

person or an action is named 'kāma'. This evil in the form of 'Kāma' involves endless flaws, endless defects and endless sins. Therefore so long as a man has desire, he can't be totally free from flaws, defects and sins. The desire to get pleasure causes evils. He who has no desire becomes free from evils.

The fruit of action is of three kinds—pleasant, unpleasant and mixed (Gītā 18/12). Out of the three the fruit of desire that accrues is only unpleasant.

Prārabdha does not compel a man to resort to sinful acts but it is the desire that directs a man to sinful acts. An urge for an activity may be there for enjoyment of fruits of past actions due to Prārabdha but there cannot be any sinful act as there is no need to commit such a sin for enjoyment of fruits of destiny.

Kāma (desire) is born of 'Rajoguṇa' (the mode of passion). Therefore the cause of sins is 'Rajoguṇa' and their effect (evolute) is 'Tamoguṇa' (the mode of ignorance). All sins are born of 'Rajoguṇa'.



*Link:— 'It is a sin', even knowing this a man commits sin. What is the reason that this knowledge does not help? The Lord explains in the next two verses.*

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।  
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

dhūmenāvriyate vahniriyathādarśo malena ca  
yatholbenāvṛto garbhastathā tenedamāvṛtam

As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by placenta, so is this (knowledge) concealed by desire. 38

*Comment:—*

'Dhūmenāvriyate vahnir'— As fire is covered by smoke, so is this knowledge, (discrimination) covered by desire.

Discrimination is revealed in the intellect. There are three

divisions of intellect—of the nature of 'goodness' (Sāttvika), of 'passion' (Rajas) and of 'ignorance' (Tamas). The intellect by which one knows, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, is of the nature of 'goodness'. The intellect, by which one wrongly understands, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, is of the nature of 'passion', while the intellect by which one sees all things in a perverted way (contrary to the truth) is, of the nature of 'ignorance' (Gītā 18/30—32). When desire is born, even the intellect of goodness (Sāttvika) is covered by desire, as fire by smoke, then the intellect of the mode of passion (Rajas) and ignorance (tamas) will definitely be covered by it, of which there is no doubt.

As soon as, a desire is born, one's spiritual path is covered with its smoke. If it is given scope for enhancement, it makes the path totally dark. By thinking that the desired objects are deserting us constantly, we can destroy desires.

We have desire to acquire the worldly objects, because these appear to be beautiful and charming. The desire veils our discrimination, which is a privilege of human birth. Just as, fire can burn even when it is covered with smoke, so can discrimination work, if a man becomes cautious, as soon as desire is born. A man can get rid of desire at the outset, by thinking of the kaleidoscopic and transitory nature, of the worldly objects etc., which he wants to acquire.

'Yathādarśo malena ca'—When dirt accumulates on the surface of a mirror, it cannot reflect an object. Similarly, the dirt of desire, covers knowledge (discrimination), and a striver cannot decide what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. Because of desire, he hankers after worldly pleasures and prosperity, and he has a downfall. This is the second stage of desire.

A striver, should realize that it is not a thing, but its proper use, which is significant. So, instead of having a desire to acquire

more and more, he should think to make a proper use of it. Moreover, he cannot acquire objects merely by desire.

The less importance, he will attach to the worldly objects, the more importance he will attach to God. When he stops attaching importance to the worldly objects altogether, he will realize God and desire will totally be eliminated.

'Yatholbenāvṛto garbhah'—When, dirt accumulates on the surface of a mirror, even though it does not reflect a face, yet it can be known that it is a mirror. But when an embryo is covered by the placenta, it cannot be known, whether the child is male or female. Similarly, knowledge (discrimination) is, so much veiled at this third stage, that he totally forgets his duty and his desire is intensified.

If desire is not satisfied, it gives birth to anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion there is destruction of discrimination; from destruction of discrimination one does not do, what ought to be done, but indulges in evil acts, such as falsehood, fraud, dishonesty, injustice, oppression and other sinful acts. The Lord does not want to call such people, human beings (men). Therefore, the Lord while describing such people, in the sixteenth chapter (from the eighth to the eighteenth verses), has not used any such word which stands for human beings. The Lord has called the people, who have heaven as their goal, 'Kāmātmānaḥ' (desire incarnate) (Gītā 2/43), because they are the embodiments of desires. Having identified themselves with desires, they hold that there is no higher aim than the gratification of desires (Gītā 16/11).

[When desires are strengthened, a man totally forgets, that the real aim of human life is God-realization. But if due to past influences or good company, or any other factor, he comes to know the real aim of human life, he can attain salvation or God-realization.]

'Tathā tenedamāvṛtam'—In this verse, the Lord has given three illustrations, pertaining to the covering of discrimination by desire. It means that discrimination is covered by desire, in three stages. But those who hold that desire is the cause of happiness, and so depend on it, cannot renounce it (desire), while strivers who practise spiritual discipline, know it in its reality and can root it out.

The Lord here, has described the three stages of desire, so that a striver may kill the enemy, in the form of desire, as directed by Him, in the forty-first and forty-third verses of this chapter. In fact, desire crosses the first two stages so quickly, that a man cannot perceive these phases. Then desire leads him, to all sorts of sins and sufferings. Therefore, a striver, through discrimination, should not allow a desire to arise. But if it is born, it should be renounced either in the first or the second stage, it should not be allowed to reach the third stage.

### An Important Fact

As smoke, shows the presence of fire, and as a mirror and an embryo are identified even when these are covered respectively, with dust and placenta, so discrimination is possessed by every human being, even when it is covered by desire. But due to the force of desire, discrimination is not used.

According to the scriptures 'Mala' (sin) (Impurity), 'Vikṣepa' (distraction) and 'āvaraṇa' (veil), are said to be, the three stumbling blocks to God-realization. These defects, are born of the affinity of man, for the unreal world. This affinity for the world is, created because of desire. Thus the root of all the evils, is desire. When desire is renounced, affinity for the unreal world, is renounced. When affinity for the unreal, is renounced, all the evils perish and discrimination is revealed.

So long as, the worldly objects seem real, beautiful and charming, a man attaches importance to them. This attachment, is the main obstacle to God-realization, as it is conducive to the three defects—sin, confusion and veil. Out of these three, sin is regarded as the most deadly defect. Desire is the root of sin. When a striver resolves not to commit sin in future, the defects are rooted out and his sin, begins to decay. But when he renounces the desire, totally, all his sins perish.

In the Śrīmadbhāgavata, Lord Kṛṣṇa has pointed out that a man with desire can attain salvation, by following the Discipline of Action (Performance of action) without expecting fruit—'Karmayogastu kāmīnām' (11/20/7). So a person who is not free from desire, need not lose heart, because only he who has a desire, will get rid of it. Desires can be renounced easily, through the Discipline of Action. When a striver performs any act, whether it is mundane or spiritual, he should think, "Why do I perform it and how do I perform it?" By thinking so, he will constantly have an eye on the aim of his life. Consequently, he will perform only virtuous actions, being free from attachment and the desire for fruit. This performance of actions without attachment, and desire for reward, will lead him to salvation.

**Appendix—**Desire is the main obstacle to God-realization. As there is a jar full of water, in it we have to do two actions—the first is to empty the jar and the second is to fill it with ether. But in fact two actions are not to be performed but only one is to be performed—to empty the jar. Empty the jar and the ether will be filled itself. Similarly renunciation of desire and God-realization—these two are not to be done. Renounce the desire and God will be automatically realized. It is because of desire that God seems to be unrealized.

