

## - CHAPTER 14 -

### The Three Modes Of Material Nature

#### Chapter 14—Text 1

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi  
jñānānām jñānam uttamam  
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve  
parām siddhim ito gatāḥ*

#### SYNONYMS

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *param*—transcendental; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *pravakṣyāmi*—I shall speak; *jñānānām*—of all knowledge; *jñānam*—knowledge; *uttamam*—the supreme; *yaj*—which; *jñātvā*—knowing; *munayaḥ*—the sages; *sarve*—all; *parām*—transcendental; *siddhim*—perfection; *itaḥ*—from this world; *gatāḥ*—attained.

#### TRANSLATION

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Again I shall declare to you this supreme wisdom, the best of all knowledge, knowing which all the sages have attained the supreme perfection.**

#### PURPORT

From the Seventh Chapter to the end of the Twelfth Chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa in detail reveals the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Now, the Lord Himself is further enlightening Arjuna. If one understands this chapter through the process of philosophical speculation, he will come to an understanding of devotional service. In the Thirteenth Chapter, it was clearly explained that by humbly developing knowledge one may possibly be freed from material entanglement. It has also been explained that it is due to association with the modes of nature that the living entity is entangled in this material world. Now, in this chapter, the Supreme Personality explains what those modes of nature are, how they act, how they bind and how they give liberation. The knowledge explained in this chapter is proclaimed by the Supreme Lord to be superior to the knowledge given so far in other chapters. By understanding this knowledge, various great sages attained perfection and transferred to the spiritual world. The Lord now explains the same knowledge in a better way. This knowledge is far, far superior to all other processes of

knowledge thus far explained, and knowing this many attained perfection. Thus it is expected that one who understands this Fourteenth Chapter will attain perfection.

## Chapter 14—Text 2

*idaṁ jñānam upāśritya  
mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ  
sarge 'pi nopajāyante  
pralaye na vyathanti ca*

### SYNONYMS

*idaṁ*—this; *jñānam*—knowledge; *upāśritya*—taking shelter of; *mama*—My; *sādharmaṁ*—same nature; *āgatāḥ*—having attained; *sarge api*—even in the creation; *na*—never; *upajāyante*—are born; *pralaye*—in the annihilation; *na*—nor; *vyathanti*—are disturbed; *ca*—also.

### TRANSLATION

By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature like My own. Thus established, one is not born at the time of creation or disturbed at the time of dissolution.

### PURPORT

After acquiring perfect transcendental knowledge, one acquires qualitative equality with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, becoming free from the repetition of birth and death. One does not, however, lose his identity as an individual soul. It is understood from Vedic literature that the liberated souls who have reached the transcendental planets of the spiritual sky always look to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, being engaged in His transcendental loving service. So, even after liberation, the devotees do not lose their individual identities.

Generally, in the material world, whatever knowledge we get is contaminated by the three modes of material nature. Knowledge which is not contaminated by the three modes of nature is called transcendental knowledge. As soon as one is situated in that transcendental knowledge, he is on the same platform as the Supreme Person. Those who have no knowledge of the spiritual sky hold that after being freed from the material activities of the material form, this spiritual identity becomes formless, without any variegatedness. However, just as there is material variegatedness in this world, in the spiritual world there is also variegatedness. Those in ignorance of this think that spiritual existence is opposed to material variety. But actually, in the spiritual sky, one attains a spiritual form. There are spiritual activities, and the spiritual situation is called devotional life. That atmosphere is said to be uncontaminated, and there one is equal in quality with the Supreme Lord. To obtain such knowledge, one must develop all the spiritual qualities. One who thus develops the spiritual qualities is not affected either by the creation or by the destruction of the material world.

## Chapter 14—Text 3

*mama yonir mahad brahma  
tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham  
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
tato bhavati bhārata*

### SYNONYMS

*mama*—My; *yonir*—source of birth; *mahat*—the total material existence; *brahma*—supreme; *tasmin*—in that; *garbham*—pregnancy; *dadhāmi*—create; *aham*—I; *sambhavaḥ*—the possibility; *sarva-bhūtānām*—of all living entities; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *bhavati*—becomes; *bhārata*—O son of Bharata.

### TRANSLATION

The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth, and it is that Brahman that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living beings, O son of Bharata.

### PURPORT

This is an explanation of the world: everything that takes place is due to the combination of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña*, the body and the spirit soul. This combination of material nature and the living entity is made possible by the Supreme God Himself. The *mahat-tattva* is the total cause of the total cosmic manifestation; and that total substance of the material cause, in which there are three modes of nature, is sometimes called Brahman. The Supreme Personality impregnates that total substance, and thus innumerable universes become possible. This total material substance, the *mahat-tattva*, is described as Brahman in the Vedic literature (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.19): *tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annam ca jāyate*. The Supreme Person impregnates that Brahman with the seeds of the living entities. The twenty-four elements, beginning from earth, water, fire and air, are all material energy, and they constitute what is called *mahad brahma*, or the great Brahman, the material nature. As explained in the Seventh Chapter, beyond this there is another, superior nature—the living entity. Into material nature the superior nature is mixed by the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thereafter all living entities are born of this material nature.

The scorpion lays its eggs in piles of rice, and sometimes it is said that the scorpion is born out of rice. But the rice is not the cause of the scorpion. Actually, the eggs were laid by the mother. Similarly, material nature is not the cause of the birth of the living entities. The seed is given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and they only seem to come out as products of material nature. Thus every living entity, according to his past activities, has a different body, created by this material nature, so that the entity can enjoy or suffer according to his past deeds. The Lord is the cause of all the manifestations of living entities in this material world.

