

CHAPTER 14

THE MODES OF MATERIAL NATURE

Connection between Chapter 13 and Chapter 14

- ❖ Chapter 13 explained how the living-entity (*purusa*) is entangled in the external energy (*prakrti*) due to his desire for enjoyment
- ❖ Chapter 14 explains how material energy binds the soul through the three modes of material nature as indicated in *Bg.* 13.22; the knowledge of *Bg.* 13.22 will now be expanded
- ❖ The key verse connecting Chapter 13 to Chapter 14 is *Bg.* 13.22

BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 14

SECTION I (14.1 – 14.4) — THE LIBERATION AND CONDITIONING OF LIVING ENTITIES

- Krishna glorifies the knowledge that He will speak now
- By Him, the Supreme Lord, the material energy is impregnated with the living entities

SECTION II (14.5 – 14.9) — THE MODES BIND THE PURE SOUL

- The eternal living entity connects with the material energy thorough conditioning by the three modes of material nature
- One is conditioned by the mode of
 - Goodness: to happiness
 - Passion: to fruitive activities
 - Ignorance: to madness

SECTION III (14.10 – 14.13) — RECOGNIZING A MODE'S SUPREMACY

- Modes compete with one another for supremacy within an individual
- Manifestation from the mode of
 - Goodness: is knowledge
 - Passion: is attachment, uncontrollable desire and intense endeavor
 - Ignorance: is inactivity and madness

SECTION IV (14.14 – 14.18) — ACTING AND DYING WITHIN THE MODES

- Both, the results of one's action and the results after one's death, are predominated by a specific mode of nature and thus bring about certain results

SECTION V (14.19 – 14.27) — TRANSCENDING THE MODES

- One transcends all the modes by knowing the following two points:
 - All within this world takes place under the modes
 - Krishna's activities are transcendental to the modes
- Krishna explains that one can transcend the modes by engaging unflinchingly in full devotional service
- One will then come to Brahman platform of which Krishna is the source

SECTION I (14.1 – 14.4) THE LIBERATION AND CONDITIONING OF LIVING ENTITIES

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION I

Understanding the conditioning of the three modes
is a powerful tool to assist on the path of self-realisation


Texts 14.1 *– 14.2*

COMMON THEME: Introduction and glorification of Chapter 14

- ❖ One who understands this chapter attains liberation (not born at creation or disturbed at dissolution) and attains to transcendental nature like “My own” (14.2)
- ❖ Knowing which all the sages have attained the Supreme perfection (14.1)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.1 – 14.2

- (a) **What was revealed in Chapters 7 – 12** – Krishna reveals in detail the Absolute Truth as the Supreme Personality of Godhead
- (b) **How to understand this Chapter** – Through the process of philosophical speculation
- (c) **Result of such learning**
 - Freedom from material entanglement
 - One comes to an understanding of devotional service
- (d) **Why this knowledge is proclaimed superior to all** – because
 - Understanding the conditioning of the three modes is a powerful tool to assist one on the path of self-realization
 - By this knowledge many sages attained perfection and transferred to spiritual world
 - One can attain a transcendental nature like Krishna and thus attains liberation
 - Whoever understands Chapter 14 will attain perfection
- (e) **“Attaining transcendental natural like My own”** - implies
 - One acquires qualitative equality with the Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - Freedom from birth and death
 - One does not lose his identity as individual soul
 - *Ref. Vedic literatures* – Liberated souls in transcendental planets always look to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, being engaged in His loving service
- (f) **Transcendental knowledge defined**
 - Knowledge which is not contaminated by the three modes of material nature
 - Knowledge of knowing oneself on the same platform (in quality) as the Supreme Person
 - Lack of this knowledge of spiritual sky – They think liberation means that spiritual identity becomes formless without variegatedness
 - Conceptions in real knowledge
 - Form – Spiritual world is also full of variety just like the material world. In spiritual sky one attains a spiritual form
 - Activity – Spiritual world is full of spiritual activities – situation is called devotional life
 - That atmosphere is uncontaminated
 - Qualification – To obtain such knowledge, one must develop all spiritual qualities
 - Benefit of such qualities – He is not affected by creation and destruction of material world

