

in the body, an insignificant fragment of the lower nature. Because of this entanglement he, instead of attaining only bliss and bliss, is suffering only miseries and sorrows. As in the teats of a cow where there is only milk, there a cattle-louse drinks only blood. Goswāmī Tulasīdāsajī Mahārāja says—

ānāda-sindhu-madhya tava bāsā, binu jāne kasa marasi piyāsā
(Vinayapatrikā 136/2)

(A man's residence is in the ocean of bliss but he is dying of thirst without knowing this fact.)



आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

ābrahmabhuvanālokaḥ punarāvartino'rjuna
māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate

All worlds, from the abode of Brahmā downwards, are by nature subject to birth; But O Arjuna, O son of Kuntī, on attaining Me there is no rebirth. 16

Comment:—

'Ābrahmabhuvanālokaḥ punarāvartino'rjuna'—O Arjuna! All the worlds from the abode of Brahmā downwards, are subject to return i.e., after living there, at the end of the enjoyment of the fruit of their virtuous actions, men have to return.

The highest plane of existence, is said to be the abode of Brahmā. In this mortal world of ours, the king, who possesses a prosperous kingdom, a young healthy body, no enemy, an obedient and sincere family, and servants, is regarded as completely happy. The mortal gods, who as a fruit of their virtuous actions, obtain the abode of gods after enjoying that fruit, again come back to the mortal world (Gītā 9/21). They, are a hundred times happier, than the kings. The permanent gods (Ājāna devatā), who at the beginning of universe, were gods and continue to be gods, till

the end of the universe, are a hundred times happier, than mortal gods. Indra, the ruler of the gods, is regarded as a hundred times happier than permanent gods. The abode of Brahmā, is supposed to possess, a hundred times more happiness, than that of Indra and the bliss of a liberated soul, is regarded as a hundred times more happy than the abode of Brahmā. It means, that from the highest region of Brahmā, to the mortal world of the earth, happiness is limited, changing and perishable. But, the bliss of God-realization is limitless, fathomless, and permanent.

'Punarāvartinah' also means, that a man being a fraction of God, is eternal. But, so long as, he is unable to realize God, he even after attaining the highest plane of existence, of the abode of Brahmā, has to come back.

Here a doubt arises, that even by beholding devotees, saints, liberated souls and representatives of the Lord, a man attains salvation, why do people not attain salvation by beholding Brahmā, in the abode of Brahmā? Why do they return? The clarification is, that the concession of salvation, by beholding, is applicable to men of this mortal world, only because this human body has been bestowed only for God-realization. This concession, has not been granted, for the other worlds. But in those worlds also, if anyone has a keen desire for salvation, he can attain it. Even amongst animals and birds, there have been devotees. But, such cases are, exceptions. Had this concession been granted in the other worlds, all those, going to the hell must have attained salvation, because all of them beheld 'Yamarāja', the god of death, a representative of the Lord. But, there is no mention in the scriptures, that they attained salvation. It proves, that in other worlds, a man even by beholding the liberated souls etc., does not attain salvation.

An Important Fact

This embodied soul is an eternal fraction of God. Divine

abode is that whence there is no return. As a man after finishing his journey returns to his home so this embodied being, having a fraction of divinity should also return to the supreme abode of his Lord whence there is no return. Question arises as to why after death does it return?

As a man, goes to a divine discourse, he returns to his house, after listening to it. But, if he forgets anything there, he has to go back again, to take it. Similarly if the soul, gets attached to wealth, property and family etc., it has to come back. The body dies, so it has to occupy place in any other body, of a man or an animal or a bird etc. The Lord, declares in the Gītā, "Attachment to the three types (modes), born of Nature, is the cause of his birth, in good and evil wombs" (13/21). It means, that he, who has desire and attachment, for the world, will have to come back.

'Māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate'—'All the worlds, from the abode of Brahmā downwards, are subject to rebirth. But on attaining Me there is no rebirth.' Here 'Māmupetya' (having attained Me) means "See Me in reality, know Me in essence, and enter into Me" (Gītā 11/54).