## Chapter 14—Text 4

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya  
mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ  
tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir  
aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

### SYNONYMS

*sarva-yoniṣu*—in all species of life; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *mūrtayaḥ*—forms; *sambhavanti*—they appear; *yāḥ*—which; *tāsāṁ*—of all of them; *brahma*—the supreme; *mahat yonir*—source of birth in the material substance; *aham*—I; *bīja-pradaḥ*—the seed-giving; *pitā*—father.

### TRANSLATION

**It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.**

### PURPORT

In this verse it is clearly explained that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the original father of all living entities. The living entities are combinations of the material nature and the spiritual nature. Such living entities are seen not only on this planet but on every planet, even on the highest, where Brahmā is situated. Everywhere there are living entities; within the earth there are living entities, even within water and within fire. All these appearances are due to the mother, material nature, and Kṛṣṇa's seed-giving process. The purport is that the material world is impregnated with living entities, who come out in various forms at the time of creation according to their past deeds.

## Chapter 14—Text 5

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti  
guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ  
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho  
dehe dehinam avyayam*

### SYNONYMS

*sattvaṁ*—the mode of goodness; *rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *iti*—thus; *guṇāḥ*—the qualities; *prakṛti*—material nature; *sambhavāḥ*—produced of; *nibadhnanti*—do condition; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *dehe*—in this body; *dehinam*—the living entity; *avyayam*—eternal.

### TRANSLATION

Material nature consists of three modes—goodness, passion and ignorance. When the eternal living entity comes in contact with nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, he becomes conditioned by these modes.

### PURPORT

The living entity, because he is transcendental, has nothing to do with this material nature. Still, because he has become conditioned by the material world, he is acting under the spell of the three modes of material nature. Because living entities have different kinds of bodies, in terms of the different aspects of nature, they are induced to act according to that nature. This is the cause of the varieties of happiness and distress.

## Chapter 14—Text 6

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt  
prakāśakam anāmayam  
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti  
jñāna-saṅgena cānagha*

### SYNONYMS

*tatra*—there; *sattvam*—the mode of goodness; *nirmalatvāt*—being purest in the material world; *prakāśakam*—illuminating; *anāmayam*—without any sinful reaction; *sukha*—with happiness; *saṅgena*—by association; *badhnāti*—conditions; *jñāna*—with knowledge; *saṅgena*—by association; *ca*—also; *anagha*—O sinless one.

### TRANSLATION

**O sinless one, the mode of goodness, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode become conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge.**

### PURPORT

The living entities conditioned by material nature are of various types. One is happy, another is very active, and another is helpless. All these types of psychological manifestations are causes of the entities' conditioned status in nature. How they are differently conditioned is explained in this section of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The mode of goodness is first considered. The effect of developing the mode of goodness in the material world is that one becomes wiser than those otherwise conditioned. A man in the mode of goodness is not so much affected by material miseries, and he has a sense of advancement in material knowledge. The representative type is the *brāhmaṇa*, who is supposed to be situated in the mode of goodness. This sense of happiness is due to understanding that, in the mode of goodness, one is more or less free from sinful reactions. Actually, in the Vedic literature it is said that the mode of goodness means greater knowledge and a greater sense of happiness.

The difficulty here is that when a living entity is situated in the mode of goodness he becomes conditioned to feel that he is advanced in knowledge and is better than others. In this way he becomes conditioned. The best examples are the scientist and the philosopher. Each is very proud of his knowledge, and because they generally improve their living conditions, they feel a sort of material happiness. This sense of advanced happiness in conditioned life makes them bound by the mode of goodness of material nature. As such, they are attracted toward working in the mode of goodness, and, as long as they have an attraction for working in that way, they have to take some type of body in the modes of nature. Thus there is no likelihood of liberation, or of being transferred to the spiritual world. Repeatedly one may become a philosopher, a scientist or a poet, and repeatedly

become entangled in the same disadvantages of birth and death. But, due to the illusion of the material energy, one thinks that that sort of life is pleasant.



## Chapter 14—Text 7

*rajo rāgātmakam viddhi  
tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam  
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya  
karma-saṅgena dehinam*

### SYNONYMS

*rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *rāga-ātmakam*—born of desire or lust; *viddhi*—know; *tṛṣṇā*—with hankering; *saṅga*—association; *samudbhavam*—produced of; *tat*—that; *nibadhnāti*—binds; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *karma-saṅgena*—by association with fruitive activity; *dehinam*—the embodied.

### TRANSLATION

**The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings, O son of Kuntī, and because of this the embodied living entity is bound to material fruitive actions.**

### PURPORT

The mode of passion is characterized by the attraction between man and woman. Woman has attraction for man, and man has attraction for woman. This is called the mode of passion. And when the mode of passion is increased, one develops the hankering for material enjoyment. He wants to enjoy sense gratification. For sense gratification, a man in the mode of passion wants some honor in society, or in the nation, and he wants to have a happy family, with nice children, wife and house. These are the products of the mode of passion. As long as one is hankering after these things, he has to work very hard. Therefore it is clearly stated here that he becomes associated with the fruits of his activities and thus becomes bound by such activities. In order to please his wife, children and society and to keep up his prestige, one has to work. Therefore, the whole material world is more or less in the mode of passion. Modern civilization is considered to be advanced in the standard of the mode of passion. Formerly, the advanced condition was considered to be in the mode of goodness. If there is no liberation for those in the mode of goodness, what to speak of those who are entangled in the mode of passion?

