

CHAPTER THREE



Karma-Yoga Yoga Through the Principle of Action

ŚLOKA 1

अर्जुन उवाच—
ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥१॥

*arjuna uvāca
jyāyasi cet karmaṇas te / matā buddhir janārdana
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām / niyojayasi keśava*

arjuna uvāca—Arjuna said; *janārdana*—O Janārdana; *cet*—if; *te*—Your; *matā*—consideration; (is that) *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; (is) *jyāyasi*—better; *karmaṇah*—than fruitive work; *tat*—then; *kiṁ*—why?; *keśava*—O Keśava; *niyojayasi*—are You engaging; *mām*—me; *ghore*—in this ghastly; *karmaṇi*—work.

Arjuna said: O Janārdana, if You consider that intelligence related to *bhakti*, which is beyond the modes, is superior to action, then why, O Keśava, are You engaging me in this ghastly activity of fighting?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

This Third Chapter gives a detailed explanation of action (*karma*) offered to Śrī Bhagavān without expecting any material return (*niṣkāma-bhāva*). It also describes the wisdom of a person who is willing to conquer lust, anger and so forth.

From the *ślokas* in the previous chapter, Arjuna has understood that *guṇatītā bhakti*-yoga, which bestows freedom from the *guṇas* (*nistrai-guṇya*), is superior both to *jñāna*-yoga and to *niṣkāma-karma*-yoga. Now, in the mood of a friend (*sakhyabhāva*), he reproaches Śrī Bhagavān, who is eager to engage him in his prescribed duty of fighting, with the following words. “If that intelligence which is resolute (*vyavasāyātmikā*) and free from the *guṇas* (*guṇatītā*) is superior, then why, O Janārdana, are You engaging me in this ghastly warfare?” *Jana* means to Your own people and *ārdana* means giving pain, so Janārdana means by Your order You give pain to Your own people.

Arjuna also addresses Kṛṣṇa as Keśava. “No one can transgress Your order, because You are Keśava, the controller of both Brahmā and Mahādeva (*ka* means Brahmā, *īśa* means Mahādeva and *va* means controller).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In this *śloka* there is a mysterious secret behind Arjuna’s addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the names Keśava and Janārdana. Arjuna inquired, “O Janārdana, first You said that resolute intelligence (*vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*), which is beyond the modes (*guṇatītā*) and fixed in *bhakti*, is superior to *karma* (action). Why, then, are You engaging me in this ghastly warfare? Learned men are right in calling You Janārdana, for by Your order You give pain to Your own people who are dear to You and dependent on You. Janārdana is a very befitting name for You because You killed the *asura* named Jana, which is another indication of Your cruel nature. Keśava is another

appropriate name, because You killed the *asura* Keśī. Moreover, *ka* means Brahmā, *iśa* means Mahādeva and *va* means controller. Since You control them, You are called Keśava. How, then, can an insignificant person such as I transgress Your order? O Prabhu, be merciful to me!"

In Śrī Harivamśa Śrī Rudra (Śaṅkara) says in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His name, Keśava:

*ka iti brahmaṇo nāma / iśo ‘ham sarva-dehinām
āvāṁ tavāṅga-sambhūtau / tasmāt keśava-nāma bhāk*

Ka is Brahmā and I am *iśa* (Śaṅkara), the controller of all living entities. Since both of us were born from Your limbs, You are called Keśava.

ŚLOKA 2

**व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥२॥**

*vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena / buddhim mohayasīva me
tat ekam vada niścitta / yena śreyo ‘ham āpnuyām*

mohayasi iva—You seem to bewilder; *me*—my; *buddhim*—intelligence; *iva vyāmiśrena*—by (Your) apparently equivocal; *vākyena*—statements; *tat*—therefore; *vada*—please tell; *ekam*—one path; *yena*—by which; *niścitta*—ascertaining; *aham*—I; *āpnuyām*—may have; *śreyah*—welfare.

My intelligence is somewhat bewildered by Your apparently ambiguous statements. Please, therefore, tell me decisively which path will be most beneficial for me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān is telling His friend, "O sakhe Arjuna! It is a fact that *guṇātītā bhakti* is the most superior process because it is transcendental. But such *bhakti* can only be attained by

the mercy of My *mahā-bhakta* who is independent (transcendental to the *guṇas*) and *aikāntika* (one-pointed). It can never be attained by one's own endeavour. Therefore, become *nistrai-guṇya* (free from the *guṇas*). I bless you that you will become *nistrai-guṇya* by performing transcendental *bhakti* (*guṇatītā bhakti*) to Me. When this blessing fructifies, you will achieve *guṇatītā bhakti* by the mercy of an independent and *aikāntika-mahā-bhāgavat*, but, as I have already said, at present your eligibility (*adhikāra*) is to perform *karma* only."

Arjuna then says, "If this is so, why don't You definitively tell me to engage only in *karma*? Why are You drowning me in an ocean of doubts?" This is why Arjuna is speaking this *śloka* beginning with *vyāmiśreṇeva*, which has various implications. He is saying, "By such statements You are bewildering my intelligence. Moreover, initially You said: *karmay evādhikāras te* (Gītā 2.47). 'You only have the *adhikāra* to perform *karma*, your prescribed duty.' Then You said: *siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate* (Gītā 2.48). 'That equanimity in which one remains equipoised in success and failure is called *yoga*.' Then again, You said: *buddhi-yukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛta-duṣkṛte tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogah karmasu kauśalam* (Gītā 2.50). 'Intelligent persons abandon both pious and impious activities and, because *buddhi-yoga* is the highest goal of *karma*, they endeavour for *niṣkāma-karma*.' Here, by the word *yoga*, You are also referring to *jñāna*. Then You say: *yadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitariṣyati* (Gītā 2.52). 'When your intelligence crosses beyond the dense forest of delusion.' Here again, You are simply speaking about *jñāna*.

"In fact, the word *iva* ('like that' or 'it seems') implies that Your statement is not ambiguous. Since You are merciful, it is not Your desire to bewilder me. Besides, since I am not ignorant of these matters, it is appropriate for You to speak directly." The deep purport is that *karma* (action) in *sattva-*

guṇa is superior to *karma* in *rāgo-guṇa*. *Jñāna* is also in *sattva-guṇa*, but it is superior to *karma* in *sattva-guṇa*, and *nirguṇa-bhakti* is far superior to *jñāna*. “If You think that it is impossible for me to engage in *nirguṇa-bhakti*, then please simply instruct me on *sāttvika jñāna*, by which I will become free from bondage to this miserable material world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Action (*karma*) in *sattva-guṇa* is superior to action in *rāgo-guṇa*. *Jñāna* is superior to *karma* in *sattva-guṇa*, although it is also in *sattva-guṇa*. *Sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam*. “From *sattva-guṇa* real *jñāna* develops” (*Gitā* 14.17).