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 14.2 & 14.3:** After glorifying the knowledge that He is about to reveal, Krishna begins to explain the relationship between material nature, the conditioned living entities and Himself

Texts 14.3 – 14.4

COMMON THEME: These verses explain how the soul comes into the material world and is placed within the modes of material nature

- ❖ Material nature is the mother, supplying living-entity with the body (14.3)
- ❖ The Lord puts him there by His potent glance and thus impregnates the material nature with the seed


FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.3 – 14.4

- (a) **Material nature is the mother, supplying living-entity with the body** (14.3)
 - The total material substance, called *Brahman* is the source of birth
 - Lord impregnates that *Brahman* with living entities
- (b) **Analogy: Scorpion lays its eggs in rice, but the rice is not the cause of the scorpion**
 - This refutes that material nature is the cause of the birth of living entities
 - Actual seed is given by the Supreme Lord himself
- (c) **Text 14.3 gives an explanation of the world as follows:**
 - Everything that takes place is due to combination of *ksetra* (body) and *ksetra-jna* (spirit soul)
 - This combination of the living-entity is made possible by the Supreme God himself
- (d) **Mahat-tattva – It is the total cause of the total cosmic manifestation;**
 - Total substance of the material cause, in which there are three modes of material nature, is sometimes called *Brahman*
 - Ref. *Mundaka Upanisad*
- (e) **‘Mahad-Brahma’ – Great Brahman refers to the material nature**
 - Constituted by 24 elements which constitute the inferior energy
 - This Living entity constitutes the superior energy
- (f) **Living entities are seen everywhere, on all the planets** (14.4)
 - On earth, even within water and fire
 - Even on the highest planet, where Brahma is situated

SECTION II (14.5 – 14.9) THE MODES BIND THE PURE SOUL

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION II

The three modes of nature bind the conditioned souls to matter by habituating him to various experiences and emotions

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION I & SECTION II:** Krishna now describes the soul’s entanglement. He first identifies Himself as the source—the ultimate father—of all living entities. The placement of the souls under the control of material nature is next described.

Text 14.5


THEME: The living entity gets conditioned

- ❖ The eternal living entity comes in contact with material nature and becomes conditioned by it. In other words, despite his desire for independent enjoyment, his existence is subject to strict control by the modes of material nature.
- ❖ The fault which causes the soul's conditioned state certainly rests in his own independent desire. We cannot blame Krishna any more than a criminal can blame a judge for his jail sentence.

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.5

(a) Why the transcendental living-entity suffers

- Living entity although transcendental, but has become conditioned by the material world and thus under the spell of material modes
- Different bodies and different activities under the different modes is the **“cause of varieties of happiness and distress”**

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 14.5 & 14.6:** The next group of verses describes the effects of each of the modes upon the conditioned soul. Texts 14.6, 14.7 and 14.8, one after another, explain the ways in which goodness, passion and ignorance force a soul to experience his existence

Texts 14.6* – 14.8*

COMMON THEME: Effects (Binding-force) of each of the modes upon the conditioned souls

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.6 – 14.8

- (a) **Three types of conditioned living entites** – happy, active, helpless (14.6)
- (b) **Representative type of “Goodness”** – Brahmana (14.6)
- (c) **The best examples for Goodness – Scientist, Philosopher and Poet** (14.6)
 - Proud of their knowledge
 - Sense of advanced happiness binds them and keeps them in repeated birth and death
 - Feel a sort of material happiness because of improved living conditions
 - What causes the sense of happiness – because one is more or less free from sinful reactions
 - Destiny – no likelihood of liberation
- (d) **Passion binds by the ropes of “Desire” and “Attachment”** (14.7*)
 - **Characteristic type** – Attraction between man and woman
 - **“Advancement of modern civilization”** – Is considered in the mode of passion (Formerly “advanced condition” was considered to be in the mode of goodness)
 - **Some “Products of mode of passion”**
 - Hankering for material enjoyment and sense gratification
 - Wants honour in society, nation etc.
 - Wants happy family with wife, house, children etc.
 - To construct a residence for sense gratification – One works hard for a palatial house as if it is eternal (14.12)
 - Thus bound by **“Fruits of work”**
 - **Destiny** – No chance of liberation

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.6 – 14.8 continued...