## Chapter 14—Text 8

*tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi  
mohanam sarva-dehinām  
pramādālasya-nidrābhis  
tan nibadhnāti bhārata*

### SYNONYMS

*tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *tu*—but; *ajñāna-jam*—produced of ignorance; *viddhi*—know; *mohanam*—the delusion; *sarva-dehinām*—of all embodied beings; *pramāda*—with madness; *ālasya*—indolence; *nidrābhiḥ*—and sleep; *tat*—that; *nibadhnāti*—binds; *bhārata*—O son of Bharata.

### TRANSLATION

**O son of Bharata, know that the mode of darkness, born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied living entities. The results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.**

### PURPORT

In this verse the specific application of the word *tu* is very significant. This means that the mode of ignorance is a very peculiar qualification of the embodied soul. The mode of ignorance is just the opposite of the mode of goodness. In the mode of goodness, by development of knowledge, one can understand what is what, but the mode of ignorance is just the opposite. Everyone under the spell of the mode of ignorance becomes mad, and a madman cannot understand what is what. Instead of making advancement, one becomes degraded. The definition of the mode of ignorance is stated in the Vedic literature. *Vastu-yāthātmya-jñānāvarakam viparyaya-jñāna-janakam tamaḥ*: under the spell of ignorance, one cannot understand a thing as it is. For example, everyone can see that his grandfather has died and therefore he will also die; man is mortal. The children that he conceives will also die. So death is sure. Still, people are madly accumulating money and working very hard all day and night, not caring for the eternal spirit. This is madness. In their madness, they are very reluctant to make advancement in spiritual understanding. Such people are very lazy. When they are invited to associate for spiritual understanding, they are not much interested. They are not even active like the man who is controlled by the mode of passion. Thus another symptom of one embedded in the mode of ignorance is that he sleeps more than is required. Six hours of sleep is sufficient, but a man in the mode of ignorance sleeps at least ten or twelve hours a day. Such a man appears to be always dejected and is addicted to intoxicants and sleeping. These are the symptoms of a person conditioned by the mode of ignorance.

## Chapter 14—Text 9

*sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati  
rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata  
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ  
pramāde sañjayaty uta*

### SYNONYMS

*sattvaṁ*—the mode of goodness; *sukhe*—in happiness; *sañjayati*—binds; *rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *karmaṇi*—in fruitive activity; *bhārata*—O son of Bharata; *jñānam*—knowledge; *āvṛtya*—covering; *tu*—but; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *pramāde*—in madness; *sañjayati*—binds; *uta*—it is said.

### TRANSLATION

O son of Bharata, the mode of goodness conditions one to happiness; passion conditions one to fruitive action; and ignorance, covering one's knowledge, binds one to madness.

### PURPORT

A person in the mode of goodness is satisfied by his work or intellectual pursuit, just as a philosopher, scientist or educator may be engaged in a particular field of knowledge and may be satisfied in that way. A man in the mode of passion may be engaged in fruitive activity; he owns as much as he can and spends for good causes. Sometimes he tries to open hospitals, give to charity institutions, etc. These are signs of one in the mode of passion. And the mode of ignorance covers knowledge. In the mode of ignorance, whatever one does is good neither for him nor for anyone.

## Chapter 14—Text 10

*rajaḥ tamaś cābhibhūya  
sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata  
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś caiva  
tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā*

### SYNONYMS

*rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *ca*—also; *abhibhūya*—surpassing; *sattvaṁ*—the mode of goodness; *bhavati*—becomes prominent; *bhārata*—O son of Bharata; *rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *sattvaṁ*—the mode of goodness; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *ca*—also; *eva*—like that; *tamaḥ*—the mode of ignorance; *sattvaṁ*—the mode of goodness; *rajaḥ*—the mode of passion; *tathā*—thus.

### TRANSLATION

Sometimes the mode of goodness becomes prominent, defeating the modes of passion and ignorance, O son of Bharata. Sometimes the mode of passion defeats goodness and ignorance, and at other times ignorance defeats goodness and passion. In this way there is always competition for supremacy.

### PURPORT

When the mode of passion is prominent, the modes of goodness and ignorance are defeated. When the mode of goodness is prominent, passion and ignorance are defeated. And when the mode of ignorance is prominent, passion and goodness are defeated. This competition is always going on. Therefore, one who is actually intent on advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to transcend these three modes. The prominence of some certain mode of nature is manifested in one's dealings, in his activities, in eating, etc. All this will be explained in later chapters. But if one wants, he can develop, by practice, the mode of goodness and thus defeat the modes of ignorance and passion. One can similarly develop the mode of passion and defeat goodness and ignorance. Or one can develop the mode of ignorance and defeat goodness and passion. Although there are these three modes of material nature, if one is determined he can be blessed by the mode of goodness, and by transcending the mode of goodness he can be situated in pure goodness, which is called the *vasudeva* state, a state in which one can understand the science of God. By the manifestation of particular activities, it can be understood in what mode of nature one is situated.

## Chapter 14—Text 11

*sarva-dvāreṣu dehe 'smiṇ  
prakāśa upajāyate  
jñānam yadā tadā vidyād  
vivṛddham sattvam iti uta*

### SYNONYMS

*sarva-dvāreṣu*—in all the gates; *dehe asmiṇ*—in this body; *prakāśaḥ*—the quality of illumination; *upajāyate*—develops; *jñānam*—knowledge; *yadā*—when; *tadā*—at that time; *vidyāt*—know; *vivṛddham*—increased; *sattvam*—the mode of goodness; *iti uta*—thus it is said.

### TRANSLATION

The manifestations of the mode of goodness can be experienced when all the gates of the body are illuminated by knowledge.

