Matthew Horton

Hinduism Modes Essay

**According to the Bhagavad Gita, which paths can one take to gain freedom from the modes and attain the "supreme goal"?**

Worship through devotional service. Be careful not to become to engrossed in the performance of rituals. Do not allow oneself to be distracted from the meaning of the rituals. Worship in one’s actions in everything one does. This is the most surefire way towards achieving enlightenment. Devotees are the most blessed and are the people most likely to come to realization and join the Supreme lord. Do not be concerned with the position of oneself but focus instead on the greatness and worship of the supreme omnipotent Godhead Krishna. “If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.” - ([1] Ch.12.Text.10.) If this cannot be done focusing one’s work with devotion is an admirable and constructive way towards reaching enlightenment.

**Describe the characteristics of the three modes of material nature.**

“Material nature consists of the three modes - - goodness, passion, and ignorance.” - ([1] Ch.14.Text.5.) The three modes effect all things material. Even dehinam, translated “the living entity”, the underlying immaterial force of life and pervasive nature of god is affected by the modes after having interacted with the material world. So these are known to be constant forces that are as pervasive as the concept of the polymorphic monotheism that is Hindu god. The purest form of existence in the material world.

The mode of goodness is described like a trap. Those with goodness are more personally developed than someone engaged in the other two modes. They will be more knowledgeable. The tradeoff is that through this increased knowledge they will improve the world around them and become more attached to it. This mode is said there is no liberation for those in the mode of goodness.

Passion is more so directed towards corporeal concerns. Someone entangled in the mode of passion will be concerned with the material world but not necessarily with material things. Like a Japanese salaryman, they will be engrossed in providing for the family and can become entrapped in being further engrossed in work and labor for pride, status, and maybe greed. This is considered very difficult to escape.

“O son of Bharata, the mode of darkness causes the delusion of all living entities. The result of this mode is madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.” - ([1] Ch.14.Text.8.) There is little to no hope for someone engaged in the mode of ignorance. They are lazy in all mannerisms. There is no understanding of the world around them and no desire for further understanding. Characterized by the lack of drive, lack of investment in self, and lack of investment in the world around themselves. They can do no good for anyone.

[1] “Bhagavad-gita As It Is” by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Original 1972 edition with some corrections to obvious typographical errors and missing references added