



30. Tamoguṇa – Nature and Effects (113-116)

एषाऽऽवृत्तिर्नाम तमोगुणस्य शक्तिर्यया वस्त्ववभासतेऽन्यथा ।
सैषा निदानं पुरुषस्य संसृतेः विक्षेपशक्तेः प्रवणस्य हेतुः ॥ ११३ ॥

*eṣā''vṛtirnāma tamoguṇasya śaktiriyayā vastvavabhāstate'nyathā,
saiṣā nidānaṁ puruṣasya saṁsṛteḥ vikṣepaśakteḥ pravaṇasya hetuḥ. (113)*

113. *The veiling power (āvṛti) is the power of tamas, which makes things appear to be other than what they actually are. It causes man's repeated transmigration and initiates the action of the projecting power (vikṣepa).*

Māyā, in its tamoguṇa nature, acts in our personality as the 'power of veiling', by which Reality is veiled from our cognition and things are observed as something other than what they actually are. Tamas veils Reality and rajas creates agitations in the mind. As the result of a combination of these two, we see things which are not really there.

Things as they are, are veiled by tamas and the mind projects its imaginations upon them. Objects are not perceived in their right perspective when the inner personality is poisoned by rajas and tamas. This tamas is the springboard for man's repeated transmigration. Considering myself to be the body, the mind and the intellect, I function in the world of objects, emotions and thoughts, creating more and more vāsanās for myself. In order to exhaust these vāsanās, I must necessarily search for another physical body when the present one drops off. The cycle of birth and death goes on until all the vāsanās have been exhausted. All this is only because Reality is not clearly apprehended. Reality is veiled because of tamas. This tāmasika aspect of māyā is actually the cause for all the agitations of the mind.

So far, it has been described how man comes to suffer the persecutions of the world. The tāmasika aspect of māyā veils the intellect, and so the intellect cannot have the right judgement of things. When the intellect is veiled by tamas, the mind under the influence of rajas, projects a wrong idea of things perceived by the sense organs. The individual then gets excited.

When the rope is not recognised as a rope, man suffers from the misconceptions projected by his own mind that it is a serpent. Similarly, due to the tamas in me, I am not able subjectively, to realise the nature of Brahman, the Ātman in me. In Its place, I recognise the subject-object world of experiences caused by the rajas in me. Not only do I not know that I am the Self – the Ātman – but in Its place I experience the limitations of the equipment of the body, mind and intellect, and their experiences.

So māyā plays in two ways – through her āvaraṇa-śakti (veiling power) and through her vikṣepa-śakti (projecting power) – which are due to tamas and rajas respectively.



प्रज्ञावानपि पण्डितोऽपि चतुरोऽप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मार्थदृक्
व्यालीढस्तमसा न वेत्ति बहुधा सम्बोधितोऽपि स्फुटम् ।
भ्रान्त्यारोपितमेव साधु कलयत्यालम्बते तद्गणान्
हन्तासौ प्रबला दुरन्ततमसः शक्तिर्महत्यावृत्तिः ॥ ११४ ॥

*prajñāvānapi paṇḍito'pi caturo'pyatyantasūkṣmārthadrk
vyālīḍhastamasā na vetti bahudhā sambodhito'pi sphuṭam,
bhrāntyāropitamēva sādhu kalayatyālabhate tadgaṇān
hantāsau prabalā durantatamasah śaktirmahatyāvṛtiḥ. (114)*

114. Even the wise and the learned and those who are proficient in the vision of the supremely subtle meaning of the scriptures, are overpowered by tamas and cannot comprehend Truth, even though it is clearly explained in various ways. They consider as real what is simply