Superior to *jñāna* in *sattva-guṇa* is *nirguṇa-bhakti*, which is defined as follows in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.11-12):

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa / mayi sarva-guhāśaye
 mano-gatir avicchinnā / yathā gaṅgāmbhaso'mbudhau
 lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya / nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
 ahaituky avyavahitā / yā bhaktih puruṣottame*

While Kapiladeva was instructing His mother, Devahūti in *nirguṇa-bhakti*, He said, “Just as the water of the Gaṅgā flows naturally and without cessation towards the ocean, similarly that natural unbroken flow of the ātmā towards Me, who am situated within the cave of the heart of the living entity, merely hearing about My pastimes and qualities, which are blessed with extraordinary potency, is called *nirguṇa-bhakti-yoga*. *Nirguṇa-bhakti* is *anyābhilāṣa-śūnya*, devoid of the duality of the material world which arises from *dvitīya-abhiniveśa* (forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa), and it absorbs the performer favourably in continuous service to Me, Puruṣottama.”

To forget Kṛṣṇa and become absorbed in *māyā* is called *dvitīya-abhiniveśa*, absorption in the second or false object (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37). This gives rise to various separate interests, such as ‘I,’ ‘mine,’ ‘you’ and ‘yours’.

ŚLOKA 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच—
 लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
 ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

*śrī bhagavān uvāca
 loke'smin dvi-vidhā niṣṭhā / purā proktā mayānaghā
 jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām / karma-yogena yoginām*

śrī bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; *anagha*—O sinless one; *purā*—previously; *proktā*—it was clearly said; *mayā*—by Me; (*that*) *asmin*—this; *loke*—in the world; (*there are*) *dvi-vidhā*—two types of; *niṣṭhā*—strong faith; (*that*) *sāṅkhyānām*—of the analytical philosophers; *jñāna-yogena*—through the linking process of philosophical speculation; (*and that*) *yoginām*—of the *yogīs*; *karma-yogena*—through the *yoga* of *niṣkāma-karma*.

Śrī Bhagavān said, “O sinless Arjuna, I have already explained clearly that there are two types of firm faith in this world. The faith of the *sāṅkhya-vādī jñānīs* is in the path of *jñāna-yoga* and that of the *yogīs* is in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In response to Arjuna’s question, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “If I say that *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, which are the *sādhana* performed to attain *mokṣa*, are independent of each other, you will again ask Me to speak decisively on one of them. But as I have explained, the two types of *niṣṭhā* (staunch faith), *karma-niṣṭhā* and *jñāna-niṣṭhā*, are actually two consecutive stages on the same path. In fact, I have not said that there are two types of people who are eligible to achieve *mokṣa*.”

The two *ślokas* beginning with the present *śloka*, *loke 'smin*, are being spoken for this reason. As explained in the previous

chapter, *dvi-vidhā* indicates two types of *niṣṭhā*. Regarding this *niṣṭhā*, Kṛṣṇa is saying that, since in the stage of *jñāna* the heart of the *jñānī* is pure, *maryādā* (regulated discipline) can be established by the practice of *jñāna-yoga*. Only such persons who accept *maryādā* are well known in this world as *jñānīs*.

In *Gītā* (2.61) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya / yukta āśīta mat-parah
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi / tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

Therefore, after controlling all of their senses, the *yogīs* should remain under My shelter and devote themselves to Me. Only a person in control of his senses has fixed intelligence. Only he is *sthita-prajña*.

“On the other hand, there are those who lack the purity of heart to situate themselves on the path of *jñāna*, but are searching for the means to attain that path. The *maryādā* of such *yogīs* is established by following the path of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* which is offered unto Me. They are known as *karmīs*. In *Gītā* 2.31 it is said “For a *kṣatriya* there is no better engagement than to fight for religion.” Therefore the terms “*karmī*” and “*jñānī*” are only two appellations. However, generally when *karmīs* begin to purify their hearts by the process of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* they, too, become *jñānīs* who can in turn become liberated by the process of *bhakti*. This is the import of My statements.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The various processes of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna* and *tapasyā* cannot give their own results independently. They are only able to produce beneficial results by taking the support of *bhakti*. *Nirguṇa-bhakti*, however, can give *kṛṣṇa-prema* independently without the help of these other processes. *Bhakti-yoga* mixed with *jñāna* or *karma* is the *sādhana* for

achieving *mokṣa*. There are two types of *niṣṭhā* (staunch faith) related to this *sādhana*. The first is possessed by those with pure hearts, who ascend the path of *bhakti-yoga* through their steady faith in *sāṅkhya* or *jñāna-yoga*. The second is the faith of those whose hearts are impure, but who, by performing *niṣkāma-karma* offered to Śrī Bhagavān, can also ascend the path of *jñāna-yoga* and ultimately achieve *bhakti*.

ŚLOKA 4

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्वैकर्म्यं पुरुषोऽशनुते ।
न च सन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥४॥

*na karmaṇām anārambhān / naiśkarmyam puruṣo'śnute
na ca sannyasanād eva / siddhim samadhibigacchati*

(it is) *na anārambhāt*—not by refraining from; *karmaṇām*—prescribed duties; (that) *puruṣah*—a person; *śnute*—attains; *naiśkarmyam*—freedom from reaction; *ca*—and; (it is) *na*—not; *eva*—only; *sannyasanāt*—by renouncing prescribed duties; (that a person whose heart is impure) *samadhibigacchati*—attains; *siddhim*—perfection.

Without performing *karma* as prescribed in *śāstra*, a person cannot attain knowledge in the form of *naiśkarmya*, nor can a person with an impure heart attain perfection merely by renouncing action (*sannyāsa*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In this *śloka* beginning with the word *na*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining that *jñāna* will not appear in an impure heart. One cannot attain *naiśkarmya* (freedom from *karma* and its reaction), without performing the *karma* (action) prescribed in *śāstra* and consequently one cannot attain *jñāna*. Those persons whose hearts are impure cannot attain perfection

merely by accepting *sannyāsa*, the renunciation of prescribed *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Jñāna does not appear unless the heart is pure, and without *jñāna* one cannot perfect *sannyāsa*, which is a limb of the process of attaining *mokṣa*. Therefore, until one attains *jñāna* by purity of heart one should, as stated in *śāstra*, continue performing prescribed duties related to *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

ŚLOKA 5

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥५॥

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api / jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt
kāryate hy avasah karma / sarvah prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ*

hi—certainly; *na kaścit*—no one; *jātu*—at any time; *tiṣṭhati*—can remain; *akarma-kṛt*—inactive; *api*—even; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment; *sarvah*—everyone; *hi*—certainly; *kāryate*—is engaged; *avaśah*—helplessly; *karma*—in action; *guṇaiḥ*—through the modes; *prakṛti-jaiḥ*—born of one's nature.

