

Śloka 37

श्री भगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३७ ॥

śrī bhagavānuvāca

*kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhyenamihā vairiṇam*

श्री भगवान् उवाच	<i>śrī bhagavān uvāca</i>	the Lord said
कामः	<i>kāmaḥ</i>	desire
एष	<i>eṣa</i>	this
क्रोधः	<i>krodhaḥ</i>	anger
एष	<i>eṣa</i>	this
रजोगुण	<i>rajoguṇa</i>	activity
समुद्भवः	<i>samudbhavaḥ</i>	born of
महाशनः	<i>mahāśanaḥ</i>	all-devouring
महापाप्मा	<i>mahāpāpmā</i>	all sinful
विद्धि	<i>viddhi</i>	know
एनम्	<i>enam</i>	this
इह	<i>iha</i>	here
वैरिणम्	<i>vairiṇam</i>	the foe

VERSE 37

Answer to Arjuna's Question of What Causes One to Instigate Sin

37

The Lord said,

It is desire; it is anger born of the rajas guṇa (quality of activity), all devouring, most sinful; know this as the enemy here (in this world).

In the previous verse Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa what impels people to sin, even against their will. In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa answers that **desire** and **anger born of rajas guṇa (quality of activity)** impel people to sin.

Desire and anger are the demons within an individual. They are the grosser forms of attachment and aversion. It is the quality of *rajas guṇa* that promotes attachment, and conversely attachment promotes *rajas guṇa*. In a human being desire is hidden in the mind, senses, and intellect. No amount of enjoyment can satisfy desire because desire is insatiable. The more desires are enjoyed, the more they grow. The insatiable nature of desire constantly agitates the mind. When a desire is obstructed or suppressed, it takes the shape of anger. When a desire is enjoyed, it gives rise to greed, attachment, pride, envy, and their innumerable variations. Therefore, it can be seen that desire is the root of all evils.

In this world of activity, desire for the world is the greatest **enemy**. This is because it blocks the path to redemption and keeps an individual's soul in the bondage of ignorance.

Śloka 38

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

*dhūmenāvriyate vahniryathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhastathā tenedamāvṛtam*

धूमेन	<i>dhūmena</i>	by smoke
आव्रियते	<i>āvriyate</i>	is enveloped
वह्निः	<i>vahniḥ</i>	fire
यथा	<i>yathā</i>	as
आदर्शः	<i>ādarśaḥ</i>	a mirror
मलेन	<i>malena</i>	by dust
च	<i>ca</i>	and
यथा	<i>yathā</i>	as
उल्बेन	<i>ulbena</i>	by the womb
आवृतः	<i>āvṛtaḥ</i>	enveloped
गर्भः	<i>garbhaḥ</i>	embryo
तथा	<i>tathā</i>	so
तेन	<i>tena</i>	by it
इदम्	<i>idam</i>	this
आवृतम्	<i>āvṛtam</i>	enveloped

VERSES 38-39

How Desire Is Our Enemy and How It Veils Discrimination

38

As fire is enveloped by smoke, mirror by dust, and the fetus by the womb, so is this (knowledge) covered by it (desire).

The preceding verse said that desire is the root cause of all evil and that it is the enemy that compels a person to commit sin. This verse and the next explain how desire compels a person to commit sin.

This verse gives three examples to define how desire deludes and envelops the discriminative faculty of a human mind. Discrimination is a function of intellect. Intellect is classified in three categories:

1) *Sattvic* (pure) intellect: In *sattvic* intellect there is correct discrimination between what is right and what is wrong.

2) *Rajasic* (active) intellect: In *rajasic* intellect, due to agitation in the mind, the discrimination is confused.

3) *Tamasic* (impure) intellect: In *tamasic* intellect the mind is completely enveloped by ignorance, and discrimination between what is right and what is wrong becomes the opposite of what it should be.

If the *sattvic* or pure intellect can be deluded by desire, how much more delusion can be created by the *rajasic* and *tamasic* intellect? Thus the three-fold veiling of the desire-enveloped mind is caused by: 1) restlessness, 2) impurity, and 3) obscuration.

As fire is enveloped by smoke refers to veiling of the mind by restlessness; just like thick smoke covers a fire's flame, when desire for the world arises in the pure intellect, the mind becomes restless and the intellect's discriminative knowledge is covered by its attachment to the world. The intellect is the flame of the fire, and desire is the smoke. Desires to achieve such things as power, wealth, name, and glory arise in the mind. The more intense the desires get, the thicker the smoke becomes, veiling the brilliance of the light emitted by the flame. Even the *sattvic* mind can get attached to worldly desires if it is not watched closely.

