

of nature, is of three kinds—sāttvika (good), rājasa (passionate) and tāmasa (ignorant). Lord Kṛṣṇa, asks Arjuna to hear about these three, from Him.

In the preceding verse, in the expression 'Sattvamāho rajastamaḥ,' the conjunction 'Āho' (Or), has been used, which denotes that according to Arjuna 'sattvam' (good), stands for divine nature, while rajastamaḥ' (passionate-ignorant) stand, for demoniac nature. It means, that according to him, there are only two divisions. As far as bondage is concerned, the Lord also includes both the rajas and the tamas, in demoniac nature, when he declares that demoniac nature is conducive to bondage (Gītā 16/5). But, there is a difference between the two—the rajas and the tamas. The rājasa (passionate) people, perform actions, according to ordinance of scriptures to get their fruit. So having enjoyed, in heaven the heavenly pleasure, they enter (return to) the world of mortals, when their merit is exhausted (Gītā 9/21). But the tāmasa (ignorant) people do not perform actions, according to ordinances of the scripture. So they sink deep (Gītā 14/18). Thus the Lord, divides the faith of people, possessing a demoniac nature, into two parts, the rajas and the tamas, and asks Arjuna to hear from him, of the three kinds of faith— sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa, separately.



Link:—The Lord, in the preceding verse, explains three kinds of faith. In the next verse, He explains, why it is of three kinds.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३ ॥

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śraddhāmayo'yaṁ puruṣo yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ

The faith of each, O Bhārata (Arjuna), is in accordance with

his inner sense. Man is of the nature of his faith; as a man's faith, so is he. 3

Comment:—

'Sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata'—Here, the expression 'Sattvānurūpā' stands for 'Svabhāvajā', which was used in the preceding verse. The term 'Sattva', stands for inner sense. So the faith of a man is in accordance with his inner sense. As a man's inner sense is sātvika, rājasa or tāmasa, so is his faith.

The term 'Sarvasya', denotes 'dehinām' (the embodied), used in the preceding verse. It means, that the faith of each person, whether he knows the ordinances of the scriptures or not, believes in them or not, acts, according to them or not and he may belong to any caste, creed, country, social order, of any tradition but, faith of each and all is of three kinds.

'Śraddhāmayo'yaṁ puruṣaḥ'— A man's character is judged, by his faith. As a man's faith is, so is his character.

'Yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ'— As a man's faith, is so is his 'Niṣṭhā', (state of being, conviction) and according to his conviction is his fate. His feelings and actions, are according to his faith. So long as, he maintains affinity with the world, he is the same as is his nature or his inner sense.

A Vital Fact

A man is inclined towards the world by regarding it, as true, while he is inclined towards God, by having faith in Him. Without faith a man, cannot progress in the spiritual sphere, whether he follows the discipline of action, of knowledge or of devotion.

Faith, occupies an important place in a man's life. As a man's faith is, so is he (17/3). He may not be so today, but in the course of time, he will become so.

Today, it is difficult for a striver, to recognize his natural faith, because there are innumerable sects and religions. Having

read and heard, different opinions and principles, he finds himself in a fix. He cannot decide, what his aim is, and what he should do. In such circumstances, he should give a serious thought, to his internal feelings which are untainted by any external influences, of association, of a preceptor or scriptures. Thus he comes to know, of his natural inclination or faith.

Every being, has an inclination to be free from all sorrows, and to attain eternal bliss. This inclination, is aroused in human beings, because of their past influences, present education, environment and heredity. They make their decisions, according to their inclination or nature. This resolution, decides their faith. Sāttvika faith, leads to spirituality, while the tāmasa and rājasa ones lead to the mundane world. So, the sāttvika faith is spiritual, while the tāmasa and the rājasa faiths, are mundane i.e., the sāttvika faith is divine nature, while the tāmasa and the rājasa faiths, imply demoniac nature. The seventeenth chapter, has been started in order to enable people to renounce demoniac nature, and to reveal divine nature. The reason, is that those who want to attain salvation, should renounce the demoniac nature and should acquire divine one.

The faith of the people, who want to attain salvation is sāttvika, of those who want mundane pleasures, prosperity and also heaven etc., is rājasa and of those who believe in 'eat, drink and be merry' as well as in indolence, heedlessness and excessive sleep etc., is tāmasa. Faith consists, in the acceptance of the existence of God and in His realization. Where there is faith, love reveals itself naturally, because the soul is a fragment of God. So, as soon as, one develops faith, he is attracted towards Him. When having a disinclination, for the Lord, he remains absorbed in worldly pleasures and prosperity, believing in the mundane. This sort of faith or belief, is not real, it is a misuse of faith. This mundane faith, leads to a downfall. The faith, that he belongs to a particular caste(varṇa) and a particular social

order (āśrama), is a higher sort of faith, than mundane faith. But, the best and the real faith, is the faith in God, saints, liberated souls and scriptures. Such faith leads to salvation.*

Those, who have neither knowledge of scriptures, nor company of the great souls, can also have faith in spirituality or God, because of the impressions saṁskāra of the past. Such people naturally believe in God, and are engaged in virtuous actions, such as religious sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, fast, good company and study of scriptures etc. Even if they do not perform such virtuous acts, their faith can be recognized, by the sāttvika food, they eat.