No one can remain without performing action, even for a moment. Everyone is impelled to act under the influence of such qualities such as attachment, envy and so on which are born of his nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Those who have accepted *sannyāsa* while their hearts are still impure become absorbed in mundane activities, and give up the *karma* prescribed to them in *śāstra*. It is for this reason only that Śrī Bhagavān speaks this *śloka* beginning with *na hi*. Anticipating Arjuna's question, "By the acceptance of

sannyāsa does a person cease performing activities prescribed in the *Vedas* or activities which are related to the material world?" Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying, *kāryate*. "Being forcibly bound by his own nature, he must act."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŠIKĀ-VRTTI

Here, the word *sannyāsa* means detachment from the fruits of *karma*. It does not mean completely giving up *karma* or becoming inactive, because it is not possible for the embodied soul to completely renounce activity. It is stated in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam (6.1.44), *dehavān na hy akarma-kṛt*. "Those whose hearts are pure and who control their senses, remain engaged in that *karma* prescribed in *śāstra*. However, persons whose hearts are impure and whose senses are uncontrolled remain attached to *akarma* (neglect of duty) and *kukarma* (sinful actions). It is therefore impossible for such persons to achieve *sannyāsa*."

ŚLOKA 6

कर्मन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥६॥

*karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya / ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā / mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate*

sah vimūḍha-ātmā—a foolish person; *yah*—who; *saṁyamya*—controls; *karma-indriyāṇi*—the working senses; (*yet*) *āste*—remains; *smaran*—meditating; *indriya-artha*—on sense objects; *manasā*—by means of the mind; *ucyate*—is called; *mithyācāraḥ*—one whose behaviour is false, a hypocrite.

A deluded person who forcibly controls his working senses while internally meditating on sense objects is to be known as a hypocrite.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

One may argue, “It seems that, like the hypocrite, some *sannyāsīs* are seen with their eyes closed and devoid of bodily movements.” In response Śrī Bhagavān says, “One who controls his working senses (*karmendriyas*) such as speech and hands, but who thinks of sense objects on the pretext of meditation, is a hypocrite and an imposter.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VRTTI

*tvam padārtha-vivekāya sannyasah sarva-karmaṇām
śrutyeha vihito yasmāt tat-tyāgī patito bhavet*

This Vedic injunction from the *dharma-śāstra* states that it is absolutely essential to renounce all fruitive actions in order to attain knowledge of the self (*tvam padārtha*). Those who do not follow this injunction are fallen. Therefore, a man with an impure heart who accepts the dress of a *sannyāsī* and who makes a display of sitting in an āsana to meditate on Bhagavān is a pretender and is *adharma*. To exhibit oneself in society as a devotee while being devoid of *bhakti* is pretentious. Such people are not only hypocritical but also arrogant.

ŚLOKA 7

**यस्त्वन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥७॥**

*yas tv indriyāṇi manasā / niyamyārabhate'arjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam / asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate*

tu—however; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *sah yah*—he who; *asaktaḥ*—without attachment; *niyamya*—controls; *indriyāṇi*—the senses; *manasā*—through the mind; (and) *ārabhate*—begins; *karma-yogam*—the process of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *karma-indriyaiḥ*—through the medium of the working senses; *viśiṣyate*—is superior.

O Arjuna, a person who performs action with his working senses (*karmendriyas*), according to the injunctions of *sāstra*, but who has controlled his senses by his mind, and who is free from all fruitive desires, is superior to the hypocrite who refrains from activity.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

It is indicated here that, even a *grastha* who acts according to *sāstra* is recognised as superior to the false renunciant described in the previous *śloka*. Śrī Bhagavān explains this by speaking this *śloka* beginning with *yas tu*. Here, *karma-yoga* refers to action prescribed in *sāstra*, and *asaktah* means without desire for the fruits of one's activity. This means that the person who acts according to the instructions of *sāstra* with no desire for the fruits of his activities attains a superior condition. Śrī Rāmānujācārya says: *asambhāvita-pramādatvena jñāna-niṣṭhād api puruṣād viśiṣṭah*. “A householder who has controlled his knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriyas*) and his working senses (*karmendriyas*), is better than a so-called transcendentalist who makes a display of his knowledge. The pseudo-transcendentalist may deviate because his senses are uncontrolled, but there is no possibility that a householder who has controlled his knowledge-acquiring senses will deviate or be careless while performing his prescribed duties with his working senses.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In order to purify the heart, it is imperative to perform actions prescribed in *sāstra* without attachment. Those *sādhakas* who, after controlling their *jñānendriyas* (such as the eyes, ears and tongue), perform *karma-yoga* with their *karmendriyas* (such as the legs, hands and speech) without desiring the fruits, and who are always careful and attentive, are qualified to attain *puruṣārtha*, the supreme goal of human

life. Such *sādhakas* who aspire for the transcendental goal are superior to those *sādhakas* who accept *sannyāsa* impetuously and who forcibly control their working senses while enjoying sense objects through their knowledge-acquiring senses.

ŚLOKA 8

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्येदकर्मणः ॥८॥

*niyatam kuru karma tvam / karma jyāyo hy akarmanah
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te / na prasidhyet akarmanah*

tvam—you; *kuru*—must perform; *karma*—duties; *niyatam*—under regulation of *sāstra* (*sandhyā* and *upāsanā*); *hi*—certainly; *karma*—action; *jyāyah*—is better; *akarmanah*—than inaction; *ca*—and; *api*—even; *te*—your; *śarīra*—bodily; *yātrā*—maintenance; *na prasidhyet*—can not be effected; *akarmanah*—without work.

Perform your prescribed duties such as *sandhyā* and *upāsanā*, because action (*karma*) is better than inaction (*akarma*). If you refrain from action, you will not even be able to maintain your body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

“Therefore, O Arjuna, perform your *nitya-karma* (regulated duties) such as *sandhyā* (morning, noon and evening prayers) and *upāsanā* (worship). It is better to do so than to renounce *karma* (*akarmanah*). If you give up all *karma*, you will not even be able to maintain your body.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The above statement is verified in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.26.2):

*āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ
sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ
smṛti-lambhe sarvagrānthināṁ vipramokṣah*

It is by the purity of food that one's mind becomes purified and *sāttvika*. When the mind is purified, one attains a stable memory. When the memory is stable, all the knots of the heart are untied.

