

The enjoyer or sufferer (ego) is the Self conditioned by the mind and the intellect. This conditioning can never bring about any real bondage to the Self just as any harm done to my reflection in the mirror can never harm me.



य एषु मूढा विषयेषु बद्धाः रागोरुपाशेन सुदुर्दमेन ।
आयान्ति निर्यान्त्यध ऊर्ध्वमुच्चैः स्वकर्मदूतेन जवेन नीताः ॥ ७५ ॥

*ya eṣu mūḍhā viṣayeṣu baddhāḥ rāgorupāśena sudurdamena,
āyānti niryāntyadha ūrdhvamuccaiḥ svakarmadūtena javena nītāḥ. (75)*

75. Those thoughtless ones who are bound to these sense objects by the stout ropes of attachment, so very difficult to cut asunder, come and go, carried up and down by the compelling force of the convoy of the reactions of their own past actions.

We know that the sense objects are innocent tanmātrās which, in another form become the sense organs and the gross body. Steam cannot bind water, both being the same element in its subtle or gross form.

A saṁsārin is under the persecution of sense objects because of his attachment to them. These attachments are so strong that they become almost unbreakable. Thus bound to the gross, the ego ekes out its experiences and yearns for more. Every moment, it perpetrates endless activities each providing its own reactions to be enjoyed or suffered by the same ego. Thus repeatedly, the same ego visits different fields of activities and in a variety of environments. It again and again enters and leaves the arena of existence, reaping its reaction and sowing new seeds through desire prompted activities, which in their turn, compel it to come again to reap the fruits of the new harvest.

In the last line of this verse are two innocent looking phrases which, in an aphoristic form, give us the theory of karma as understood by the Vedāntin.

According to the *mimāṃsakas*, God is the almighty power omniscient and omnipotent. Just and true, He distributes the fruits of actions according to the purity of motives, clarity of conscience, sincerity of application, faithfulness and obedience to the eternal prescriptions laid down in the immortal Vedas. But according to Vedānta, much more intellectually satisfying is the theory that the reaction of an action is not anything different from the action itself.

An action performed in a particular time and place may fulfil itself, perhaps, in another place and in a future period of time. A bud fulfils itself in its fruit and there is no need for a supreme power's intervention for the petals to fall off and the fruit to mature. The life history of a thought expressed (action), is the immediate action which is finally concluded only in its reaction. 'Action and reaction are equal and opposite', one of Newton's laws, is perhaps true even in philosophy.

So, actions undertaken and performed at the instance of its delusory attachment with the sense objects, guide each egocentre to its self dictated destinies of enjoyment or sorrow. Thought by thought, wading through actions, the ego orders for itself a future world wherein it can enjoy its demand, be it the life of a pig or the life of a God-man. This is the burden of the term 'carried up and down' the ladder of evolution and devolution. Through right activity and discrimination when we develop detachment, the sense objects cannot bind us and our activities become oriented to end ignorance through discovery and knowledge of the eternal and true principle of divinity in us.

In Vedānta śāstra, the possible wombs, for taking births from, fall under two distinct groups, the higher and the lower. In the higher *yonīs*, we are born only to enjoy the ethereal sense objects which can provide, through the necessary instruments of perception and enjoyment, a greater share of finite joys for a longer period of existence. This is called the experience of 'heaven'. The other type is called the 'lower *yonīs*' which comprise of existence in the form of animals and birds, plants