

In spiritual discipline, actions do not play such an important role, as aim does. Actions, thoughts and trance performed, by physical, subtle and causal bodies respectively, are all activities of bodies. But the aim, that he has to realize God, is decided by the self. As is the aim, so are the actions. The aim, can be fixed by Sāttvika intellect, while a man holds firm to it, by Sāttvika firmness. So, from the thirty-third verse to the thirty-fifth verse, the Lord by addressing Arjuna as 'Pārtha' six times, warns him, regarding him as a representative of strivers, that without worrying about mundane persons and objects, he should hold fast, to his aim, by giving up rājasika and tāmasika propensities.

Appendix—The man, who is of the conviction that the evil propensities such as (excessive) sleep, fear, grief, depression and conceit etc., can't be removed, is evil minded. Such type of people don't pay any heed to give up evils, they don't have the courage to give them up but they own them naturally.

Excessive sleep is an obstacle to the progress of a striver. Necessary and moderate (regulated) sleep is not an obstacle (Gītā 6/16-17).



Link:—A man wants to perform actions, to gain happiness (joy). So the Lord, in the next four verses, classifies happiness under, three heads.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
 अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ ३६ ॥
 यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
 तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ ३७ ॥

sukham tvidānīm trividham śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha
 abhyāsāDRAMate yatra duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati
 yattadagre viṣamiva pariṇāme'mṛtopamam
 tatsukham sāttvikam proktamātmabuddhiprasādam

And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, of the three kinds of

happiness, in which one rejoices by practice and surely achieves, the end of pain. That happiness, which is like poison at first due to worldly attachment, but as nectar at the end. That which springs from the placidity of mind, brought about by meditation on God, is said to be, *sāttvika*. 36-37

Comment:—

'*Bharatarṣabha*'—The Lord addresses Arjuna as *Bharatarṣabha*, the best of all the persons in the Bharata family, to emphasize the fact, that it is easy for him to overcome the *rājasika* and *tāmasika* pleasures. He has overcome, the *rājasika* pleasure, because he rejected the offer of a beautiful heavenly damsel named, *Urvasī*. Similarly, he has overcome the *tāmasika* pleasure of sleep, and he is called '*Guḍākeśa*', the conqueror of sleep.

'*Sukham tu idānīm*'—Having classified knowledge, action, agent, intellect and firmness, under three heads, the Lord, by using the term '*Tu*', declares, that happiness is also of three kinds. A fact needs special attention here. The main stumbling block to spiritual progress or God-realization, is the desire for pleasure.

Even *sāttvika* happiness, if anyone is attached to it, leads to bondage. If a striver, is attached to happiness which he receives out of adoration, meditation and even trance, it leads him to bondage, by delaying him in God-realization (*Gītā* 14/6). Now, the question arises, whether eternal bliss of God-realization should also not be enjoyed. In fact, eternal bliss is not enjoyed, it is experienced or felt through self (*Gītā* 5/21; 6/21, 28). If a striver, does not enjoy happiness derived out of spiritual discipline, he experiences, that eternal bliss, naturally. The Lord has used the term '*Tu*', to divert the strivers' attention, to eternal bliss.

Here the Lord by using the term '*Idānīm*', means that Arjuna wanted to know the true nature of renunciation (*Sannyāsa*) and the Discipline of Action (*Tyāga*); so in response to his query, the Lord, classified abandonment, knowledge, action, agent and firmness each, under three heads. But the aim of all of them, is

to derive pleasure (happiness). So, the Lord classifies happiness under three heads.

'Trividham śṛṇu me'—People remain so much engrossed in rājasika and tāmasika pleasure, that they cannot imagine that sāttvika happiness, transcends them. So the Lord, asks Arjuna to choose Sāttvika joy (happiness), by rejecting rājasika and the tāmasika ones. Sāttvika joy is conducive to God-realization, while Rājasika and Tāmasika pleasure by entangling a man in the world, lead him to a fall.

'Abhyāsādramate yatra'—In Sāttvika happiness, one rejoices by practice. An ordinary man cannot rejoice in it, without practice. In rājasika and tāmasika pleasure, there is no need of any practice. Beings are naturally attracted to rājasika and tāmasika pleasure. The senses, are attracted towards sense-objects, mind and intellect are attracted towards pleasure and prosperity, and there is an inclination towards sleep, in the state of tiredness, naturally. All beings like pleasure, born of sense-contacts, pride, praise and sleep etc. Even dogs get pleased, when they are honoured, and displeased when they are dishonoured.

Now, the question arises, what sort of practice is required to gain sāttvika happiness. Hearing, thinking, study of scriptures and removal of the rājasika and tāmasika inclinations etc., are included in the term, 'practice'.

A striver, should practise adoration and meditation etc., but should not enjoy them. This is the meaning, which the Lord wants to convey, by the expression 'Abhyāsādramate'.

'Duḥkhāntam ca nigacchati'—By practice, as a man develops interest in and attraction for, Sāttvika happiness, his sorrow comes to an end and he gains happiness or joy (Gītā 2/65).

The Lord, by using the conjunction, 'Ca' (and) means to convey that a striver cannot get rid of pain or sorrow, so long as, he rejoices in Sāttvika happiness. The reason is, that even Sāttvika happiness is born of placidity of mind and whatever is born, is perishable. So, how can the perishable, bring sorrow to

an end? A striver, instead of being attached to sāttvika happiness, should transcend it. By doing so, his sorrows come to an end.