Furthermore it is stated in *Gītā* (3.13):

bhuñjate te tv aghāṁ pāpā / ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt

It is understood from this and other statements that for the perfection of one's *sādhana*, it is necessary to maintain and protect the body, which is essential for the performance of one's *sva-dharma* (prescribed duties). However, those who impetuously give up all action by taking *sannyāsa* do not see the light of knowledge in their impure hearts. Moreover, if they perform no work at all, they can even leave their bodies due to lack of maintenance.

ŚLOKA 9

*यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥९॥*

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra / loko'yaṁ karma-bandhanah
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya / mukta-saṅgah samācara*

kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; *anyatra*—other; *karmaṇah*—than *niṣkāma-karma*; *yajña-arthāt*—for the sake of Śrī Viṣṇu; *ayam*—this; *lokaḥ*—humanity; *karma-bandhanah*—has bondage through their work; (*being*) *mukta-saṅgah*—free from attachment; *samācara*—nicely perform; *karma*—work; *tad-arthaṁ*—for His sake.

O Kaunteya, all actions other than *niṣkāma-karma* offered to Śrī Viṣṇu are a cause of bondage to this

world. Therefore, become free from all desires for the fruits of your actions, and perform appropriate action solely for His satisfaction.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŞINI

Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, if you quote *karmaṇā badhyate jantuḥ* from the *smṛti-śāstra* as evidence that a *jīvātmā* is bound by performing action, and if you think that you will also become bound, then listen carefully. This is not always the case. Karma offered to Parameśvara is not a cause of bondage.” The present śloka beginning with *yajñārthāt* is spoken to explain this. *Niṣkāma-dharma*, performance of one’s prescribed duties wherein the fruits are offered to Śrī Viṣṇu, is called *yajña*. All *karma* (action), except for that performed for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, binds a person to the material world. Therefore, to attain perfection in *dharma*, one must perform such *karma* properly for the satisfaction of Śrī Viṣṇu. If Arjuna again asks, “Will it be a cause of bondage to make an offering which is materially motivated, even though I am offering the results of my prescribed duties to Śrī Viṣṇu?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa answers, *mukta-saṅgah*. “Perform action without any desire for the fruits.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Uddhava in the same way:

*sva-dharma-stho yajan yajñair / anāśih-kāma uddhava
na yāti svarga-narakau / yady anyan na samācaret
asmil loke vartamānah / sva-dharma-stho’naghaḥ śuciḥ
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti / mad-bhaktiṁ vā yadṛcchayā*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.10-11

O Uddhava, a person who performs his *sva-dharma* without desiring the fruits and who worships Śrī Bhagavān by *yajña*, not engaging in the pursuit of any desirable sense object or any forbidden activity, attains neither heaven nor hell. Such a person, who is situated in his *sva-dharma*, who has given up all

forbidden activities and who is free from all attachment and envy, attains *viśuddha jñāna*, pure knowledge, even in his present condition in this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The Vedas say: *yajño vai viṣṇuh*. “*Yajña* is indeed *Viṣṇu*.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa also tells Uddhava in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.19.39): *yajño 'ham bhagavattamah*. “I, the son of Vasudeva, am *yajña*.” The Tantra-sāra also states *yajña* to be Śrī Hari Himself:

*yajño yajña-pumānś caiva yajñaśo yajña-bhāvanah
yajña-bhuk ceti pañcātmā yajñeṣv ijyo hariḥ svayam*

In the two ślokas of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.10-11), which Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has cited in his commentary on the present śloka, the word *sva-dharma-stha* (situated in one’s prescribed duties) has been used twice. While commenting on these two ślokas, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says:

- 1) One does not go to hell if he is situated in his *sva-dharma* and does not transgress the activities prescribed in *śāstra*, that is, he does not engage in forbidden activities. And, since he has no desire for the fruits of his activities, he does not go to Svarga (heaven) either.
- 2) A person who engages in *niṣkāma-karma* is called *sva-dharma-stha*.

When *karma* is performed in accordance with *śāstra*, without any selfish motive and for the pleasure of Śrī Viṣṇu, it purifies the heart. *Sādhu-saṅga* then causes *bhagavat-tattva* to appear in the heart, allowing one to enter the path of *nirguṇa-bhakti*.

Devarṣi Nārada has also said this in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.5.32):

*etat saṁsūcitaṁ brahmaṁ / tāpa-traya-cikitsitam
yad iśvare bhagavati / karma brahmaṇi bhāvitam*

O knower of *brahma*, that *karma* which is dedicated to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, the controller and master of everyone, removes the three types of miseries.

Śrī Bhagavān also told the Pracetās:

gṛheśv āviśatāṁ cāpi / pūrṇāṁ kuśala-karmaṇāṁ
mad-vārtā yāta-yāmānāṁ / na bandhāya gṛhā matāḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.30.19

Those who know Me to be the enjoyer of the fruits of all activities offer all of their *karma* to Me alone. Such expert performers of action, as well as those who spend their time hearing and reciting My pastimes, do not become bound by their actions, even though remaining in household life.

ŚLOKA 10

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥१०॥

saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā / purovāca prajāpatih
anena prasaviṣyadhwam / eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk

purā—in ancient times; *sṛṣṭvā*—having created; *prajāḥ*—progeny; *saha-yajñāḥ*—together with *brāhmaṇas* qualified to perform *yajña*; *prajā-patiḥ*—Prajāpati Brahmā; *uvāca*—said; *anena*—by this *yajña*; *prasaviṣyadhwam*—be more and more prosperous; *astu*—let; *eṣaḥ*—this *yajña*; (be) *vah*—your; *iṣṭa-kāmadhuk*—fulfiller of cherished desires.

In the beginning of creation, Prajāpati Brahmā created *brāhmaṇas* who were qualified to perform *yajña*, and also men, *devas* and all the other subjects. He then blessed them, saying, “May you prosper by this *yajñā*, and may it fulfil all your desires.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān says, “A person with an impure heart should exclusively engage in *niṣkāma-karma* and not take *sannyāsa*, but if in his present state he cannot become *niṣkāma*, then let him perform *sakāma-karma* (fruitive action) and offer the results to Śrī Viṣṇu.” To explain this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks seven *ślokas*, the first of which begins here with the word *saha*. *Sahayajña* means along with sacrifice. In accordance with the *sūta-vikalpe-upasarjana*, *saha* has not been replaced with *sa*.

Pura implies that in the beginning of creation, Brahmā produced progeny who would perform *yajña* in the form of *dharma* activities offered to Śrī Viṣṇu, and then blessed them, saying, *anena dharmena prasaviṣyadhvam*. “By this *dharma* may you become increasingly prosperous in terms of progeny and opulence.” Keeping in mind the tendency of the progeny to enjoy, Lord Brahmā said, “Let this *yajña* fulfil all your desired ends.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Offering *kāmya-karma*, fruitive action, to Śrī Viṣṇu is better than *akarma* (non-action).