(e) **Ignorance (14.8)**

- “Tu” (But) – implies this mode is a very particular qualification of embodied soul. It is just the opposite of the mode of goodness (This is the difference from mode of goodness)
- Destiny – no advancement but one becomes degraded
- Definition of ‘Mode of ignorance’ in the Vedic literatures – Under the spell of ignorance one cannot under a thing as it is. This is manifested as follows:
 - **Madness:** Everyone is dying, but people are madly accumulating money and not caring for the eternal spirit
 - **Lazy:** Not Interested when invited to associate for spiritual understanding
 - **Sleep:** Six hours is sufficient, but in ignorance
 - One sleeps 10 – 12 hours per day
 - Always dejected
 - Addicted to intoxicants and sleeping

SUMMARIZED THEME 14A

WORKINGS OF THE THREE MODES				
Mode	Binding force (14.6 – 14.8)	Characteristics and manifestations (14.11 – 14.23)	Destination at death (14.14 – 14.15)	Results of action (14.16 – 14.18)
Goodness	Sense of: 1. Happiness 2. Satisfaction 3. Knowledge 4. Superiority	1. Illuminates the gates of the body with knowledge 2. Frees one from sinful reactions	Attains the pure, higher planets of the great sages	1. Pure 2. Knowledge (sees things as they are) 3. Elevation to higher planets like Brahmaloaka or Janaloka
Passion	1. Attachment to fruitive activities 2. Binds by the ropes of desire and attachment	1. Intense, unlimited desires and longings 2. Great attachment 3. Fruitive activities	Attains earthly planets	1. Misery 2. Greed 3. Earthly planets
Ignorance	1. Madness 2. Indolence (Laziness) 3. Sleep	1. Delusion/ illusion 2. Darkness 3. Madness 4. Inertia	Birth in lower species	1. Foolishness 2. Madness 3. Illusion 4. Life in hellish worlds

**SUMMARISED THEME 14B
OBSTACLES PRESENTED BY THE MODES**

A) GOODNESS

- **No impetus to take up spiritual life. Why?**
 - Because you're too happy and satisfied to do what Krsna says
- **Hard to be humble. Why?**
 - Have sense of superiority
- **Hard to learn. Why?**
 - I already know (have knowledge)

B) PASSION

- **Can't give up the fruits – Why?**
 - Because wants to fulfill unlimited desires
- Thus becomes very attached
- Often willing to sin to fulfill desires
- Thus cannot take up Bhakti with determination

C) IGNORANCE

- Too deluded to recognize Krishna's instructions
- Too lazy to perform austerities

Text 14.9*

THEME: This verse summaries Texts 14.6 – 14.8

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.9

- (a) **Difference between passion and ignorance** – Both may work hard but in:
- **Passion** – one engages in fruitive action and owns as much as he can, but spending for the good cause, e.g. Sometimes he opens hospitals, charity institutions etc.
 - **Ignorance** – All actions are neither good for him, nor for others: but one acts whimsically without following the regulative principles

SECTION III (14.10 – 14.13) RECOGNIZING A MODE'S SUPREMACY



LINK BETWEEN SECTION II & SECTION III:

Does one mode become predominant within a person? If so, how?

Text 14.10

THEME: Modes compete with each other

- ❖ After describing the effects of the modes, Krishna now tells Arjuna that the modes are not constant in their influence upon the living entity. According to our *karma*, our work, our association, our choice of food and so on, a particular mode becomes predominant within us.
- ❖ Here Krishna indicates the awkwardness of the eternal, nonchanging soul's predicament within this constantly changing world. Srila Prabhupāda therefore writes, ". . . One who is actually intent on advancing in Krishna consciousness has to transcend these three modes."