### PURPORT

There are nine gates in the body: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals and the anus. When every gate is illuminated by the symptoms of goodness, it should be understood that one has developed the mode of goodness. In the mode of goodness, one can see things in the right position, one can hear things in the right position, and one can taste things in the right position. One becomes cleansed inside and outside. In every gate there is development of the symptoms of happiness, and that is the position of goodness.

## Chapter 14—Text 12

*lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ  
karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā  
rajasy etāni jāyante  
vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha*

### SYNONYMS

*lobhaḥ*—greed; *pravṛttiḥ*—activity; *ārambhaḥ*—endeavor; *karmaṇām*—in activities; *aśamaḥ*—uncontrollable; *spṛhā*—desire; *rajasi*—of the mode of passion; *etāni*—all these; *jāyante*—develop; *vivṛddhe*—when there is an excess; *bharata-ṛṣabha*—O chief of the descendants of Bharata.

### TRANSLATION

O chief of the Bhāratas, when there is an increase in the mode of passion the symptoms of great attachment, fruitive activity, intense endeavor, and uncontrollable desire and hankering develop.

### PURPORT

One in the mode of passion is never satisfied with the position he has already acquired; he hankers to increase his position. If he wants to construct a residential house, he tries his best to have a palatial house, as if he would be able to reside in that house eternally. And he develops a great hankering for sense gratification. There is no end to sense gratification. He always wants to remain with his family and in his house and to continue the process of sense gratification. There is no cessation of this. All these symptoms should be understood as characteristic of the mode of passion.

## Chapter 14—Text 13

*aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca  
pramādo moha eva ca  
tamasy etāni jāyante  
vivṛddhe kuru-nandana*

### SYNONYMS

*aprakāśaḥ*—darkness; *apravṛttiḥ*—inactivity; *ca*—and; *pramādaḥ*—madness; *mohaḥ*—illusion; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *tamasi*—the mode of ignorance; *etāni*—these; *jāyante*—are manifested; *vivṛddhe*—when developed; *kuru-nandana*—O son of Kuru.

### TRANSLATION

**When there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, O son of Kuru, darkness, inertia, madness and illusion are manifested.**

### PURPORT

When there is no illumination, knowledge is absent. One in the mode of ignorance does not work by a regulative principle; he wants to act whimsically, for no purpose. Even though he has the capacity to work, he makes no endeavor. This is called illusion. Although consciousness is going on, life is inactive. These are the symptoms of one in the mode of ignorance.

## Chapter 14—Text 14

*yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu  
pralayaṁ yāti deha-bhṛt  
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān  
amalān pratīpadyate*

### SYNONYMS

*yadā*—when; *sattve*—the mode of goodness; *pravṛddhe*—developed; *tu*—but; *pralayaṁ*—dissolution; *yāti*—goes; *deha-bhṛt*—the embodied; *tadā*—at that time; *uttama-vidāṁ*—of the great sages; *lokān*—the planets; *amalān*—pure; *pratīpadyate*—attains.

### TRANSLATION

**When one dies in the mode of goodness, he attains to the pure higher planets of the great sages.**

### PURPORT

One in goodness attains higher planetary systems, like Brahmaloka or Janoloka, and there enjoys godly happiness. The word *amalān* is significant; it means “free from the modes of passion and ignorance.” There are impurities in the material world, but the mode of goodness is the purest form of existence in the material world. There are different kinds of planets for different kinds of living entities. Those who die in the mode of goodness are elevated to the planets where great sages and great devotees live.



## Chapter 14—Text 15

*rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā  
karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate  
tathā pralīnas tamasi  
mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate*

### SYNONYMS

*rajasi*—in passion; *pralayaṁ*—dissolution; *gatvā*—attaining; *karma-saṅgiṣu*—in the association of those engaged in fruitive activities; *jāyate*—takes birth; *tathā*—similarly; *pralīnaḥ*—being dissolved; *tamasi*—in ignorance; *mūḍha-yoniṣu*—in animal species; *jāyate*—takes birth.

### TRANSLATION

When one dies in the mode of passion, he takes birth among those engaged in fruitive activities; and when one dies in the mode of ignorance, he takes birth in the animal kingdom.

### PURPORT

Some people have the impression that when the soul reaches the platform of human life it never goes down again. This is incorrect. According to this verse, if one develops the mode of ignorance, after his death he is degraded to an animal form of life. From there one has to again elevate himself, by an evolutionary process, to come again to the human form of life. Therefore, those who are actually serious about human life should take to the mode of goodness and in good association transcend the modes and become situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is the aim of human life. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that the human being will again attain to the human status.

## Chapter 14—Text 16

*karmaṇaḥ sukr̥tasyāhuḥ  
sāttvikam nirmalam phalam  
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham  
ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam*

### SYNONYMS

*karmaṇaḥ*—of work; *su-kṛtasya*—pious; *āhuḥ*—is said; *sāttvikam*—in the mode of goodness; *nirmalam*—purified; *phalam*—the result; *rajasas*—of the mode of passion; *tu*—but; *phalam*—the result; *duḥkham*—misery; *ajñānam*—nonsense; *tamasaḥ*—of the mode of ignorance; *phalam*—the result.

### TRANSLATION

The result of pious action is pure and is said to be in the mode of goodness. But action done in the mode of passion results in misery, and action performed in the mode of ignorance results in foolishness.