The soul, has not to come back, because being a fraction of the Lord it reaches Him, and the Supreme Abode of the Lord, is its real home. Its real home, is not the abode of Brahmā etc., and so it has to come back from there. As a man, can board a bus or a train only upto the station, for which he has got the ticket, and then he has to get off. Similarly, a man has to come back, after enjoying the fruit of his virtuous actions, in the worlds of the gods. But if he is in his own house, he has not to leave it. A man cannot attain salvation, even after reaching the highest plane of existence. So a striver, should never aspire to enjoy the pleasure of the higher worlds.

All the worlds, including that of Brahmā, lead a man to bondage. Those persons who reach abode of Brahmā and return

possess demoniac properties. This demoniac disposition leads one to bondage. If the man takes refuge in God, he is liberated from the bondage, because he possesses divine virtues (Gītā 16/5).

An Exceptional Fact

There are two kinds of persons, who go to the abode of Brahmā—those who perform virtuous deeds in order to enjoy the pleasures of the abode of Brahmā, and those whose aim is to attain God, but at the time of death, because of having a desire for pleasure, deviate from spiritual discipline and so they have to go to the world of Brahmā. The latter, at the time of final annihilation, are liberated with Brahmā, after enjoying pleasure there. This liberation is called 'Krama-Mukti', (gradual liberation or gradual salvation), when Brahmā after his span of life vacates the place for the succeeding Brahmā. But strivers, who realize the Lord here, their salvation is called 'Sadyo-Mukti' (instant Salvation).

In the second verse of this chapter, Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "How are You to be realized, at the time of death?" Lord Kṛṣṇa, answered this question, in the fifth verse. In the sixth verse, He explained the general rule that the predominating thought of the last moment, determines one's future destiny. In the seventh verse, He asks Arjuna, to think of Him, at all times. This seventh verse, is connected with the fourteenth verse. In between (from the eighth to the thirteenth verse) there is, context of the Lord, Who is endowed with attributes and is formless, and also attributeless-formless Lord.

The verses, eighth to sixteenth, prove that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, Who is endowed with attributes and is formless as well as the Lord, Who is attributeless and formless. So the supreme aim of a man's life is to attain ever-enhancing love for Him.

Appendix—Here a man may raise a doubt that when all worlds, from the abode of Brahmā downwards, are manifestations

of God—‘Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ’, then why are the people who go to those worlds, being reborn? The clarification is that the people, who go to those worlds, don’t consider the worlds the manifestation of God but regard them as material for pleasure (Gītā 9/21). They go to the abode of Brahmā to enjoy pleasures. As the fruit of their virtuous deeds, they attain the worlds upto the abode of Brahmā and (when they exhaust their merit), they are reborn in the world of mortals.

Attachment to pleasure is the root of rebirth. Here the Lord by the expression ‘ābrahmabhuvanālokāḥ’ means that a man has to return to the mortal world even after reaching the abode of Brahmā, the last limit of the mundane pleasures. All the pleasures of infinite universes cannot make a man happy and cannot free him from the pangs of birth and death, therefore he who hopes to derive pleasure from the world, is under illusion.

Two types of people go to the abode of Brahmā—those who go to the abode of Brahmā in order to enjoy pleasures and then return to this mortal world; and the others are those who along the bright path go to the abode of Brahmā and then with Brahmā they are liberated (Gītā 8/24). They don’t return to this mortal world, this is because of the glory of their aim, it is not the glory of Brahmāloka (abode of Brahmā). One has certainly to return from the abode of Brahmā because neither an enjoyer nor a Yogī can live there forever. All upto the abode of Brahmā is the fruit of action. When every action has a beginning and an end, then how can its fruit be imperishable?

The term ‘mām’ in ‘māmupetya’ denotes entire-God (God in full), Who is the master of both parā and aparā. Having attained Him, there is no birth in this sorrowful world. But such God-realized souls also by God’s will, can descend to this mortal world either as the representatives of God (Kāraka puruṣa) or as His incarnation. But such a birth does not depend on the performance of actions but it depends on God’s will.