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.10

(a) Modes struggle to dominate each other

- If one is actually intent on advancing in Krishna consciousness, one has to transcend the mode
- "Vasudeva state" – State of pure goodness where one can understand the science of God

(b) How to identify the modes – Depending on the characteristics mentioned in 14.11 – 14.13

Texts 14.11 – 14.13

COMMON THEME: Symptoms of three modes – These verses explain how the effects of the three modes of material nature, as explained in Texts 14.6 – 14.8, are manifested externally

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.11 – 14.13

Certain concepts are defined below:

- (a) "All gates illuminated by knowledge" (14.11) – Implies
 - Perception by the senses based on knowledge, in the right position
 - Clean inside and out
- (b) **Darkness and inertia implies** (14.13)
 - Not works according to regulative principles
 - Works whimsically for no purpose
- (c) **Illusion** – Even though he has the capacity to work, he does not endeavor (14.13)

SECTION IV (14.14 – 14.18) ACTING AND DYING WITHIN THE MODES

Texts 14.14 – 14.15

COMMON THEME: Death in different modes

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.14 – 14.15

- (a) **Death in mode of goodness (14.14)**
- “Amalan” – indicates free from mode of passion and ignorance
 - Mode of goodness – Purest form of existence in material world
- (b) **Death in mode of passion and ignorance (14.15)**
- Establishes that after human life that soul can also go down to lower existence
 - This refutes that one can never go down from human life
 - Aim of human life
 - Take to mode of goodness
 - Take to good association
 - Gradually transcend all the three modes and situate yourself in Krishna consciousness

Texts 14.16* – 14.18*

COMMON THEME: Results of actions in different modes (Covered in Summarized Theme 14A above)

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.16 – 14.18

- (a) **Mode of passion results in misery**
- e.g. Building a skyscraper requires so much toil and misery for little happiness
 - One may experience so-called mental happiness e.g. I have this house or money
- (b) **Mode of Ignorance**
- Ignorance leads to misery – Examples:
 - Performer is without knowledge and therefore all activities lead to misery and next life is animal life
 - Animal life is always miserable but under illusion one does not understand this
 - Grossest type of ignorance – Slaughtering poor animals for the taste of tongue - especially cow killing is **most vicious**
 - Ref. Rg Veda – Killing cow after taking its milk is the grossest ignorance
- (c) **WARNING! Human society is advancing in the wrong direction**
- Ref. Vishnu Purana – “Namo brahmanya”
 - Brahmanas are the symbol of spiritual education
 - Cows are the symbol of most valuable food. They are very dear to Krishna
 - “Real advancement of civilization” implies that Brahamans and cows must be given all protection
 - Modern human society – spiritual knowledge is neglected, cow killing is encouraged
- (d) **Suggested solution:** All nations should take care to provide the easiest process, Krishna consciousness, to save humanity from the greatest danger

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.17*

- (a) **How does Krishna consciousness help**
 - One will develop the mode of goodness in this society
 - People will see things as they are
- (b) **Mode of ignorance** – One does not see things as they are because ‘no education’ makes one irresponsible e.g. one does not see the equal and opposite reactions of animal killing
- (c) **How to stop irresponsible activities and benefit the current civilization**
 - Educate to stop irresponsible behavior
 - Education makes them sober and one knows things as they are
 - Then one becomes happy and prosperous
- (d) **What if all do not take to this education**
 - Even if a certain percentage develops Krishna consciousness and become situated in the mode of goodness, then there is peace and prosperity all over
 - Otherwise under passion there will be no peace and prosperity
 - Makes one greedy and unlimited hankering for sense enjoyment
 - Even if one has money, he will neither be happy nor have peace of mind because under the mode of passion his profession and occupation are very troublesome
 - Devise so many plans and schemes to acquire money to maintain his status quo.
 - And ignorance makes one mad, distressed by various circumstances one takes shelter of intoxications and sinks further down – future is very dark
- (e) **Happiness is only possible in the mode of goodness by practicing Krishna consciousness; not just by earning money**


FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.18

- (a) **According to the degree of goodness one can go to different upper planetary systems**
- (b) **Passion is usually mixed, between goodness and ignorance**
 - Even if pure passion, one remains on earth as a king or a rich man
 - Otherwise may go down
 - May go mad in the next life
 - One cannot forcibly go to higher planets
- (c) **Mode of Ignorance**
 - Lowest Quality
 - Result is very risky
 - According to the degree one comes to any of the 8 million species
 - “*Tamasah*” – Those who continue to stay in ignorance without rising to the higher modes have a very dark future
- (d) **Krishna consciousness is the “System and opportunity to elevate to higher mode of goodness”**

SECTION V (14.19 – 14.27) TRANSCENDING THE MODES

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION V

Jnana stresses discrimination. Discrimination ultimately leads one to appreciate that he is not the body, that Krishna is Supreme, and that he should take shelter of Krishna to become free. Thus *jnana* is a path that culminates in *Bhakti*

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION IV & SECTION V:** Having described the all-pervasive control of the modes of nature, Krishna tells us in the next and final section of this chapter how to transcend the modes and explains His own position in relation to them.

Text 14.19*

THEME: Platform of real knowledge

- ❖ Three modes perform all material activities
- ❖ Supreme Lord controls all these modes

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXT 14.19

- One can understand reality only from proper authorities
- Sri Krishna is the ultimate authority because He is unaffected by the limitations and illusions of material nature
- One who has taken shelter of Sri Krishna is also free from the influence of the modes and can therefore also impart knowledge which brings liberation from the modes

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.19

- (a) **One can transcend by understanding this science properly** by learning from proper souls
- (b) **Real spiritual master is Krishna (Giving knowledge to Arjuna)**
 - Therefore learn this science from one fully in Krishna consciousness
 - Otherwise one's life will be misdirected
 - Know your real position and how you are entrapped in the modes and become fixed in Krishna consciousness, by the help of spiritual masters instructions
 - *Ref. Bg. 7.14* – Surrender in Krishna consciousness helps to overcome modes

Text 14.20

THEME: Result of realizing this knowledge i.e. the result of transcending the modes

- ❖ One becomes liberated (freedom from distress)
 - Devotional service in Krishna consciousness is a sign of liberation from material entanglement (*Ref BG Chapter 18*)
- ❖ One can relish nectar even in this life (Enjoys life on spiritual platform)
 - Text 14.20 explains how to relish transcendental position even in this body
 - “Dehi” – Indicates that even within the material body, by advancement in spiritual knowledge, one can be free from the modes of material nature
 - One can enjoy happiness of spiritual life even in this body
 - Till one goes to spiritual sky, where there is full happiness available



PLEASE NOTE:

Points of Purport 14.20 have already been included in the subpoints under the Theme above, therefore there is no Focus of learning section for this verse

Text 14.21*

THEME: Three questions asked by Arjuna

- ❖ What are the symptoms of one who has transcended the modes?
- ❖ What is his behavior?
- ❖ How does he transcend the modes?

Texts 14.22 – 14.25

COMMON THEME: Answers to the first 2 questions – “Symptoms” and “Behavior”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF TEXTS 14.22 – 14.25

- When one desires neither attainment of pleasure, nor escape from pain, he has transcended the modes of nature
- The embodied soul will always undergo dualities of loss and gain, but the liberated soul can remain unaffected by these things due to focusing his identity within

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 14.22 – 14.25

(a) **Symptoms of transcendence** – Krishna first indicates that such a person is free from envy and hankering

- No desire for or repulsion from manifestations of the modes – Illumination, attachment, delusion – This statement implies that:
 - As long as one is in the body one has to act neutrally
 - Engage in devotional service so that identification with the body will be forgotten
 - One does not need this body nor need to accept the dictations of the body
- Equipoised, transcendental and detached, knowing that the modes alone are active
 - How does the soul become aloof – He neither desires to enjoy the body, nor desires to go out of the body

(b) **Behavior/Dealings of one transcendental to the modes**

- Steady in all circumstances
 - Praise and blame
 - Honor and dishonor
 - Happiness or distress
 - Desirable or undesirable
- Deals equally with everyone and everything
 - Earth , Stone, Gold (Accepts whatever is favourable for his duty in Krishna consciousness)
 - Friend or enemy (Takes anyone who helps him in Krishna consciousness as dear friend and not hates so-called enemies)
- Equally disposed and sees everything on an equal level / Social and political issues do not affect him
 - Knows that he has nothing to do with material existence
 - Knows the situation of temporary upheavals and disturbances
- Does not attempt anything for his own sake but can attempt anything for Krishna