ŚLOKA 11

देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥११॥

*devān bhāvayatānena / te devā bhāvayantu vah
parasparam bhāvayantah / śreyah param avāpsyatha*

bhāvayatā—by pleasing; *devān*—the *devas*; *anena*—through this *yajña*; *te*—those; *devāh*—*devas*; *bhāvayantu*—must please; *vah*—you; *bhāvayantah*—may please (by bestowing the results); *parasparam*—one another; *avāpsyatha*—you shall attain; *param*—supreme; *śreyah*—good fortune.

May you please the *devas* by this *yajña*, and may they please you in turn by granting you your desired fruits. Satisfying one another in this way, you will attain the supreme auspiciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In this *śloka* beginning with *devān*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining how *yajña* can grant all the heart's desires. He says, "May you please the *devas* by this *yajña*, may those *devas* also please you." In this context the word *bhāva* means *prīti*, pleasing.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In this *śloka*, Bhagavān instructs that, to please the *devas*, oblations of ghee are to be offered to them. This has a hidden meaning. Bhagavān is not instructing us to give up our devotional service and make sacrificial offerings to worship the *devas*, as if they are independent lords. They are not independent. Śrī Viṣṇu empowers qualified *jīvātmās* and, giving them the post of protectors of the directions, He maintains the universe through them. Thus, these *devas* are like the limbs of Śrī Bhagavān. It is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.11.26): *bāhavo loka-pālānām*. "The arms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the shelter for all of the administrative *devas* of the world." Again it is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.1.29): *indrādayo bāhava āhur usrāḥ*. "Devas such as Indra are the arms of the *virāṭ-puruṣa*, the Lord's universal form."

Regarding Indra-pūjā, it is seen in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that the residents of Vraja used to worship him every year, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked them to worship the mountain Giri Govardhana instead. When Indra's arrogance was crushed, he accepted that it was due to pride in his *aiśvarya* (opulence) that he considered himself an independent lord. Śrī Bhagavān showed him great mercy by removing his false ego. Indra said, "Now, having realised that I am the servant of the servant of Your

servants, I surrender to You.” From this context it is evident that the *devas* who protect the various directions are the limbs of the *virāt-puruṣa* (universal form).

ŚLOKA 12

**इष्टान् भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्के स्तेन एव सः ॥१२॥**

*iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā / dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo / yo bhūṅkte stena eva saḥ*

yajña-bhāvitāḥ—being pleased by the performance of sacrifices; *hi*—indeed; *devāḥ*—the *devas*; *dāsyante*—will award; *vah*—unto you; *iṣṭān*—the desired; *bhogān*—pleasures; *yah*—he who; *bhūṅkte*—enjoys; *dattān*—ingredients given; *taiḥ*—by them; *apradāya*—without offering; *ebhyah*—unto the *devas*; *sah*—he; (*is*) *eva*—certainly; *stenaḥ*—a thief.

Being pleased by your *yajña*, the *devas* will award your desired goals. Therefore, a person who enjoys the ingredients given by the *devas*, without first offering them to the *devas*, is certainly a thief.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Failure to perform *karma* is certainly a defect. Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *śloka* beginning with the word *iṣṭān* to clarify this point. Grains and other products grow due to rain which is caused by the *devas*. After producing grains and other items, a person who enjoys them, without first offering them to the *devas* by performing *pañca-mahā-yajña*, is a thief.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In regard to *pañca-mahā-yajña*, it is stated in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*adhyāpanam brahma-yajñah
pitṛ-yajñas tu tarpaṇam
homo daivo baliḥ bhauto
nṛ-yajño 'tithi-pūjanam*

1) *Adhyāpana*, to give instructions from śāstra to the disciple is *brahma-yajña*. 2) To offer oblations to the forefathers is *pitṛ-yajña*. 3) To perform *homa-yajña* (fire sacrifice) is *deva-yajña*. 4) To give in charity offerings of fruits, flowers, grains and so on to the living entities is *bali* or *bhūta-yajña*. 5) To receive guests warmly is called *nṛ-yajña*.

Many persons think that the word *bali* in this *sloka* means to offer a *yajña* by killing animals and humans, but this is not the opinion of śāstra.

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā
nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña
surā-grahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.11

The true meaning of *bali* is to give grains, water, fruits, flowers and animals in charity for the satisfaction of the *devas*.

ŚLOKA 13

**यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वधं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥१३॥**
*yajña-śiṣṭāśinah santo / mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā / ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

santah—saintly persons; (*are*) *aśinah*—eaters; *yajña-śiṣṭa*—of the remnants of food of *yajña*; *mucyante*—they are freed; *sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ*—from all sins; *tu*—but; *te*—those; *pāpāḥ*—sinners; *ye*—who; *bhuñjate*—eat; *ātma-kāraṇāt*—for their own sake; *pacanti*—digest; *agham*—sin.

Saintly persons who accept the remnants of *yajña* become free from all sins, but those who cook grains and other foodstuffs for their own sake are sinful, and certainly partake of sin.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Those who accept the grain remnants of *yajñas*, such as *vaiśvadeva* (a type of *deva-yajña*), become free from the sins incurred due to *pañca-sūnā*. According to *smṛti-śāstra*, the five objects known to the householder as *pañca-sūnā* are: the cooking fire, the grinding instrument, the mortar and pestle, the water-pot and the broom. The word *sūnā* means the place where animals are slaughtered. These five household objects are called *pañca-sūnā* because they may inflict violence upon living entities. It is only because of *pañca-sūnā* that householders do not attain Svarga.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Yajñas related with the worship of the *devatās* are called *vaiśvadeva*.

*vasu-sato kratu-dakṣau kāla-kāmau dhṛtiḥ kuruḥ
purūravā mādravāś ca viśvadevāḥ prakīrtitāḥ*
Bharata Muni

Violence is caused unknowingly to living entities by the householders' use of the pestle, fire, grinding instrument, water-pot, and broom.

Those who cook food for themselves become implicated in such sins. Even if they properly perform their prescribed duties, they do not attain Svarga. Therefore, the *smṛti-śāstras* have prescribed the *pañca-yajña* to nullify the sins from *pañca-sūnā*: *pañca-sūnā kṛtam pāpam pañca-yajñair vyapohati*.