### PURPORT

The result of pious activities in the mode of goodness is pure. Therefore the sages, who are free from all illusion, are situated in happiness. But activities in the mode of passion are simply miserable. Any activity for material happiness is bound to be defeated. If, for example, one wants to have a skyscraper, so much human misery has to be undergone before a big skyscraper can be built. The financier has to take much trouble to earn a mass of wealth, and those who are slaving to construct the building have to render physical toil. The miseries are there. Thus *Bhagavad-gītā* says that in any activity performed under the spell of the mode of passion, there is definitely great misery. There may be a little so-called mental happiness—“I have this house or this money”—but this is not actual happiness. As far as the mode of ignorance is concerned, the performer is without knowledge, and therefore all his activities result in present misery, and afterwards he will go on toward animal life. Animal life is always miserable, although, under the spell of the illusory energy, *māyā*, the animals do not understand this. Slaughtering poor animals is also due to the mode of ignorance. The animal killers do not know that in the future the animal will have a body suitable to kill them. That is the law of nature. In human society, if one kills a man he has to be hanged. That is the law of the state. Because of ignorance, people do not perceive that there is a complete state controlled by the Supreme Lord. Every living creature is a son of the Supreme Lord, and He does not tolerate even an ant’s being killed. One has to pay for it. So indulgence in animal killing for the taste of the tongue is the grossest kind of ignorance. A human being has no need to kill animals, because God has supplied so many nice things. If one indulges in meat-eating anyway, it is to be understood that he is acting in ignorance and is making his future very dark. Of all kinds of animal

killing, the killing of cows is most vicious because the cow gives us all kinds of pleasure by supplying milk. Cow slaughter is an act of the grossest type of ignorance. In the Vedic literature (*Ṛg Veda* 9.4.64) the words *gobhiḥ prīṇita-matsaram* indicate that one who, being fully satisfied by milk, is desirous of killing the cow is in the grossest ignorance. There is also a prayer in the Vedic literature that states:

*namo brahmaṇya-devāya  
go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca  
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya  
govindāya namo namaḥ*

“My Lord, You are the well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*, and You are the well-wisher of the entire human society and world.” ( *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.19.65) The purport is that special mention is given in that prayer for the protection of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*. *Brāhmaṇas* are the symbol of spiritual education, and cows are the symbol of the most valuable food; these two living creatures, the *brāhmaṇas* and the cows, must be given all protection—that is real advancement of civilization. In modern human society, spiritual knowledge is neglected, and cow killing is encouraged. It is to be understood, then, that human society is advancing in the wrong direction and is clearing the path to its own condemnation. A civilization which guides the citizens to become animals in their next lives is certainly not a human civilization. The present human civilization is, of course, grossly misled by the modes of passion and ignorance. It is a very dangerous age, and all nations should take care to provide the easiest process, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to save humanity from the greatest danger.

## Chapter 14—Text 17

*sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam  
rajaso lobha eva ca  
pramāda-mohau tamaso  
bhavato 'jñānam eva ca*

### SYNONYMS

*sattvāt*—from the mode of goodness; *sañjāyate*—develops; *jñānam*—knowledge; *rajasah*—from the mode of passion; *lobhah*—greed; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *pramāda*—madness; *mohau*—and illusion; *tamasaḥ*—from the mode of ignorance; *bhavataḥ*—develop; *ajñānam*—nonsense; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also.

### TRANSLATION

**From the mode of goodness, real knowledge develops; from the mode of passion, greed develops; and from the mode of ignorance develop foolishness, madness and illusion.**

### PURPORT

Since the present civilization is not very congenial to the living entities, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is recommended. Through Kṛṣṇa consciousness, society will develop the mode of goodness. When the mode of goodness is developed, people will see things as they are. In the mode of ignorance, people are just like animals and cannot see things clearly. In the mode of ignorance, for example, they do not see that by killing one animal they are taking the chance of being killed by the same animal in the next life. Because people have no education in actual knowledge, they become irresponsible. To stop this irresponsibility, education for developing the mode of goodness of the people in general must be there. When they are actually educated in the mode of goodness, they will become sober, in full knowledge of things as they are. Then people will be happy and prosperous. Even if the majority of the people aren't happy and prosperous, if a certain percentage of the population develops Kṛṣṇa consciousness and becomes situated in the mode of goodness, then there is the possibility for peace and prosperity all over the world. Otherwise, if the world is devoted to the modes of passion and ignorance, there can be no peace or prosperity. In the mode of passion, people become greedy, and their hankering for sense enjoyment has no limit. One can see that even if one has enough money and adequate arrangements for sense gratification, there is neither happiness nor peace of mind. That is not possible, because one is situated in the mode of passion. If one wants happiness at all, his money will not help him; he has to elevate himself to the mode of goodness by practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When one is engaged in the mode of passion, not only is he mentally unhappy, but his profession and occupation are also very troublesome. He has to devise so many plans and schemes to acquire enough money to maintain his status quo. This is all miserable. In the mode of ignorance, people become mad. Being distressed by

their circumstances, they take shelter of intoxication, and thus they sink further into ignorance. Their future in life is very dark.

## Chapter 14—Text 18

*ūrdhvam gacchanti sattva-sthā  
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ  
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā  
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*ūrdhvam*—upwards; *gacchanti*—go; *sattva-sthāḥ*—those situated in the mode of goodness; *madhye*—in the middle; *tiṣṭhanti*—dwell; *rājasāḥ*—those situated in the mode of passion; *jaghanya*—of abominable; *guṇa*—quality; *vṛtti-sthāḥ*—whose occupation; *adhaḥ*—down; *gacchanti*—go; *tāmasāḥ*—persons in the mode of ignorance.

### TRANSLATION

Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets; and those in the abominable mode of ignorance go down to the hellish worlds.

### PURPORT

In this verse the results of actions in the three modes of nature are more explicitly set forth. There is an upper planetary system, consisting of the heavenly planets, where everyone is highly elevated. According to the degree of development of the mode of goodness, the living entity can be transferred to various planets in this system. The highest planet is Satyaloka, or Brahmaloḥka, where the prime person of this universe, Lord Brahmā, resides. We have seen already that we can hardly calculate the wondrous condition of life in Brahmaloḥka, but the highest condition of life, the mode of goodness, can bring us to this.