(c) **The basic point in terms of symptoms and behavior is the same:** A soul who has become liberated by cultivating knowledge of the modes of nature is detached from matter and the pushing of the modes

Text 14.26*
Method of transcending

THEME: Answers to the third question – By pure devotional service one can transcend and achieve Brahman liberation

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.26

- (a) **Suggested solution for transcending the modes** – Transfer your consciousness to Krishna activities called “*Bhakti-yoga*” and not disturb your consciousness by activities of the three modes
- (b) **Transfer to any form** – This includes not only Krishna, but all His plenary expansions. Service to any of these forms is transcendental
- (c) **All the forms are equipotent** – All the forms of Krishna are omnipotent, omniscient, transcendental and *sac-cid-ananda*
- (d) **Power of service** – Service with unfailing determination **to any form** helps to overcome the modes (Ref. *Bg.* 7.14)
- (e) **Qualification to serve** – To be in Krishna consciousness implies acquiring qualitative equality with Krishna (*sac-cid-ananda*)
 - *Analogy*: Gold mine and a particle of gold
 - *Analogy*: To be a personal assistant to the king one must acquire the qualifications
 - Qualification to serve Krishna is “**to become *Brahman*”**
 - To become *Brahman* implies to be freed from material contamination
 - *Ref. Vedic literature* – One can attain the Supreme Brahman by becoming *Brahman*, but not losing eternal individual identity
- (f) **Individuality in service is an eternal fact** – *Bhakti-yoga* means individuality is maintained eternally – *Bhakti-yoga* means:
 - **3 things** – The lord, the devotee, The process of *bhakti* (All 3 must be there)

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 14.26 & 14.27:** One may ask after reading 14.26 why one in full devotional service will attain Brahman. After all, his desire is not *Brahman* realization but Krishna’s service. Krishna therefore expands His answer for clarification and ends the chapter by describing His own relationship to *Brahman*. He thus again stresses *bhakti*.

Text 14.27*

THEME: Lord says: “And I am the basis of impersonal *Brahman*”

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 14.27

- (a) **Characteristics of brahman**
- Immortal, Imperishable, Eternal and Constitutional position of ultimate happiness
- (b) **Brahman is the first stage** of realizing the Absolute Truth. Both *Brahman* and *Paramatma* are within the realization of the Supreme Person. Different stages are as follows –
- **Living entity gets conditioned** – Lord impregnates the spiritual living entity into the material nature (*Bg.* 7.4 – 7.5)
 - **How living entity elevates** – When a living entity thus conditioned begins cultivating spiritual knowledge, he gradually rises up to the *Brahman* conception of Supreme
 - ***Brahman* conception as transcendental** – At this stage he is transcendental to the material position
 - **Perfect realization** – Brahman realisation is not perfect in realisation of Absolute Truth – One may stay at this position or gradually elevate to the Supreme Bhagavan realisation e.g. Four Kumaras
- (c) **Must elevate or fall down** – If one does not elevate beyond impersonal conception of *Brahman* – “There is a risk of falldown”
- Because the intelligence is not perfectly cleared
- (d) **Devotional service is the safest position** – It includes all the characteristics of *Brahman* realization
- *Ref. Taittiriya Upanisad* mentions Supreme Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of all pleasure
 - And when one understands this he actually becomes transcendently blissful
 - Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of six opulences, when a devotee approaches the Lord there is exchange of six opulences
 - *Analogy*: Servant of King enjoys equal opulence at the level of the King
 - Thus realisation of *Brahman* like eternity, imperishability and ultimate happiness are included in devotional service
- (e) **Summary of Chapter 14**
- Living entity, although *Brahman* in nature, has the desire to lord it over material nature
 - Desire to enjoy makes him fall down
 - Association with modes makes him desire to dominate the material world in different bodies.
 - How devotional service helps
 - Krishna consciousness immediately puts one in transcendental position
 - His unlawful desire to control material nature is removed
 - Practicing nine processes of devotional service in the association of devotees and under the influence of the spiritual master, removes one’s material desire to dominate and one becomes firmly fixed in devotional service
 - One thus situated in *Brahman* conception becomes equal in quality to the Supreme Personality of Godhead

