

Satsanga with Sri Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Bhaja Govindam – Verse 26

The next verse tells us what is it that we should seek to become free from so that sameness or equanimity of mind can be maintained.

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं त्यक्त्वाऽत्मानं पश्यति सोऽहम् ।

आत्मज्ञान विहीना मूढाः ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥ २६ ॥

kāmaṁ krodhaṁ lobhaṁ moham tyaktvā' tmānaṁ paśyati so'ham,
ātmajñāna vihīnā mūdhāḥ te pacyante narakanigūdhāḥ.

Having given up lust, anger, greed, and delusion, the seeker sees in the Self, 'He am I'. They are fools who have no Self-knowledge, and they, as captives in hell, are tortured.

Ātmānaṁ so'ham iti paśyati. The seeker of self-knowledge is able to see the self for what it is, *soham*, that I am. I am that Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, I am that limitless or the whole. When is this seeker able to see the truth about himself?

Tyaktvā, having given up, *kāmaṁ krodhaṁ lobhaṁ* and *moham*. *Kāma* is lust, *krodha* is anger, *lobha* is greed or miserliness, and *moham* is the delusion that arises because of these. *Tyaktvā*, do not let yourself come under the sway of this lust, anger, greed, or delusion. Maintain your balance of mind.

Our obstacles are internal

It is the demons of *kāmaṁ krodhaṁ lobhaṁ* and *moham*, which prevent me from seeing this truth. In reality, then, where is the obstacle? Is it the world that really harasses you? No, the obstacles are within ourselves.

Kāma is not merely simple desire, it is *tr̥sna* or craving. That lust or passion that I have is called *kāma*. When it arises, I lose myself, I come under its sway. So *kāma* or passion arises as a tremendous force within me, and at that time, I lose myself.

These internal obstacles rob us of our good judgment

Krodha or anger is another *āvega*, impulse. When anger arises, it also comes as a tremendous force from within, and takes hold of me. Again, I lose myself. When I act as dictated by the anger, my sense of discrimination or

wisdom does not come into play at all. It is not that we don't know things. We know all of this, but at that time this knowledge is not available to us. At that time, I come under the pull of these bandits.

kāmaḥ krodascha lobhascha madhye tiṣṭhanti taskarāḥ (source?)

These *taskarāḥ*, thieves, are within you. Just as when we are going along an isolated route, bandits come and rob us of our wealth, so also, when we are under the sway of our passions, these robbers that are within, rob us of our good judgment. *Ātmasam aparāhāya*, they rob you of your self; they rob whatever little wealth there is inside. They rob whatever divine wealth I have gathered, whatever purity I have gathered. *Tasmad jāgratha jāgratha*, therefore may you wake up, may you become alert.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

*trividham narakasyedam dvaram nāśanamātmanaḥ,
kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhastasmādetattrayaṁ tyajet.*

This doorway to *naraka* (painful experiences), which destroys a person, is threefold – desire, anger, and also greed. Therefore, one should give up this triad [Bhagavadgītā, 16-21].

Talking of lust, anger, and miserliness or greed, he says, these three are the gateway to hell, *narakasyedarim dvaram*. *Nāśanamātmanaḥ*, they destroy the self, they damage or hurt my own self.

These obstacles damage us

Everytime lust arises, or anger arises, or whenever there is greed in me, I am causing damage to myself. It is like a heart attack, which leaves a permanent damage on the heart everytime it strikes. Similarly, every time lust or anger or greed comes, it leaves behind damage in the self. Therefore, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says, those who are devoid of the knowledge of the self, *ātmajñāna vihinā*, have delivered themselves into the hands of *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha*, and are deluded, *mūḍāḥ*. They are *naraka nigudāḥ*, the captives of hell.

All our suffering can be traced to these internal obstacles

People ask this question, “Swamiji, is there a place called heaven or hell?” There must be, because the scriptures describe them. Still, we don’t have to go too far to experience hell. Who has captured the deluded in hell? It is *kāma*, *krodha*, and *lobha*. I live a life of hell, captured by them or dominated by them; there is constant inner suffering. *Pacyante* means they are cooked. It is said that you may be cooked or fried in hell, in a big cauldron, or you may be asked to embrace burning pillars. You may even be cooked in the oven. We don’t have to go anywhere to be cooked in the fire of hell. *Pacyante*, we are already being cooked constantly. *Kāma*, *krodha*, and *lobha* are the fire that is constantly cooking or torturing me, and all my suffering may be traced back to them. Where do they arise from?