The mode of passion is mixed. It is in the middle, between the modes of goodness and ignorance. A person is not always pure, but even if he should be purely in the mode of passion, he will simply remain on this earth as a king or a rich man. But because there are mixtures, one can also go down. People on this earth, in the mode of passion or ignorance, cannot forcibly approach the higher planets by machine. In the mode of passion, there is also the chance of becoming mad in the next life.

The lowest quality, the mode of ignorance, is described here as abominable. The result of developing ignorance is very, very risky. It is the lowest quality in material nature. Beneath the human level there are eight million species of life—birds, beasts, reptiles, trees, etc.—and according to the development of the mode of ignorance, people are brought down to these abominable conditions. The word *tāmasāḥ* is very significant here. *Tāmasāḥ* indicates those who stay continuously in the mode of ignorance without rising to a higher mode. Their future is very dark.

There is an opportunity for men in the modes of ignorance and passion to be elevated to

the mode of goodness, and that system is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But one who does not take advantage of this opportunity will certainly continue in the lower modes.

## Chapter 14—Text 19

*nānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāram  
yadā draṣṭānupaśyati  
guṇebhyaś ca param vetti  
mad-bhāvam so 'dhigacchati*

### SYNONYMS

*na*—no; *anyam*—other; *guṇebhyaḥ*—than the qualities; *kartāram*—performer; *yadā*—when; *draṣṭā*—a seer; *anupaśyati*—sees properly; *guṇebhyaḥ*—to the modes of nature; *ca*—and; *param*—transcendental; *vetti*—knows; *mat-bhāvam*—to My spiritual nature; *saḥ*—he; *adhigacchati*—is promoted.

### TRANSLATION

**When one properly sees that in all activities no other performer is at work than these modes of nature and he knows the Supreme Lord, who is transcendental to all these modes, he attains My spiritual nature.**

### PURPORT

One can transcend all the activities of the modes of material nature simply by understanding them properly by learning from the proper souls. The real spiritual master is Kṛṣṇa, and He is imparting this spiritual knowledge to Arjuna. Similarly, it is from those who are fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that one has to learn this science of activities in terms of the modes of nature. Otherwise, one's life will be misdirected. By the instruction of a bona fide spiritual master, a living entity can know of his spiritual position, his material body, his senses, how he is entrapped, and how he is under the spell of the material modes of nature. He is helpless, being in the grip of these modes, but when he can see his real position, then he can attain to the transcendental platform, having the scope for spiritual life. Actually, the living entity is not the performer of different activities. He is forced to act because he is situated in a particular type of body, conducted by some particular mode of material nature. Unless one has the help of spiritual authority, he cannot understand in what position he is actually situated. With the association of a bona fide spiritual master, he can see his real position, and by such an understanding he can become fixed in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not controlled by the spell of the material modes of nature. It has already been stated in the Seventh Chapter that one who has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa is relieved from the activities of material nature. For one who is able to see things as they are, the influence of material nature gradually ceases.



## Chapter 14—Text 20

*guṇān etān atītya trīn  
dehī deha-samudbhavān  
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair  
vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute*

### SYNONYMS

*guṇān*—qualities; *etān*—all these; *atītya*—transcending; *trīn*—three; *dehī*—the embodied; *deha*—the body; *samudbhavān*—produced of; *janma*—of birth; *mṛtyu*—death; *jarā*—and old age; *duḥkhair*—the distresses; *vimuktaḥ*—being freed from; *amṛtam*—nectar; *aśnute*—he enjoys.

### TRANSLATION

When the embodied being is able to transcend these three modes associated with the material body, he can become free from birth, death, old age and their distresses and can enjoy nectar even in this life.

### PURPORT

How one can stay in the transcendental position, even in this body, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is explained in this verse. The Sanskrit word *dehī* means “embodied.” Although one is within this material body, by his advancement in spiritual knowledge he can be free from the influence of the modes of nature. He can enjoy the happiness of spiritual life even in this body because, after leaving this body, he is certainly going to the spiritual sky. But even in this body he can enjoy spiritual happiness. In other words, devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the sign of liberation from material entanglement, and this will be explained in the Eighteenth Chapter. When one is freed from the influence of the modes of material nature, he enters into devotional service.

## Chapter 14—Text 21

*arjuna uvāca*  
*kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān*  
*atīto bhavati prabho*  
*kim ācāraḥ katham caitāms*  
*trīn guṇān ativartate*

### SYNONYMS

*arjunaḥ uvāca*—Arjuna said; *kaiḥ*—by which; *liṅgaiḥ*—symptoms; *trīn*—three; *guṇān*—qualities; *etān*—all these; *atītaḥ*—having transcended; *bhavati*—is; *prabho*—O my Lord; *kim*—what; *ācāraḥ*—behavior; *katham*—how; *ca*—also; *etān*—these; *trīn*—three; *guṇān*—qualities; *ativartate*—transcends.

### TRANSLATION

**Arjuna inquired: O my dear Lord, by which symptoms is one known who is transcendental to these three modes? What is his behavior? And how does he transcend the modes of nature?**

### PURPORT

In this verse, Arjuna's questions are very appropriate. He wants to know the symptoms of a person who has already transcended the material modes. He first inquires of the symptoms of such a transcendental person. How can one understand that he has already transcended the influence of the modes of material nature? The second question asks how he lives and what his activities are. Are they regulated or nonregulated? Then Arjuna inquires of the means by which he can attain the transcendental nature. That is very important. Unless one knows the direct means by which one can be situated always transcendently, there is no possibility of showing the symptoms. So all these questions put by Arjuna are very important, and the Lord answers them.