All beings, such as human beings, birds, beasts, plants and creepers etc., whether moving or not assumed someone as superior to them and depend upon him or it. When adversity visits them, all take shelter in someone, who is superior to them. He, who has deemed anyone superior to him, and taken shelter in him, he may believe in God or not, he has, in fact accepted God, in principle. He, who goes on viewing superiority of one, over another, in respect of age, learning, quality, wisdom, ability, power and status etc., he will have to accept, finally the most superior One of whom, there is no superior. All superiority, ends in Him and He is God.

'Pūrveṣāmapī guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt'

(Yogadarśana 1/26)

"He is the preceptor of the most ancient ancestors, because He is above, a time limit."

Everybody concedes, someone or the other, as superior to him, from his view-point. This faith in superiority, is according to feelings of his inner sense. These feelings constitute his faith. These feelings, remain different in different persons. So their

* In the mundane faith there is predominance of pleasures, in the religious faith there is predominance of feeling and in the spiritual faith there is predominance of the truth.

faith is also, distinct.

A man's faith is *sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa*, according to his nature. All beings, are endowed with the three modes of nature—*sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika* (Gītā 18/40). One of them may predominate the other two (Gītā 14/10), in every being. As nature always undergoes changes, so its modes also change. So a striver, whose aim is God-realization, without assuming any affinity, with modes of nature, should remain unperturbed, by them.

The soul is a fragment of God. So when a man, finds predominance of a mode either of passion or of ignorance, he should not regard himself, as mean or low. Being a fragment of God, he (soul), is pure. It is his company or environment, by which one mode of nature predominates, by suppressing the other two. As the nature of a man is, so is his faith—*sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa*. So a striver, should keep good (*sāttvika*) company, should live in good environment, and should study the scriptures. By doing so, his nature and faith, will be *sāttvika* (good) and these will lead him, to salvation. On the other hand, by bad company, environment and literature, his faith will be *rājasika* or *tāmasika*, which will degrade him.

Appendix—Faith is a 'bhāva' (sentiment). As is a man's sentiment, so is his self. The *bhāva* (sentiment) is of two kinds—'*sadbhāva*' and '*asadbhāva*'. The one which leads to God, is '*sadbhāva*' and the one which leads to the world is '*asadbhāva*'. In the divine nature there is predominance of '*sadbhāva*' while in demoniac nature, there is predominance of '*asadbhāva*'.

'I am a striver'—In it if there is the predominance of '*asadbhāva*', it causes pride (false pride) and if there is predominance of '*sadbhāva*', it causes '*svābhīmāna*' (Self-respect). Pride causes demoniac nature but Self-respect causes divine nature. If a man thinks that he is superior to others, he becomes proud of his superiority; and if a striver thinks of his

duty, he is full of Self-respect that he can't perform any action which is an obstacle to his spiritual progress. Being proud a man can perform an action contrary to his spiritual practice; but if the striver has Self-respect, he will feel shy in performing any action which is contrary to his spiritual discipline. 'Svābhimāna' will lead him to the 'Sāttvika' faith while 'Abhimāna' (pride) will lead him to the 'Rājasika' and 'Tāmasika' faiths.



Link:—The Lord, in the next verse, explains the means of ascertaining the conviction (state of being), of a person by his worship.

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४ ॥

yajante sāttvikā devānyakṣarakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ
pretānbhūtagaṇāṁścānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ

Good (sāttvika) men worship the gods; the passionate (rājasika) worship the gnomes (yakṣa) and the demons; the ignorant (tāmasika) offer sacrifices to the spirits and ghosts. 4

Comment:—

'Yajante sāttvikā devān'—The sāttvika (good) people, possessing divine nature, worship the gods. Here, the term 'Devān' denotes the five chief deities—Viṣṇu (the preserver), (Rāma or Kṛṣṇa etc.), Śiva (the destroyer), Gaṇeśa, Durgā (Power) and the Sun, because the term 'Deva', stands for God (Divinity) and His nature viz., divine nature, which is conducive to liberation (16/5). Thus, strivers possessing the sāttvika (good) faith worship, anyone of five chief deities, according to their natural faith. The worship of twelve Ādityas, eight Vasus, eleven Rūdras, and two Aśvinī Kumāras, without any selfish motive, is also regarded as sāttvika worship.

'Yakṣarakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ'—The passionate, worship the gnomes