ŚLOKA 14

अत्राद्विन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादवसम्भवः ।

यज्ञाद्वति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥१४॥

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni / parjanyād anna-sambhavah
yajñād bhavati parjanyo / yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

bhūtāni—living beings; *bhavanti*—develop; *annāt*—from grains; *parjanyāt*—from rains; *anna*—food grains; *sambhavah*—are produced; *yajñāt*—from the performance of sacrifice; *parjanyaḥ*—rain; *bhavati*—is produced; *yajñāḥ*—sacrifice; *samudbhavaḥ*—is born of; *karma*—prescribed duties.

All living beings are born from food grains, which are produced from rain. Rains are produced from *yajña*, and *yajña* is born of prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān says, “It is still desirable to perform *yajña*, because it maintains the cycle of action in this material world.” To express this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the *sloka* beginning with the word *annād*. Living entities take birth from food grains, thus food grains are the cause of living entities. Grain is transformed into blood which then turns into semen, which in turn forms the body of the living entity. Clouds are the source of food grains, which are produced from rain. *Yajña* is the cause of the clouds, because when *yajña* is performed, sufficient rain clouds are produced. The cause of the *yajña* is *karma* (action), because a *yajña* is perfectly executed when the *rtvik* (priest) of the *yajña* and the *yajamāna* (he on whose behalf the *yajña* is performed) both fulfil the prescribed *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VR̥TTI

Rtvik—Priests who perform *yajña* in different seasons are called *r̥tvik*:

*āgnedheyam pāka-yajñān āgniṣṭomādikān makhān
yah karoti vṛto yasya sa tasyartvig ihocaye*

There are four prominent *r̄tviks* in the performance of *yajña*. They are known as: 1) *hotā*, one who chants the *Rg Veda* mantras; 2) *adhvaryu*, one who chants the *Yajur Veda* mantras; 3) *brahmā*, one who chants the *Atharva Veda* mantras, and 4) *udgātā*, one who chants the *Sāma Veda* mantras.

ŚLOKA 15

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥१५॥

*karma brahmodbhavam viddhi / brahmākṣara-samudbhavam
tasmat sarva-gataṁ brahma / nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*

viddhi—you should know that; *karma*—prescribed duties; *udbhavam*—originate; *brahma*—from the *Vedas*; (and that) *brahma*—the *Vedas*; *samudbhavam*—originate; *akṣara*—from Acyute, the immutable Supreme Lord; *tasmat*—for this reason; *sarva-gatam*—the all-pervading; *brahma*—supreme *brahma*; (is) *nityam*—always; *pratiṣṭhitam*—situated; *yajñe*—in sacrifice.

Know that prescribed duties are inspired by the *Vedas* and that the *Vedas* originate from Acyuta. The all-pervading *brahma* is therefore always situated in *yajña*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

The *Vedas* are the cause of that *karma* (*yajña*), because *yajña* is performed only after hearing Vedic injunctions. *Akṣara-brahma*, or Acyuta, the imperishable Absolute Reality, is the cause of the *Vedas*, because they originated from *brahma*. In this regard it is said in the *Vedas* (*śrutis*):

asya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad
ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāmavedo 'tharvāṅgirasah
Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.11

The *Rg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda* are the breath of the Mahāpuruṣa. Therefore, *sarva-gatam*, the all-pervading *brahma*, is situated in *yajña*.

This statement also establishes that one can attain *brahma* by *yajña*. Although a connection of cause and effect has been shown here by linking food grains to *brahma*, in *śāstra*, only *yajña* is described as the governing factor and only *yajña* is glorified. *Manu-smṛti* also says: “Oblations offered in the fire reach Sūrya-deva, the sun-god. From the sun comes rain, from rain comes food grains, and from food grains progeny are born.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Udyamasthā sadā laksmīḥ. “Wealth always resides in endeavour.” Similarly, the all-pervading *brahma* is always situated in *yajña*. By engaging in *yajña* and righteous acts, the *jīva* not only becomes free from sin but can also attain *brahma*.

ŚLOKA 16

एवं प्रवर्त्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्त्यतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥१६॥

*evam pravarttitam cakram / nānuvartayatīha yaḥ
aghāyur indriyārāmo / mogham pārtha sa jīvati*

pārtha—O Pārtha; *iha*—in this world; *yaḥ*—one who; *na anuvartayati*—does not follow; *cakram*—the cycle; *evam*—thus; *pravarttitam*—set into motion; (is) *indriyaārāmaḥ*—attached to the senses; (and) *aghāyuh*—a life of sin; *sah*—he; *jīvati*—lives; *mogham*—in vain.

O Pārtha, in this world one who does not follow this cycle of *karma*, which is established by the Vedas, becomes attached to his senses and engaged in sinful activity. Thus he lives in vain.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

By not engaging in this cycle, the fault of irregularity arises. The present *śloka* beginning with *evam* is spoken to give an understanding of this point. *Cakra*, or cycle, means an ordered series of events. For example, clouds and rain come from *yajña*, food grains come from rains, and from food grains come the living beings (men) who again perform *yajña*, which produces rain clouds and so on. One who does not engage in *yajña* to continue this cycle is *aghāyuh*, a sinful person. Who does not go to hell? Only one who performs *yajña* does not go to hell.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Parameśvara has established the cycle of *karma* to fulfil the desires of the *jīvas*. Consequently, one who does not perform *yajña*, which perpetuates the cycle of the universe, becomes implicated in sin and goes to hell.

Śrila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “O Pārtha, those who are qualified to engage in *kāmya-karma* (action with fruitive desires), but who do not perform *yajña* to perpetuate the cycle of the universe, become servants of their senses, which engage them in sinful life. Thus they live in vain.” The significance is that there is no consideration of sin or piety in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* which is offered to Śri Bhagavān, because Śāstra has established this as the most suitable path to attain *nirguṇa-bhakti* of Bhagavān. A person following this path easily becomes pure at heart and free from material contamination. Those who have not acquired the *adhikāra* to offer this *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* to Śri Bhagavān are always swayed by material desires and sensual urges and thus engage in sinful acts. The only way to reduce this sinful tendency is to perform *puṇya-karma*. Those who have acted sinfully should only take shelter of atonement. The provision of *yajña* is certainly *dharma*, pious activity. That which is auspicious for all *jīvas* and conducive for the harmonious development of

the cycle of the universe, is called *pūṇya*, or pious deeds. The performance of *pūṇya* destroys the unavoidable sins that are born of *pañca-sūnā*. So long as the performer of *yajña* protects the interests and welfare of the universe, whatever can be accepted for his happiness and personal enjoyment becomes part of the *yajña*, and is counted as piety.