CHAPTER 14 Appendix

Selected Texts extracted from "Surrender unto Me"

Text 14.1

Kṛṣṇa uses the word bhūyaḥ, "again," to indicate that He will repeat the knowledge He mentioned in Bg. 13.22. How is this knowledge "the best of all"? Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains Kṛṣṇa's words: "Again I will speak a kind of knowledge different from what I have spoken so far. It deals specifically with the modes of nature. It is the best of all kinds of knowledge about the prakṛti and the jīva, and it resembles a distillation of yogurt from milk. Realizing this knowledge and meditating upon it thoughtfully, all great sages attained, in this very world, correct perception of the Supreme Soul."

The proper use of intelligence is to understand śāstric truths. Usually, Śrīla Prabhupāda decries philosophical speculation because it is generally used as a process that attempts to uncover the Absolute Truth by one's limited intellectual strength. In his purport, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda invites readers to engage in philosophical speculation. Here, philosophical speculation refers to hearing from bona fide sources and then using one's intelligence to understand what has been heard.

Text 14.2

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa states that we attain this knowledge by worshiping the feet of our spiritual master.

Text 14.6

Arjuna is addressed as anagha, sinless. The two sins of the mode of goodness are attachment to sukha, happiness, and jñāna, knowledge, but Arjuna is not bound by either. It is attachment to happiness and knowledge (not happiness and knowledge themselves) that binds the living entity in the mode of goodness. Such attachment breeds pride, and both attachment and pride are symptoms of the mode of passion. In other words, attachment to jñāna causes ajñāna, ignorance. As Śrīla Prabhupada explains in his purport, "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."

Text 14.7

In text 6, the word nirmala, "pure," was used. Here, rāga, which can mean "colored," is used. The person in the mode of passion sees everything colored by his unlimited desires, and he experiences tṛṣṇā-saṅga, a thirst or hankering for boundless material enjoyment. Because of his intense, multiple hankerings, he is always forced to engage in karma-saṅga, hard work.

Text 14.8

In goodness we can work purely. In passion we at least produce fruits from our work that may be offered to Kṛṣṇa. Ignorance, however, produces nothing but deeper ignorance. Sattva, goodness, creates inactivity based on knowledge, but tama, ignorance, creates inactivity based on a lack of knowledge.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments: "The use of the word tu here indicates that ignorance is opposed to the other two modes. Pramāda, madness, opposes goodness; ālasya, indolence, opposes passion; and nidrā, sleep, opposes both goodness and passion."

Text 14.9

When one is contaminated by goodness, he is too self-satisfied to follow the dictates of the Supersoul. When one is contaminated by the mode of passion, his desires speak too loudly and he cannot hear the voice of his dear friend, the Supersoul. If one is contaminated by the mode of ignorance, he is too inert, ignorant and mad to hear the Supersoul. Thus the modes of nature condition the living entity and keep him satisfied in different encasements as he pursues pleasure in the material world.

Text 14.16

While developing our Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we must attempt to perform our services in at least the mode of goodness. Service tinged by passion and ignorance adversely affects our consciousness. How can we aspiring devotees become purified enough to serve in goodness?

Text 14.17

While text 16 describes the results of action in each of the three modes of nature, this text explains the intermediate causes of those results. Action in goodness results in knowledge, which brings about proper action resulting in purity. Action in passion produces misery because it is caused by unlimited desires and insatiable greed. Action in ignorance brings about madness and illusion, which cause one to act foolishly.

Text 14.18

Two verbs are used in this verse to tell of the destinations of those who act in the modes of nature. *Gacchanti*, “go,” is used twice to describe the destinations of those in goodness and those in ignorance. *Tiṣṭhanti*, “stay,” indicates that those in passion stay on earth in their next life.