## Chapter 14—Texts 22–25

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
prakāśam ca pravṛttim ca  
moham eva ca pāṇḍava  
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni  
na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati*

*udāsīna-vad āsīno  
guṇair yo na vicālyate  
guṇā vartanta ity evam  
yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate*

*sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthaḥ  
sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ  
tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras  
tulya-nindātma-saṁstutiḥ*

*mānāpamānayos tulyas  
tulyo mitrāri-pakṣayoḥ  
sarvārambha-parityāgī  
guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate*

### SYNONYMS

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *prakāśam*—illumination; *ca*—and; *pravṛttim*—attachment; *ca*—and; *moham*—illusion; *eva ca*—also; *pāṇḍava*—O son of Pāṇḍu; *na dveṣṭi*—does not hate; *sampravṛttāni*—although developed; *na nivṛttāni*—nor stopping development; *kāṅkṣati*—desires; *udāsīna-vat*—as if neutral; *āsīnaḥ*—situated; *guṇaiḥ*—by the qualities; *yaḥ*—one who; *na*—never; *vicālyate*—is agitated; *guṇāḥ*—the qualities; *vartante*—are acting; *ity evam*—knowing thus; *yaḥ*—one who; *avatiṣṭhati*—remains; *na*—never; *neṅgate*—flickers; *sama*—equal; *duḥkha*—in distress; *sukhaḥ*—and happiness; *sva-sthaḥ*—being situated in himself; *sama*—equally; *loṣṭa*—a lump of earth; *aśma*—stone; *kāñcanaḥ*—gold; *tulya*—equally disposed; *priya*—to the dear; *apriyaḥ*—and the undesirable; *dhīraḥ*—steady; *tulya*—equal; *nindā*—in defamation; *ātma-saṁstutiḥ*—and praise of himself; *māna*—in honor; *apamānayoḥ*—and dishonor; *tulyaḥ*—equal; *tulyaḥ*—equal; *mitra*—of friends; *ari*—and enemies; *pakṣayoḥ*—to the parties; *sarva*—of all; *ārambha*—endeavors; *parityāgī*—renouncer; *guṇa-atītaḥ*—transcendental to the material modes of nature; *saḥ*—he; *ucyate*—is said to be.

### TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O son of Pāṇḍu, he who does not hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present or long for them when they disappear; who is unwavering and undisturbed through all these reactions of the material

qualities, remaining neutral and transcendental, knowing that the modes alone are active; who is situated in the self and regards alike happiness and distress; who looks upon a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye; who is equal toward the desirable and the undesirable; who is steady, situated equally well in praise and blame, honor and dishonor; who treats alike both friend and enemy; and who has renounced all material activities—such a person is said to have transcended the modes of nature.

## PURPORT

Arjuna submitted three different questions, and the Lord answers them one after another. In these verses, Kṛṣṇa first indicates that a person transcendently situated has no envy and does not hanker for anything. When a living entity stays in this material world embodied by the material body, it is to be understood that he is under the control of one of the three modes of material nature. When he is actually out of the body, then he is out of the clutches of the material modes of nature. But as long as he is not out of the material body, he should be neutral. He should engage himself in the devotional service of the Lord so that his identity with the material body will automatically be forgotten. When one is conscious of the material body, he acts only for sense gratification, but when one transfers the consciousness to Kṛṣṇa, sense gratification automatically stops. One does not need this material body, and he does not need to accept the dictations of the material body. The qualities of the material modes in the body will act, but as spirit soul the self is aloof from such activities. How does he become aloof? He does not desire to enjoy the body, nor does he desire to get out of it. Thus transcendently situated, the devotee becomes automatically free. He need not try to become free from the influence of the modes of material nature.

The next question concerns the dealings of a transcendently situated person. The materially situated person is affected by so-called honor and dishonor offered to the body, but the transcendently situated person is not affected by such false honor and dishonor. He performs his duty in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and does not mind whether a man honors or dishonors him. He accepts things that are favorable for his duty in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, otherwise he has no necessity of anything material, either a stone or gold. He takes everyone as his dear friend who helps him in his execution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he does not hate his so-called enemy. He is equally disposed and sees everything on an equal level because he knows perfectly well that he has nothing to do with material existence. Social and political issues do not affect him, because he knows the situation of temporary upheavals and disturbances. He does not attempt anything for his own sake. He can attempt anything for Kṛṣṇa, but for his personal self he does not attempt anything. By such behavior one becomes actually transcendently situated.

## Chapter 14—Text 26

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa  
bhakti-yogena sevate  
sa guṇān samatītyaitān  
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

### SYNONYMS

*mām*—unto Me; *ca*—also; *yaḥ*—a person who; *avyabhicāreṇa*—without fail; *bhakti-yogena*—by devotional service; *sevate*—renders service; *saḥ*—he; *guṇān*—the modes of material nature; *samatītya*—transcending; *etān*—all these; *brahma-bhūyāya*—elevated to the Brahman platform; *kalpate*—becomes.