The unseen controllers who cause auspiciousness for the universe are the specific *devas* born from the *śakti* of Śrī Bhagavān. By satisfying them with the offerings they desire and gaining their favour, one pleases these *devas* and all sins are destroyed. This is called the *karma-cakra*. Thus, *karma*, which is accepted in the form of worship of these *devas*, is called *bhagavat-arpita kāmya-karma*, or *sakāma upāsana* (worship with fruitive desires). Some people falsely believe that they are righteous and religious, even though they do not offer their *karma* to Śrī Viṣṇu, and are not devotionally inclined. They perform action, but disregard any form of *deva* worship, because they think that it is mundane. Such people are themselves simply following mundane morality. It is therefore auspicious for the *jīvas* of the world who are thus eligible not to follow these deluded religionists, but to perform *bhagavat-arpita kāmya-karma*.

ŚLOKA 17

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥१७॥

*yas tv ātma-ratiḥ eva syād / ātma-trptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭas / tasya kāryam na vidyate*

tu—however; *eva*—certainly; *mānavaḥ*—the man; *yah*—one who; *ātma-ratiḥ*—delighting in the self; *ca*—and; *syāt*—is; *ātma-trptaḥ*—self-satisfied; *ca*—and; *santuṣṭaḥ*—satisfied; *ātmani*—in the self; *eva*—certainly; *tasya*—for him; *kāryam*—duties; *na*—do not; *vidyate*—exist.

However, a person who delights in the self, and who remains contented and satisfied in the self, has no duties to perform.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

So far, it has been explained that those who are unable to perform *niṣkāma-karma* should perform *sakāma-karma*. Those who are situated on the platform of *jñāna*, realised knowledge, never engage in the routine of *kāmya-karma* (*sakāma karma*), because their hearts are pure. The next two *ślokas*, beginning here with *yas tu*, are spoken to explain this. *Ātma-ratiḥ* means *ātmārāma*, taking pleasure in the self. *Ātma-tṛptah* refers to those who remain satisfied simply by realizing the pleasure of the self. If one is satisfied within the *ātmā* itself, would he be even slightly satisfied with external sense objects? In response Śrī Bhagavān says, “One who is satisfied within has no need for external sense pleasures, and is therefore not obliged to perform prescribed duties.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Living entities who exist in the cycle of *karma*, which has been described above, perform *karma*, knowing it to be obligatory. However, those who can discriminate between the self and inert objects engage solely in the cultivation of the self. They remain content within the self, because they are *ātmārāma* (able to take pleasure in the self) and *āptakāma* (able to satisfy all their desires in the self). Such *mahā-puruṣas* are of two types: 1) the *jñāni-yogīs* who search for the *ātmā* and 2) the *bhakti-yogīs* who cultivate the path of *bhagavat-prema*. Personalities like the four Kumāras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat-Kumāra) are considered to be in the first category, while personalities like Devarṣi Nārada fall in the second. They do not perform *karma*, although they know it is their obligatory duty, but perform actions which are favourable to *bhakti* simply to maintain their lives. Becoming free from

the cycle of *karma*, they search for peace through *bhagavat-prīti* (affection for Bhagavān). Although they perform all sorts of *karma*, they do nothing. Therefore, their *karma* is not called *karma*. Their *karma* (activity) is called *jñāna* or *bhakti*, depending on their *adhikāra*. It is also said in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.1.4): *ātma-krīda ātma-ratiḥ kriyāvān esa brahma-vidāṁ variṣṭhah*. “Those who take pleasure in the self, whose attachment is in the self, and who are active only in the self, are the best among the knowers of the *Vedas*.”

ŚLOKA 18

**नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥१८॥**

*naiva tasya kṛtenārtho / nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsyā sarva-bhūteṣu / kaścid artha-vyapāśrayaḥ*

*tasya—for him; (there is) *na*—no; *arthaḥ*—purpose to be attained; *kaścana*—whatsoever; *ihā*—in this world; *kṛtena*—by acting; *ca*—and; *na*—nor; *eva*—indeed; *akṛtena*—by not acting; *asya*—he has; *na*—not; *kaścit*—any; *artha*—necessity; *vyapāśrayaḥ*—to take shelter; *sarva-bhūteṣu*—of any of the living beings.*

One who is *ātmārāma* does not attain any virtue by performing action in this world, nor does he incur any fault through not acting, and nor does he need to depend on any *jīva* in the universe for attaining his purpose.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŞINİ

Kṛta refers to a person who neither has interest in performing actions nor has any desires to be fulfilled by such actions. *Akṛta* means that he is not at fault by not performing action. To attain his purpose, there is no *jīva* in the universe, either moving or non-moving, who can act as a suitable shelter for

him. The word *vyapāśrayah* has been described in the *Purāṇas* as follows:

*vāsudeve bhagavati / bhaktim udvahatāṁ nṛṇām
jñāna-vairāgya-vīryāṇāṁ / na hi kaścid vyapāśrayah*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.17.31

A person endowed with *bhakti* for Bhagavān Vāsudeva does not take shelter of *jñāna*, *vairāgya* or *vīrya* (powerful strength), nor is he interested in them.

Moreover, it is stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.4.18): *yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ śudhyanti*. “A living entity becomes purified merely by taking shelter of those who are surrendered to Śrī Bhagavān.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

A person who derives pleasure only within the self (*ātmārāma*) neither achieves piety by performing his prescribed duties, nor does he become implicated in sin by not performing them. Every *jīva*, both moving and non-moving, beginning with Brahmā, remains absorbed in enjoying material happiness due to his misconception of identifying the body with the self. His every action is performed for sense enjoyment. He does not even care for *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, which are the shelter of the *tyagīs*. This is because he has taken shelter of *bhakti*, the natural function of the self. *Jñāna* and *vairāgya*, which are both subordinate to *bhakti*, manifest in him as a matter of course.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42), Śrī Kavi speaks to Mahārāja Nimi:

*bhaktih paresānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭih puṣṭih kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

With each mouthful of food that a hungry person takes, three

effects are simultaneously accomplished: he obtains satisfaction, he is nourished and his hunger ceases. Similarly, surrendered souls who are engaged in the performance of *bhajana* simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of *bhakti* which ultimately develops into *prema*, direct manifestation of Bhagavān's beloved form, and detachment from material objects.

One may raise the following question: In the *Vedas* it is said: *tasmād tan na priyam yad etan manusyā viduh*. "The *devas* do not want human beings to attain knowledge of *brahma*." (*Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10) It is also seen in *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* (11.18.14):

*viprasya vai sannyasato / devā dārādi-rūpiṇah
vighnān kurvanyt ayam hy asmān / ākramya samiyāt param*

Knowing that *brāhmaṇas* will surpass them by taking *sannyāsa* and obtaining *brahma-tattva*, the *devas* take birth to become their wives or children and to create obstacles in their path.

Thus, is it proper to worship the *devas* to eliminate these obstacles?