'Ātmabuddhiprasādam'—The mind, instead of attaching importance to honour, praise, pleasure and prosperity, thinks only of God. This thinking gives placidity of mind (Gītā 2/64). From placidity of mind accrues sāttvika happiness. It means that when a man being totally detached from mundane contact born pleasure, gets his mind, merged in meditation on God, the happiness experienced is said to be sāttvika.

'Yattadagre viṣamiva'—By the terms 'Yat' (which) and 'tat' (that), the Lord means to convey, that Sāttvika happiness, has not yet been experienced or felt. A striver, has the only aim, to gain it, but he experiences rājasika and tāmasika pleasures. So he faces difficulty in abandoning rājasika and tāmasika pleasure, because he has been enjoying these, since several births. But, he has not yet relished Sāttvika happiness. So having no real experience of Sāttvika happiness, he initially finds it most unpleasant, like poison.

In fact, Sāttvika happiness initially, is not like poison, but it is unpleasant like poison, to abandon rājasika and tāmasika pleasure. As a boy, takes more interest in play and recreation, than in studies in the beginning, because he does not know the importance of studies. But, when he goes on studying and gets success in examination, he becomes interested in studies, and then he attaches more importance to it. Similarly, people, who are attached to tāmasika and rājasika pleasure feel sāttvika happiness, like poison. But to those strivers, who are not attached to mundane pleasure, who have an inclination for the study of scriptures, for good company, loud chanting of divine name, meditation and adoration etc., and whose knowledge, actions, intellect and firmness, are sāttvika, this happiness is like nectar, to them from the very beginning. It is not unpleasant, taxing and irksome to them.

'Pariṇāme'mṛtopamam'—A striver, develops the modes of

goodness through spiritual discipline. When the mode of goodness is predominant, the light of wisdom shines in the mind and senses, and good virtues, such as peace and immutability etc., are revealed.* It is because of these virtues, that it is like nectar, at the end. If this happiness is not enjoyed, a striver, attains eternal bliss (Gītā 5/21). Sāttvika happiness is like nectar, at the end because by gaining it, a man transcends rājasika and tāmasika pleasure and his affinity with matter is renounced, which leads him to God-realization.

'Tatsukhaṁ sāttvikam proktam'—Happiness which is gained by good company, study of the scriptures, loud chanting, meditation and adoration etc., is neither like pleasure gained by honour, praise and prosperity etc., nor like the pleasure which one derives out of heedlessness, indolence and excessive sleep etc., but it is happiness gained by having affinity with God. So it has been said to be, Sāttvika (of the nature of goodness).

Appendix—In the fourteenth chapter, the Lord declared that Sāttvika happiness binds the Self—'sukhasaṅgena badhnāti' (14/6), but here He declares that by Sāttvika happiness, sorrows come to an end. It means that if a striver enjoys the Sāttvika happiness, it binds him (self) viz., does not let him rise above the three modes. But if he does not enjoy it, then by it, his sorrows end. By enjoying happiness, sorrows don't come to an end. Having renounced enjoyment (pleasure), Yoga is attained. He should remain unconcerned and detached from the Sāttvika happiness. The attachment leads the striver to Rajoguṇa which binds him. When Sattvaguṇa is mixed with Rajoguṇa, it is conducive to a downfall (ruin).

The Sāttvika happiness appears like poison initially because a striver does not attach importance to discrimination. A Rājasa person does not value discrimination. Therefore appearance of the Sāttvika happiness initially like poison is because of Rajoguṇa.

* The three modes—of goodness, of passion and of ignorance abide in the mind unrevealed. They are known by their distinctive characteristics as described from the eleventh to the thirteenth verses of the fourteenth chapter.

It means that Sāttvika happiness is not painful but because of the effect of Rajoguṇa in one's intellect, the Sāttvika happiness appears to be painful like poison. He aims at Sāttvika happiness but inwardly he is passionate (Rājasa).



Link:—The Lord now defines, Rājasika happiness.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

viṣayendriyaśamyogādyattadagre'mṛtopamam

pariṇāme viṣamiva tatsukhaṁ rājasam smṛtam

Happiness, which is derived from the contact of senses with their objects and which is like nectar at first but as poison at the end—such happiness, is said to be rājasika. 38

Comment:—

'Viṣayendriyaśamyogāt'—Happiness, which is derived from contact of senses, with their objects, does not need any practice. Every being, including a beast, a bird, an insect or a germ, derives this happiness, without doing any practice. A man, since his childhood has been pleased in favourable, and displeased in unfavourable, circumstances. So, in this passionate happiness, there is no need for practice.

'Yattadagre'mṛtopamam'—The Lord declares, that passionate happiness, is like nectar, at first. It means, that when a passionate man wishes to enjoy such happiness, and when he begins to enjoy it, he derives a lot of happiness, but when he goes on enjoying it, the joy is gradually reduced and then he develops disinclination, towards it. Even then, if he goes on enjoying it, he experiences, a burning sensation and pain. Therefore, it is said that happiness appears like nectar only in its initial stage.

Further, these sensual pleasures seem very pleasant, when people hear of these and when mind is attracted, towards them. But