Varieties of activity and other factors, as Kṛṣṇa explains to Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto, affect how we are influenced by the modes of nature: *āgama*, which *sāstras* we hear; *āpaḥ*, the water we drink and the types of food we eat; *prajā*, our association; *deśa*, where we live; *kāla*, the time of the day; *karma*, our activities; *janma*, our conditioning from birth; *dhyāna*, our thoughts; *mantras*, what we chant; and *saṁskāras*, the *varṇāśrama* ceremonies we undergo, which begin with impregnation and end with burial.

Text 14.19

Kṛṣṇa here equates transcending the modes of material nature with liberation from the material world. The first step is to observe the modes working upon us. Then, by observing the modes at work, we can understand that the modes, not we, are active, and that we are separate. In this way, we can come to understand that we are eternal living entities, separate from both our everyday activities and the modes.

The second step is to understand Kṛṣṇa’s position. Although Kṛṣṇa appears to be acting within the material sphere, He is fully transcendental.

Text 14.21

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa expands and rephrases the meanings of Arjuna’s questions. Arjuna first asks what symptoms of transcendence will manifest in a person no longer affected by the modes. The question rephrased is, “How do we understand that someone has already transcended?” The second question—“What is his behavior?”—means, “Is his behavior regulated or enacted according to his own desire?” The third question asks: “By what practices does he achieve transcendence?”

Text 14.26

While the process of knowledge just described (texts 22–25) gradually elevates one to the platform of equanimity, one engaged in full devotional service immediately and automatically transcends the modes of nature. The word *avyabhicāreṇa* implies having the tendency to render service to no one except Kṛṣṇa. Because the devotee is serving Kṛṣṇa exclusively, he has no opportunity to serve the modes. This is the direct process of transcendence. Therefore, he immediately reaches the Brahman platform, where the modes of material nature have no power over him. On that platform, which is fully spiritual and beyond the modes of nature, pure devotional service begins.

In his comment on text 2, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa stated that this knowledge was attained “by worshiping the feet of our spiritual master.” Why? Because development of a service mood, as opposed to an enjoying mood, shatters the glue that binds us to the material world. Thinking of ourselves as “my guru’s servant” and fixing his order as our life and soul frees us from *māyā*. The modes may dictate a variety of allurements to us, but devotees surrendered to their guru follow the guru’s instructions and do not heed the pushings of the modes. Their attitude of devotion and service, not merely the ability, like that of a *jñānī*, to discriminate between the modes and the pure soul, carries them to perfection.

Bhakti is for both the *sādhaka*, the practitioner, and the *siddha*, the perfect devotee. *Karmīs* and *jñānīs* must eventually give up their processes as they attain higher stages of consciousness, but one need never give up bhakti. Even *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, who do not desire the shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s service as their ultimate goal, must take to devotional service in order to achieve the fruit of their processes.

Text 14.27

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: “Kṛṣṇa is the concentrated form of Brahman, as the sun is the intensified form of light. Although Kṛṣṇa and Brahman are nondifferent, Kṛṣṇa is the support of Brahman. The completeness of Brahman is Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains Kṛṣṇa’s words: “Because everything is dependent on Me, if one worships Me with the desire for impersonal merging, he will merge into Brahman and attain the nature of Brahman.”

Arjuna, too, has confirmed Kṛṣṇa as the *param brahma*, the supreme truth, the Personality of Godhead, in Bg. 10.13.

Brahman is the basic transcendental platform upon which pure devotional service takes place. In Bg. 13.13 Kṛṣṇa said, “Brahman, the spirit, beginningless and subordinate to Me, lies beyond the cause and effect of this material world.” This Brahman, which is the goal of the impersonalists, is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it rests upon His existence.

In his purport to the opening verse of this chapter, Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that one could come to an understanding of devotional service by studying this chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, “The Three Modes of Material Nature,” through “philosophical speculation.” By applying our intelligence to understanding the nature of the modes’ stringent control in the world, we will understand the power of the Supersoul, who controls those modes. Then, if we are free from envy, we will understand our insignificance and surrender to that controller.