### TRANSLATION

**One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.**

### PURPORT

This verse is a reply to Arjuna's third question: What is the means of attaining to the transcendental position? As explained before, the material world is acting under the spell of the modes of material nature. One should not be disturbed by the activities of the modes of nature; instead of putting his consciousness into such activities, he may transfer his consciousness to Kṛṣṇa activities. Kṛṣṇa activities are known as *bhakti-yoga*—always acting for Kṛṣṇa. This includes not only Kṛṣṇa, but His different plenary expansions such as Rāma and Nārāyaṇa. He has innumerable expansions. One who is engaged in the service of any of the forms of Kṛṣṇa, or of His plenary expansions, is considered to be transcendently situated. One should also note that all the forms of Kṛṣṇa are fully transcendental, blissful, full of knowledge and eternal. Such personalities of Godhead are omnipotent and omniscient, and they possess all transcendental qualities. So if one engages himself in the service of Kṛṣṇa or His plenary expansions with unfailing determination, although these modes of material nature are very difficult to overcome, one can overcome them easily. This has already been explained in the Seventh Chapter. One who surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa at once surmounts the influence of the modes of material nature. To be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness or in devotional service means to acquire equality with Kṛṣṇa. The Lord says that His nature is eternal, blissful and full of knowledge, and the living entities are part and parcel of the Supreme, as gold particles are part of a gold mine. Thus the living entity, in his spiritual position, is as good as gold, as good as Kṛṣṇa in quality. The difference of individuality continues, otherwise there would be no question of *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga* means that the Lord is there, the devotee is there and the activity of exchange of love between the Lord and the devotee is there. Therefore the individuality of two persons is present in the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual

person, otherwise there would be no meaning to *bhakti-yoga*. If one is not situated in the same transcendental position with the Lord, one cannot serve the Supreme Lord. To be a personal assistant to a king, one must acquire the qualifications. Thus the qualification is to become Brahman, or freed from all material contamination. It is said in the Vedic literature, *brahmaiva san brahmāpy eti*. One can attain the Supreme Brahman by becoming Brahman. This means that one must qualitatively become one with Brahman. By attainment of Brahman, one does not lose his eternal Brahman identity as an individual soul.

## Chapter 14—Text 27

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham  
amṛtasyāvyayasya ca  
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya  
sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

### SYNONYMS

*brahmaṇaḥ*—of the impersonal *brahmajyotiḥ*; *hi*—certainly; *pratiṣṭhā*—the rest; *aham*—I am; *amṛtasya*—of the immortal; *avyayasya*—of the imperishable; *ca*—also; *śāśvatasya*—of the eternal; *ca*—and; *dharmasya*—of the constitutional position; *sukhasya*—of happiness; *aikāntikasya*—ultimate; *ca*—also.

### TRANSLATION

**And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness.**

### PURPORT

The constitution of Brahman is immortality, imperishability, eternity, and happiness. Brahman is the beginning of transcendental realization. Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is the middle, the second stage in transcendental realization, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth. Therefore, both Paramātmā and the impersonal Brahman are within the Supreme Person. It is explained in the Seventh Chapter that material nature is the manifestation of the inferior energy of the Supreme Lord. The Lord impregnates the inferior, material nature with fragments of the superior nature, and that is the spiritual touch in the material nature. When a living entity conditioned by this material nature begins the cultivation of spiritual knowledge, he elevates himself from the position of material existence and gradually rises up to the Brahman conception of the Supreme. This attainment of the Brahman conception of life is the first stage in self-realization. At this stage the Brahman-realized person is transcendental to the material position, but he is not actually perfect in Brahman realization. If he wants, he can continue to stay in the Brahman position and then gradually rise up to Paramātmā realization and then to the realization of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are many examples of this in Vedic literature. The four Kumāras were situated first in the impersonal Brahman conception of truth, but then they gradually rose to the platform of devotional service. One who cannot elevate himself beyond the impersonal conception of Brahman runs the risk of falling down. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that although a person may rise to the stage of impersonal Brahman, without going further, with no information of the Supreme Person, his intelligence is not perfectly clear. Therefore, in spite of being raised to the Brahman platform, there is the chance of falling down if one is not engaged in the devotional

service of the Lord. In the Vedic language it is also said, *raso vai saḥ, rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati*: “When one understands the Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of pleasure, Kṛṣṇa, he actually becomes transcendently blissful.” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1) The Supreme Lord is full in six opulences, and when a devotee approaches Him there is an exchange of these six opulences. The servant of the king enjoys on an almost equal level with the king. And so eternal happiness, imperishable happiness, and eternal life accompany devotional service. Therefore, realization of Brahman, or eternity, or imperishability, is included in devotional service. This is already possessed by a person who is engaged in devotional service.

The living entity, although Brahman by nature, has the desire to lord it over the material world, and due to this he falls down. In his constitutional position, a living entity is above the three modes of material nature, but association with material nature entangles him in the different modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. Due to the association of these three modes, his desire to dominate the material world is there. By engagement in devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is immediately situated in the transcendental position, and his unlawful desire to control material nature is removed. Therefore the process of devotional service, beginning with hearing, chanting, remembering—the prescribed nine methods for realizing devotional service—should be practiced in the association of devotees. Gradually, by such association, by the influence of the spiritual master, one’s material desire to dominate is removed, and one becomes firmly situated in the Lord’s transcendental loving service. This method is prescribed from the twenty-second to the last verse of this chapter. Devotional service to the Lord is very simple: one should always engage in the service of the Lord, should eat the remnants of foodstuffs offered to the Deity, smell the flowers offered to the lotus feet of the Lord, see the places where the Lord had His transcendental pastimes, read of the different activities of the Lord, His reciprocation of love with His devotees, chant always the transcendental vibration Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and observe the fasting days commemorating the appearances and disappearances of the Lord and His devotees. By following such a process one becomes completely detached from all material activities. One who can thus situate himself in the *brahmajyoti* or the different varieties of the Brahman conception is equal to the Supreme Personality of Godhead in quality.

*Thus end the Bhaktivedanta Purports to the Fourteenth Chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā in the matter of the Three Modes of Material Nature.*