

guṇas and also the means of rising above these, and so he puts the question:—

अर्जुन उवाच

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।

किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

arjuna uvāca

kairliṅgaistrīṅguṇānetānatīto bhavati prabho

kimācāraḥ katham caitānstrīṅguṇānativartate

Arjuna said:

What are the marks of him, who has transcended the three guṇas (modes), O Lord? What is his conduct like? How does he transcend, the three modes? 21

Comment:—

'Kairliṅgaistrīṅguṇānetānatīto bhavati prabho'—O Lord, I want to know the characteristics of a person, who has transcended the three modes of nature. What are the symptoms of such a person, by which he can be distinguished, from other common people?

'Kimācāraḥ'—What is his conduct, what is his daily routine, how does he live and what are, his activities? Are they regulated or nonregulated? How are they different, from those of common men?

'Katham caitānstrīṅguṇānativartate'—What is the means, by which one, can transcend the three modes?



Link:—In response to Arjuna's first question, the Lord explains the marks of a person who has transcended the three guṇas (modes), in the next two verses:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

**prakāśam ca pravṛttiṁ ca mohameva ca pāṇḍava
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati**

The Blessed Lord said:

O Pāṇḍava, he does not hate illumination, activity and delusion when those are abundantly present, nor does he long for them, when all absent. 22

Comment:—

'Prakāśam ca'—Purity of the senses and mind, is called 'Prakāśa', or illumination. It means, that illumination is the power, which enables the senses to perceive the five objects of senses, the mind, to think and the intellect, to judge.

The Lord (in 14/11) explained two marks of the mode of Sattva (goodness)—illumination (purity) and knowledge. Out of the two, only illumination has been mentioned here because in the mode, of goodness illumination occupies a predominant place. Unless there is illumination (purity) in the senses, mind and intellect, discrimination, is not aroused. Illumination arouses knowledge. So knowledge should be included within, illumination.

'Pravṛttiṁ ca'—So long as, a person is attached to the modes of nature, the propensities, such as greed, activity, undertaking of actions, unrest and craving, of the mode of passion arise. But when a man rises above, the three guṇas (modes), the propensities of the mode of passion, do not spring up, but there is activity free from attachment and desire. Thus, the activity of the transcendental person, is flawless.

The mode of passion, has two forms—attachment and actions. Out of the two, attachment is the root cause of all suffering. A transcendental person, is free from attachment. But he performs actions, without having any desire, for the fruit of actions. These actions denote 'Pravṛtti' (Activity).

'Mohameva ca pāṇḍava'—Delusion, can be of two kinds

(i) absence of discrimination, between the real and the unreal or between what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done. (ii) Error, in practical life. As far as the first kind of delusion, is concerned, a transcendental soul, is totally free from it. But, as far as, an error in practical life is concerned, even a transcendental person, may commit it. He may have an optical illusion, and may take a rope for a snake and a shell, as a piece of silver, by error.

'Na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati'—Illumination is the effect of Sattva, activity of Rajas and delusion of Tamas. A transcendental person, does not hate illumination, activity and delusion, when these are present, nor does he long for them, when they are absent. It means, that he does not hate them by thinking why they have evolved, and that they should disappear, nor does he desire, that they should continue or they should evolve, again. A person, who has transcended the three modes of nature, remains indifferent, to them.

An Important Fact

One thing, arises as 'cropping up of thoughts' while another is, 'to be engaged in thoughts' (have feelings of attachment and aversion). There is a world of difference, between the two. The former is cosmic, while the latter is personal. We are not responsible for what happens in the world, but we are held responsible, for what we do. Moreover, by having attachment and aversion for worldly activities, we assume our affinity with them i.e., we become a doer and so we have to get the fruit. If we do not assume our affinity, with these, we cannot be responsible for them, and we will not, have to reap their fruit (because they are performed by the body, a fragment of the world) in the same way, as we are not held responsible for the numberless actions, which are performed, in the world, through cosmic power. So a striver, should have neither attachment nor aversion to good

and evil propensities, evolved from the three modes of nature i.e., he should not assume affinity with them.

These propensities, appear in the mind, of even transcendental souls. They appear and again disappear. But, he has neither attachment nor aversion for them, he does not even perceive them, as such because he beholds, nothing else besides the Lord, in the entire universe.

One is to perceive, while the other is automatically seen. 'To see' comes within 'doing' and 'automatically seen' comes, within 'what happens.' A fault lies in 'seeing', not in 'what is automatically seen.' A striver, should not feel perturbed, even if he perceives the worst propensity, in his mind. He should have, neither attachment nor aversion to it. He commits an error, that he is either attached to those propensities, or has an aversion to them, and so he is entangled. Lord Rāma says to His younger brother, Bharata in the Rāmācaritamānasa:—

"O dear! There are innumerable virtues and vices evolved, by the deluding potency of the Lord. Discrimination, consists in their non-perception while ignorance consists in their perception" (7/41).

A striver, should think seriously, that dispositions appear and disappear, but he (the self) remains the same. The changeable cannot see the changeable, only the changeless can see, the changeable. This is a rule. It proves, that the self is an observer, while the dispositions, are to be observed. So, he is different from them. So he should not assume his affinity with them, he should, neither be pleased nor displeased with, the appearance and disappearance of the kaleidoscopic, mutable and perishable, dispositions. He should ever remain fixed, in his real self, which is non-changing, immutable and imperishable.

Appendix—The man, who transcends guṇas, desires neither the favourable circumstances to continue nor the unfavourable ones to disappear. Having realized his immutability, he has the knowledge of the desirable and the undesirable circumstances,

but he (the Self) is not affected by them. The propensities of the mind change but he himself remains untainted. The striver should not be affected by dispositions because the transcendental soul is the ideal for a striver and the striver is his follower.

It is inevitable for every striver that he should not identify the Self with the body. The dispositions are there in the mind, not in the Self. Therefore a striver should regard these dispositions neither as good nor bad nor in the Self. The reason is that these propensities are fleeting but the Self ever remains the same. Had these propensities been in us (the Self), they would have persisted, so long as the Self exists. But this is every one's experience that we ever exist but the propensities appear and disappear. These propensities are evolute of prakṛti, while we (the Self) are identified with God. Therefore the Self, who experiences the modifications apart from the Self, remains uniform.



उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते।

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥

udāsīnavadāsīno guṇairyo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ityeva yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate

He who like one unconcerned, is not moved by the modes of nature and established in the self remains apathetic without wavering, knows, that it is only the modes, that act. 23

Comment:—

'Udāsīnavadāsīnaḥ'—When two persons fight, he who sides with either is called, partial. He who is just, to both is a mediator, while 'Udāsīna' is he, who sees the two but has an attitude of indifference, towards either of the two. From the view point of a realized soul, who has risen above the three guṇas, there is no existence of the world, except God. He himself has merged in God. So to whom should he be indifferent? Therefore, no question