

Chapter 14 (Of Religion by Separation from the Qualities)

Chapter 14: Of Religion by Separation from the Qualities

Krishna. Yet farther will I open unto thee

This wisdom of all wisdoms, uttermost,

The which possessing, all My saints have passed

To perfectness. On such high verities

Reliant, rising into fellowship

With Me, they are not born again at birth

Of Kalpas, nor at Pralayas suffer change!

This Universe the womb is where I plant

Seed of all lives! Thence, Prince of India, comes

Birth to all beings! Whoso, Kunti's Son!

Mothers each mortal form, Brahma conceives,

And I am He that fathers, sending seed!

Sattwan, Raias, and Tamas, so are named

The qualities of Nature, "Soothfastness,"

"Passion," and "Ignorance." These three bind down

The changeless Spirit in the changeful flesh.

Whereof sweet "Soothfastness," by purity

Living unsullied and enlightened, binds

The sinless Soul to happiness and truth;

And Passion, being kin to appetite,

And breeding impulse and propensity,

Binds the embodied Soul, O Kunti's Son!

By tie of works. But Ignorance, begot

Of Darkness, blinding mortal men, binds down

Their souls to stupor, sloth, and drowsiness.

Yea, Prince of India! Soothfastness binds souls
In pleasant wise to flesh; and Passion binds
By toilsome strain; but Ignorance, which blots
The beams of wisdom, binds the soul to sloth.
Passion and Ignorance, once overcome,
Leave Soothfastness, O Bharata! Where this
With Ignorance are absent, Passion rules;
And Ignorance in hearts not good nor quick.
When at all gateways of the Body shines
The Lamp of Knowledge, then may one see well
Soothfastness settled in that city reigns;
Where longing is, and ardour, and unrest,
Impulse to strive and gain, and avarice,
Those spring from Passion — Prince! — engrained; and where
Darkness and dulness, sloth and stupor are,
'Tis Ignorance hath caused them, Kuru Chief!
Moreover, when a soul departeth, fixed
In Soothfastness, it goeth to the place —
Perfect and pure — of those that know all Truth.
If it departeth in set habitude
Of Impulse, it shall pass into the world
Of spirits tied to works; and, if it dies
In hardened Ignorance, that blinded soul
Is born anew in some unlighted womb.
The fruit of Soothfastness is true and sweet;
The fruit of lusts is pain and toil; the fruit

Of Ignorance is deeper darkness. Yea!
For Light brings light, and Passion ache to have;
And gloom, bewilderments, and ignorance
Grow forth from Ignorance. Those of the first
Rise ever higher; those of the second mode
Take a mid place; the darkened souls sink back
To lower deeps, loaded with witlessness!
When, watching life, the living man perceives
The only actors are the Qualities,
And knows what rules beyond the Qualities,
Then is he come nigh unto Me!
The Soul,
Thus passing forth from the Three Qualities —
Whereby arise all bodies — overcomes
Birth, Death, Sorrow, and Age; and drinketh deep
The undying wine of Amrit.
Arjuna. Oh, my Lord!
Which be the signs to know him that hath gone
Past the Three Modes? How liveth he? What way
Leadeth him safe beyond the threefold Modes?
Krishna. He who with equanimity surveys
Lustre of goodness, strife of passion, sloth
Of ignorance, not angry if they are,
Not wishful when they are not: he who sits
A sojourner and stranger in their midst
Unruffled, standing off, saying — serene —
When troubles break, "These be the Qualities!

He unto whom — self-centred — grief and joy
Sound as one word; to whose deep-seeing eyes
The clod, the marble, and the gold are one;
Whose equal heart holds the same gentleness
For lovely and unlovely things, firm-set,
Well-pleased in praise and dispraise; satisfied
With honour or dishonour; unto friends
And unto foes alike in tolerance;
Detached from undertakings, — he is named
Surmounter of the Qualities!

And such —
With single, fervent faith adoring Me,
Passing beyond the Qualities, conforms
To Brahma, and attains Me!

For I am
That whereof Brahma is the likeness! Mine
The Amrit is; and Immortality
Is mine; and mine perfect Felicity!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XIV OF THE
BHAGAVAD-GITA,

Entitled "Gunatrayavibhagayog,"

Or "The Book of Religion by Separation from the Qualities."