

The more he enjoys them, the more, the desire for these is strengthened. In order to satiate it, he is inclined to sinful acts. When he has desire for wealth, he wants to earn it, by fair means or foul. Then, at the second stage the desire engages him in theft and robberies, while in the third stage it leads him to commit violence and even murder. Thus the desire for pleasure, makes life miserable, here as well as hereafter.

Appendix—The main obstacle to the practice of spiritual discipline is the desire for pleasure which is born by the contact of senses with sense-objects. This obstacle lingers for a long time. Wherever a striver indulges in pleasure, there his spiritual progress is arrested. As much as even the pleasure (joy) from trance, hinders his progress.* Even the desire of ‘Sāttvika’ happiness and attachment to it arrest his spiritual progress—‘sukhasaṅgena badhnāti’ (Gītā 14/6)†. Therefore the Lord has declared that desire is the constant enemy of a wise (discriminating) striver—‘na teṣu ramate budhaḥ’ (Gītā 5/22) and ‘duḥkhameva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ’ (Yogadarśana 2/15).



Link:—In order to kill an enemy, it is necessary to know where it resides. Therefore, the Lord, in the next verse, mentions the seat of desire, the constant enemy of the wise (discerning soul).

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate
etairvimohayatyēṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinaṁ

* Worldly pleasures are born of union with sense-objects while the joy derived from trance is born of disunion with sense-objects. Worldly pleasures lead to ruin (fall) while the enjoyment of joy derived from trance arrests (hinders) a striver’s progress.

† Attachment to Sāttvika joy is a hindrance in the path of God-realization and attachment to Rājasa-Tāmasa pleasures leads to ruin.

The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its abode. Veiling of wisdom by the senses, mind and intellect deludes, the embodied soul. 40

Comment:—

'Indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate'—Desire, is said to have five abodes—(1) objects (Gītā 3/34), (2) senses, (3) mind, (4) intellect and (5) assumed ego ('I' viz., doer (Gītā 2/59). Though it seems to reside in five abodes, yet in fact, it resides in the 'assumed ego'. As it seems to abide in these five places, these are called its seats.

All actions are performed, with the body, senses, mind and intellect. If desire resides in these, it hinders the performance of spiritual actions. Therefore, a Karmayogī (man of action), having abandoned attachment and the fruit of actions, performs actions, only by the body, senses, mind and intellect, for the purification of the self (Gītā 5/11).

In fact, desire resides in the assumed ego (i.e., identification of the self with the body etc.). This ego or 'I'ness, is merely assumed that, 'I belong to a particular caste, creed or order of life"—this is a mere assumption. Sins perish, after bearing fruits, but desire which resides in the assumed ego, gives birth to new sins. Therefore, it is desire which binds the embodied soul.

In the Mahābhārata, it is mentioned, "In the world it is only desire which binds a man. He who is liberated from the bondage of desire, becomes eligible to attain the Eternal (Absolute)" (Śāntiparva 251/7).

'Etaṁ vimohayatyeṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinaṁ'—It is because of desire, that a man does what he ought not do, and does not do what he ought to do. Thus the embodied soul is deluded, by desire.

In the second chapter, the Lord declared—'From desire

springs anger' (2/62) and 'From anger arises delusion' (2/63). It means, that if anyone becomes an obstacle to the satisfaction of a desire, anger arises. But if the desire is satisfied, it gives birth to greed, and from greed arises delusion. Desire is, an evolute of the mode of passion, while delusion, is an evolute of the mode of ignorance. The mode of passion and the mode of ignorance, are not far from each other.* Desire, deludes the embodied soul, through senses, mind and intellect. The desire, which is an evolute of the mode of passion, is transformed into delusion, which is an evolute of ignorance.

A man has a desire to enjoy sense-objects (sensual pleasures). Firstly, he does not get those desired sense-objects. However, if he gets them, they do not stay. In spite of it, he desires to get them somehow or the other, and thinks of so many devices to obtain them. Therefore, first desire attracts the senses, towards objects. Then the senses, attract the mind, while the senses and the mind attract, the intellect. Thus desire, veiling wisdom, through the senses, mind and intellect, deludes the embodied soul and drives it to ruin.

It is a rule that if a master terminates the service of a sincere servant, he is not likely to get such a sincere servant again. Similarly, if a servant does not carry out the order of a virtuous master and does not serve him, he will not get an opportunity to work under such good masters. In the same way, if a person by misusing the human body, instead of realizing God, wastes it in hankering after worldly pleasures, and prosperity, he will not get this human life again. It is, because of the impurity of mind, that a man rejects good things; and the mind is tainted by, desire. Therefore, first of all, a striver should renounce desire.

* Among the modes of ignorance, passion and goodness the ratio of the distance is 1:10:100. It means that modes of ignorance and passion are near each other, while the mode of goodness is far-away from them.

'Dehinam vimohayati'—It means that, desire deludes only the embodied soul i.e., the soul which has identified itself with the body, and has accepted the relationship of 'mine' with it. The Lord, at the beginning of His gospel, explained that the soul is different from the body (Gītā 2/11—30). This is also everyone's experience. The desire covering wisdom, deludes the embodied soul (the soul which accepts its affinity for the body), but not the pure soul. A man (the soul) assuming the body as 'I', 'mine' and for 'me', attaches importance to the perishable objects and gets attached to them, which, creates affinity for them. This affinity gives birth to desire. Desire, having deluded the man (embodied soul), leads him to worldly bondage.



Link:—The Lord, in the next verse, tells Arjuna the device of eliminating this enemy i.e., desire, and directs him to kill it.

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ ४१ ॥

tasmaāttvamindriyāṇyādaū niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hyenaṁ jñānavijñānanāśanam

Therefore, O best of Bharatas (Arjuna), first control the senses then, kill, this sinful destroyer, of wisdom and realization. 41

Comment:—

'Tasmāttvamindriyāṇyādaū niyamyā bharatarṣabha'—Senses, are said to be controlled, when they do not enjoy the sense-objects, but are used in order to maintain the body or to attain a spiritual goal. It means, that they should neither have an aversion to disagreeable action, nor an attachment for agreeable action (Gītā 18/10). Actions performed with attachment and aversion, strengthen attachment and aversion and these drive