

transformed into Self-realization. But when there is an increase in greed, heedlessness, delusion and ignorance, then he can escape no loss, no suffering, no womb of the deluded and no hell viz., he has to face them all.



Link:—In the fourteenth and the fifteenth verses, the Lord indicated the destiny, which awaits a man dying during the predominance of one of the modes of nature. Now in the next verse, He explains the different destinies awaiting those dying who are established, in the three guṇas (modes of nature).

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ

Those, who are established in the mode of goodness rise high, those in the mode of passion, remain in the middle (regions); and those in the mode of ignorance sink low. 18

Comment:

'Ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattvasthā'—Sattvasthā (who are established in the mode of goodness), are those who have the predominance of the mode of goodness, and who because of that mode, observe self-control and fast, offer charity, and perform virtuous actions, such as running of cowpens and water huts, construction of roads, plantation of trees and supply of food free of cost etc. Such people, after giving up these physical body, go upwards to regions higher than the earth, viz., heaven etc., referred to in the fourteenth verse of the chapter, as the pure worlds of those, who know the Highest. Those persons who go to higher regions, have predominance of the fire element in their bodies acquired there.

'Madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ'—'Rājasāḥ' (who are established

in the mode of passion), are those who have predominance of passion and attachment, and who are engaged in pleasure and prosperity, without going against the ordinance of scriptures. Such persons, are reborn on the earth, as human beings, in whom there is predominance of the earth element.

The term 'tiṣṭhanti' (dwell), denotes that they dwell in the middle region i.e., they are reborn as human beings on the earth, because of their attachment to things and persons etc., while their conduct is in accordance with the ordinance of scriptures.

'Jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ'—Persons having predominance of the mode of ignorance, being overpowered by heedlessness, indolence and sleep, waste their time and money, on trifles and futile pursuits. They do not discharge their duties sincerely, they think ill of others and they perform evil actions, such as theft, robbery and fraud etc. Such persons, die in the predominance of 'Tamoguṇa', go downhill, and degrade themselves.

They go downwards in two ways—lower births and lower regions. They are either reborn, in lower species such as beasts, birds, moths, insects, snakes, scorpions and evil spirits etc., or they undergo terrible suffering and torture in the infernal regions, known as Vaitariṇī, Asipatra, Lālābhakṣa, Kumbhīpāka, Raurava and Mahāraurava etc. Those who in spite of having modes of goodness and passion, in their life, die during the predominance of the mode of ignorance, take birth in the womb of deluded (Gītā 14/15) while, those who have the predominance of the mode of ignorance throughout their life, after death, fall into a foul hell (Gītā 16/16). It means, that a person takes rebirth according to thoughts at the last moment, but gets pleasures or pains in that life, according to actions performed, in the previous birth. For example, if a man has performed good actions in his life, but if at the last moment he thinks of a dog, he will be reborn as a dog, but he will get comforts and luxuries. On the other hand,

if a person has performed evil actions, but if he thinks of a man at the time of death, he will take rebirth as a man, but he will be deprived even of the bare necessities of life, and will ever suffer, from diseases.

In order to develop the mode of goodness (Sāttvikaguṇa) a striver, should study the scripture, keep company of noble persons, reside in holy places of pilgrimages, devote mornings and evenings, the most suited time, to devotion and meditation, and discharge his duty according of his caste, creed, stage of life and the ordinance of scriptures. He should meditate on God and chant the sāttvika sacred formulas. In Śrīmadbhāgavata, there are ten factors, which influence in acquiring the guṇas (modes). These are—scriptures, water (diet), subjects (company), place, time, actions, birth, sacred formula, (mantra) and past influences (Saṁskāra). They develop Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika guṇas, according to their own nature.

An Important Fact

A person, having predominance of the mode of passion (Rajoguṇa), at the time of death, is reborn in the mortal world, as a human being (14/15) and a person established in the mode of passion, is also reborn as a human being (14/18). It means, that all human beings have only the mode of passion, they have neither the mode of goodness (Sattvagūṇa) nor the mode of ignorance (Tamoguṇa). But actually it is not so, because the Lord Himself declares, that when a man dies, during the predominance of Sattva (goodness), he attains to the pure worlds (14/14) and when he dies, being established in the mode of goodness, he goes to higher regions (14/18). Similarly, He declares that if a person dies, during the predominance of Tamas (ignorance), he is born in the womb of the deluded (14/15) and if he dies when he is established in the mode of ignorance, he sinks downwards (14/18). The three modes (guṇas) of goodness (Sattva), passion

(Rajas) and ignorance (Tamas) bind, the imperishable spirit to the body (14/5). The whole world, is deluded by the threefold modes, of nature (7/13). The doers are said to be, of three types—Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika (18/26—28). There is no being, in the entire universe, which is free, from the three modes born of nature (18/40).

Those who go to higher regions, have predominance of the mode of goodness, while the modes of passion and ignorance, occupy a secondary place. Those who are born in the mortal world as human beings, have predominance of the mode of passion, while the mode of goodness occupies, a subsidiary place and the mode of ignorance, occupies a third place. Those, who sink downwards have predominance of the mode of ignorance, while the modes of passion and goodness respectively, occupy the second and third place. Thus, when there is predominance of one of the modes in a person, he also possesses the other two modes, to a certain extent. Thus, with the predominance of anyone of the modes, every being has a different nature.

As the Lord, in spite of performing the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika actions, remains, above these threefold modes of nature (4/13), similarly, great men who transcend the modes of nature, remain unaffected by the reactions of the Sāttvika, Rājasika and Tāmasika, propensities (14/22). Therefore, adoration to the Lord and company of the transcendental souls, are helpful, for a striver in transcending, the modes of nature.

Appendix—If there is a little increase in Tamogūṇa, then a man is reborn in the womb of the stupid creatures and if there is much increase in Tamogūṇa, he is hurled into hells.



Link:—Having discussed the three modes of nature, from the fifth to the eighteenth verses, now the Lord, in the next two verses, discusses the means of rising above, the three guṇas (modes) as well as, its reward.