As **mirror by dust** refers to veiling of the mind by impurity; dust blown around by the wind gradually settles on, and covers, the clean surface of a mirror. Agitation in the mind is

like a wind, which is caused by insatiable desires; the impurities of the mind are like the dust; the intellect is like a mirror. The agitated mind carries the dust of desires and covers the surface of the mirror of intellect. This means that when the mind is agitated by desires, it loses its discrimination between right and wrong action, and right and wrong thought. The stronger the desires become, the thicker the dust. The thicker the dust, the more the mirror of intellect is covered. The thicker the covering, the greater the loss of discrimination. When the mind is thickly covered by desire, it starts seeing worldly attachments as the only reality and the light of the divine is completely veiled. This is a denser state of ignorance than the previous simile of the fire covered by smoke because even in thick smoke, fire will sometimes be seen. However, when thick dust covers the mirror completely, at no time can any reflection be seen.

and the fetus by the womb refers to veiling of the mind by obscuration. A fetus in the womb is enclosed from all sides so well that the child within cannot be seen. In the same way, the discriminative intellect is completely obscured by lustful desires. As the discriminative intellect is obscured, the intensity of lustful desires increases. When the desires are obstructed, anger is created. Anger gives rise to delusion and delusion destroys the intellect. When the intellect is destroyed, it leads to the total destruction of the individual.

The essence of this verse is that desire is the cause of obscuring the divine presence within us.

Śloka 39

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३९ ॥

*āvṛtaṁ jñānametena jñānino nityavairiṇā
kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca*

आवृतम्	<i>āvṛtam</i>	enveloped
ज्ञानम्	<i>jñānam</i>	wisdom
एतेन	<i>etena</i>	by this
ज्ञानिनः	<i>jñāninaḥ</i>	of the wise
नित्यवैरिणा	<i>nityavairiṇā</i>	by the constant enemy
कामरूपेण	<i>kāmarūpeṇa</i>	whose form is desire
कौन्तेय	<i>kaunteya</i>	O Kaunteya (Arjuna)
दुष्पूरेण	<i>duṣpūreṇa</i>	unappeasable
अनलेन	<i>analena</i>	by fire
च	<i>ca</i>	and

And, O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna), wisdom is enveloped by this constant enemy of the wise in a form of desire, which is insatiable like fire.

In the preceding verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explained how knowledge is obscured by desires. In this verse the Lord tells Arjuna that desire is the **constant enemy of the wise**.

Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of objects. Desire is like a fire, which only gets bigger and stronger as it is given more fuel.

Due to their discriminative capabilities, human beings are the highest on the evolutionary scale. Discrimination (*jñāna*) is the capacity to identify the real from the unreal, the true from the false, and the permanent from the impermanent. However, this boon of discrimination becomes a curse when the mind is possessed by desire for worldly enjoyments, because at such times the discriminative ability gets deluded or destroyed.

Desire is the constant enemy of the wise because it pulls a person down from spiritual achievement.

Śloka 40

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

*indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate
etaivimohayatyēṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinam*

इन्द्रियाणि	<i>indriyāṇi</i>	the senses
मनः	<i>manaḥ</i>	the mind
बुद्धिः	<i>buddhiḥ</i>	the intellect
अस्य	<i>asya</i>	its
अधिष्ठानम्	<i>adhiṣṭhānam</i>	seat
उच्यते	<i>ucyate</i>	is called
एतैः	<i>etaiḥ</i>	by these
विमोहयति	<i>vimohayati</i>	deludes
एष	<i>eṣa</i>	this
ज्ञानम्	<i>jñānam</i>	wisdom
आवृत्य	<i>āvṛtya</i>	having enveloped
देहिनम्	<i>dehinam</i>	the embodied

VERSE 40

The Lord Now Identifies the Seats of Desires

40

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be its (desire's) seat. Through these, it (desire) deludes the embodied soul by enveloping wisdom.

The preceding verse stated that desire is the constant enemy of the wise. In this verse the seats of desire are identified, and it is stated again that desire destroys discriminative wisdom.

The ego of individuality is the main cause of desire. In a state of egolessness, all selfish desires go away. The ego expresses itself in every action performed by the senses, mind, and intellect. Therefore, in its active form, desire exists in the senses, mind, and intellect.

Desire takes its seat in an individual through the process of perception, attachment, and memory. When the sense organs function with the sense objects, they become the first seat of desire. For example, when the eyes perceive an apple, the desire to have the apple arises. The sense object (apple) and the sense organ (eyes) become the first seat of desire through the act of perception. When, through the sense organs, this external excitement reaches the mind, the mind gets deeply involved (attached) and, through attachment, the mind becomes the second seat of desire. At the same time the intellect, which keeps the memory of enjoyment and attachment, becomes the third seat of desire. The senses, mind, and intellect are the hideouts of desire, and are the places from which desires can function and remain undetected.

Through these three centers of action, the desires envelop the wisdom of a person and the deluded ego, which identifies itself with the mind-body complex, becomes increasingly absorbed in the desire for sense objects. It gets very attached to the sense objects and thinks, "May I live forever to enjoy sense objects." This attachment to life gives rise to feelings such as anger, fear, and delusion and obstructs a person's wisdom. This creates bondage of the individual soul in a state of ignorance.