navel, with the middle finger slowly.



Link:—Having explained, that the faith of a person can be known by his worship or by the food, which is dear to him, the Lord now explains, the three kinds of sacrifice, by which a man's faith or inclination, is known.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

aphalākāṅkṣibhīryajño vidhidṛṣṭo ya ijjate
yaṣṭavyameveti manaḥ samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ

Sacrifice (yajña) which is performed, according to scriptural law, by those, who expect no reward and believe firmly, that it is their duty to offer the sacrifice, is sāttvika (good). 11

Comment:—

'Yaṣṭavyameveti'—Being blessed with human body a man, becomes eligible to perform the sacrifice according to his caste and social order, with a firm belief, that it is his duty to do so, and he should not expect any reward, either here or hereafter. The terms 'eva' (only), and 'Iti' (thus), have been used, to emphasize the fact, that it is his duty and it must be done. He should, have no other consideration, except performance of duty, for duty's sake.

'Aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ'—A man, expects no reward, either here or hereafter, for sacrifice, which he offers.

'Yajño vidhidṛṣṭo ya ijjate'—The sacrifice, should be offered, according to the ordinance of scriptures.

If he expects no reward, then why should he perform a sacrifice? The Lord, answers 'Manah samādhāya (mind having