Kāma, *krodha*, and *lobha* arise from the ignorance of the Self, which brings about the ego or the sense of individuality. This brings about a sense of insufficiency, which brings desire. When the desire is not fulfilled, it brings about anger. Yet, when the desire is fulfilled, it brings about greed. How interesting! Desire is thus damaging, whether fulfilled or not. This desire leaves behind either anger or greed in its wake. Both of them result in a disturbance of the mind, so I can never have even a moment of leisure as long as I am under the spell of *kāma*, *krodha*, or *lobha*.

Moha is delusion or the state of intoxication when under the spell of *kāma*, *krodha*, or *lobha*. It is the stage at which I lose myself; I lose my sense of judgment, and I lose my sense of discrimination. When I come under the spell of anger, I lose my judgment. I act in a manner that is totally unbecoming of me. When he comes under the spell of anger, man completely loses himself and becomes an animal, a tiger or a snake etc. That situation is called *moha*. When lust arises, I become *mūḍaḥ*, deluded. When *krodha* or anger arises, I lose all my judgment, and when greed or miserliness arises, then again, I lose myself.

These inner enemies need to be conquered

These are the inner enemies which we have to conquer. It is this struggle which is often represented as a struggle between the *devatās* and the *asuras* in the *purāṇas*. Sometimes the *devatās* win, and sometimes the *asuras*. Similarly, this battle is constantly going on in our own minds. Whenever the time comes to implement a certain value, a conflict arises. For example, the conflict arises when we have to make an honest customs declaration. The more I declare as having,

the more customs duty I have to pay. Thus, on the one hand I value the truth, but on the other hand, I have value for money, *artha*, power or possession, and for *kāma*, pleasure and entertainment. These values are embedded in us as we grow. On these occasions of conflict one part of the mind says, “Speak the truth.” The other part of the mind says, “Don’t speak the truth. Who speaks the truth anyway? How does it matter?” This is comparable to the battle between the *devatās* and the *asuras*. So values such as truth, or non-violence can be compared to the *devatās* and values such as greed, lust, and passion can be compared to the *asuras*. There is a constant struggle between the two.

These inner enemies can be conquered by using discrimination

Greed, miserliness, lust, or anger are your enemies and therefore, do not deliver yourselves into their hands. This is a practical application to the question, “Swamiji, what should we do in our day-to-day life whenever anger arises?” Don’t come under its sway; don’t give it reality. As we saw earlier, anger arises whenever I make a demand either on others or on myself. As best as possible, give up the demands. Learn to accept and enjoy things as they are.

Kāma or desire arises because of *aviveka* or non-discrimination because I do not know that what I am seeking is my own self. I do not know that when I seek happiness or security through the pursuits of the world, that pursuit is never going to be fulfilled because what I am seeking is my own self. Therefore, desire can be handled by educating the mind all the time. When a desire arises in the mind, ask the mind, “What do you want? What are you seeking?” The answer will be, “I am seeking happiness. I am seeking security.” Nobody wants money or power for its own sake; everyone wants money or power solely for the sake of happiness. When you make the mind see that happiness does not lie there, and that the happiness is to be discovered only within one’s own Self, the blind chasing after money, power etc. will slowly come to a stop. Thus, we have to handle the various impulses of the mind by *viveka* or discrimination. They can only be resolved by *viveka* or discrimination. Only by *viveka* can we make the mind free from *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, etc. It is not possible to overcome anger by will, or greed by will. That can happen only for a period of time, before they arise again.

We can see the Truth when these obstacles have been conquered

When the mind becomes free from these evils, I am able to see myself as I truly am, *so’ham*. On account of *kāma*, *krodha*, or *lobha*, not only is my judgment

impaired, but my perception of the world is also distorted. Therefore, I should seek to get rid of these devils, slowly creating the ground for the knowledge of the self.

The truth about the self is that I am not what I take myself to be today, but *so'ham*, I am that, I am Brahman. I am a complete being; I am limitless, free, and pure. This truth about the self becomes clear as a result of the teaching of the scriptures. However, the teaching becomes effective only when we have a mind which is receptive. When does the mind become receptive? Only when it overcomes these inner obstacles, *kāmam*, *krodham*, *lobham*, and *moham*¹.

¹ Transcribed and edited by Krishnakumar (KK) S. Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.