In this regard, the *śrutis* state that, even though the *devas* present these obstacles, they are, in fact, unable to harm the spiritual aspirants, because the *ātmā* itself protects them. This *ātmā* is the *ātmā* of all *ātmās*, Paramātmā.

*vāsudeva-parā vedā / vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ
vāsudeva-parā yogā / vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ*
Śrimad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.28

According to this statement, Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa is the original *ātmā* of all other *ātmās*. By performing *bhajana* to Him one can gain the affection of everyone. All the *devas* are ultimately compelled to show affection and respect to those who have *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

In addition it is stated: *bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena*

parijāyate. “One attains *bhakti* only by the association of *bhaktas*.” According to this statement of *śāstra*, just as Śrī Bhagavān is the only suitable shelter for the *bhaktas*, it is similarly necessary to take shelter of His *bhaktas* if one desires *bhakti*. For this reason, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23) states:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir / yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ / prakāśante mahātmanāḥ*

All the essential purports of *śāstra* are revealed only in the heart of a *mahātmā* who has *parā bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān and as he has devotion for Bhagavān similarly he has *suddha-bhakti* for Śrī Gurudeva.

ŚLOKA 19

**तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥१९॥**

*tasmād asaktah satataṁ / kāryam karma samācara
asakto hy ācaran karma / param āpnoti pūruṣah*

tasmāt—therefore; asaktah—without attachment; satataṁ—always; samācara—perform nicely; karma—work; kāryam—which ought to be done; hi—certainly; ācaran—performing; karma—prescribed duties; asaktah—without attachment; pūruṣah—a man; āpnoti—attains; param—mokṣa.

Therefore, always perform your prescribed duties without attachment. By working in this way, a person attains *mokṣa*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŞINĪ

“O Arjuna, you are not qualified to be on the platform of *jñāna*. But since you are a man of proper wisdom, your *adhikāra* has surpassed the level of performing *kāmya-karma*. Therefore, only perform *niṣkāma-karma*.” This śloka beginning with

tasmād is spoken for this reason. *Kāryam* means that which is prescribed as an obligatory duty. After performing that prescribed duty, one attains *mokṣa*, supreme liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI

By always performing *niṣkāma-karma*, the heart becomes purified. When the heart is purified, one attains *jñāna* by which the *sādhaka* can attain *mokṣa*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “That while engaging in *karma*, the transcendental *bhakti* which one attains as the mature state of *karma yoga* has been called liberation here.”

ŚLOKA 20

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमहसि ॥२०॥

*karmaṇai eva hi samsiddhim / āsthitā janakādayaḥ
loka-saṅgraham evāpi / sampaśyan kartum arhasi*

janaka-ādayaḥ—Janaka and other kings; *hi eva*—most assuredly; *āsthitāḥ*—became situated; *samsiddhim*—in supreme perfection; *karmaṇā*—by performance of prescribed duties; *eva*—certainly; *sampaśyan*—considering; *loka-saṅgraham*—the protection of the people; *arhasi*—you ought; *api*—also; *kartum*—to do (your prescribed duties).

Saintly kings such as Janaka attained supreme perfection by performing *karma* (prescribed duties). Therefore, in consideration of setting an ideal for people in general, you should perform your prescribed duty.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

This śloka beginning with *karmaṇai* presents evidence about the importance of *sadācāra* (proper conduct). Śrī Bhagavān says, “Even if you consider yourself to have the

adhikāra to follow the path of *jñāna*, you should still perform your prescribed duties with the purpose of instructing the people in general.” For this purpose, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: *loka-saṅgraham*, ‘the people in general’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Śrila Śrīdhara Svāmī comments that Śrī Bhagavān instructs Arjuna, “In order to engage people in their respective prescribed duties and to restrain them from their tendency to follow a degraded path, the performance of *karma* is necessary for you.”

ŚLOKA 21

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तदवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्त्तते ॥२१॥

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas / tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramāṇam kurute / lokas tad anuvarttate*

eva—surely; *yat*—however; *śreṣṭhaḥ*—an exalted person; *ācarati*—acts; *tat* *tat*—that very thing; *itarah*—a common; *janah*—person; *sah*—he; (*yat*)—whatever; *pramāṇam*—standard; *kurute*—he sets; *tat*—that; *lokah*—the people; *anuvarttate*—follow.

Common people will follow the behaviour of a great man, and the whole world will emulate the standards that he sets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In this *śloka* beginning with the words *yad yad*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining how ideals are established for the common people.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In order to establish an ideal for the people in general, great persons should perform their *karma* (prescribed duties). This *siddhānta* of *Bhagavad-gītā* is also verified in many parts of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: (2.8.25), (3.16.23), (5.4.14) and (6.2.4).

ŚLOKA 22

**न मे पार्थस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥२२॥**

*na me pārthasti karttavyam / triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana
nānavāptam avāptavyam / varta eva ca karmaṇi*

pārtha—O Pārtha; *me*—for Me; *asti*—there is; *na*—not; *kiñcana*—any; *karttavyam*—prescribed duty; *triṣu*—in the three; *lokeṣu*—planetary systems; (*there is*) *na*—nothing; *anavāptam*—unattainable; (*nor*) *avāptavyam*—needed to be obtained; *eva*—still; *varte*—I am engaged; *ca*—also; *karmaṇi*—in prescribed duties.

O Pārtha, I have no need to perform prescribed duties (*karma*), because there is nothing within the three worlds that I cannot attain, nor is there anything that I desire to attain. Even so, I am always engaged in performing prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In this and the next two *ślokas*, Śrī Bhagavān presents Himself as an example in order to instruct the common people of the world.

ŚLOKA 23

**यदि ह्यहं न वर्त्यं जातु कर्मण्यतन्त्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्त्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥२३॥**

*yadi hy aham na vartteyam / jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvarttante / manusyāḥ pārtha sarvaśah*

pārtha—O Pārtha; *hi*—certainly; *yadi*—if; *jātu*—at any time; *aham*—did I; *vartteyam na*—not engage; *karmaṇi*—in prescribed duties; *atandritaḥ*—with great care; *manusyāḥ*—all men; *anuvarttante*—would follow; *mama*—My; *vartma*—path; *sarvaśah*—in all respects.

O Pārtha, if I ever failed to engage vigilantly in My prescribed duties, common people would certainly imitate Me in all respects.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

The word *anuvartante* means they will imitate.

ŚLOKA 24

*उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥२४॥*

*utsīdeyur ime lokā / na kuryām karma ced aham
saṅkarasya ca karttā syām / upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ*

cet—if; *na kuryām*—I did not perform; *karma*—prescribed duties; *ime*—all these; *lokāḥ*—people; *utsīdeyuh*—would become degraded; *aham*—I; *syām*—would be; *karttā*—the creator; *saṅkarasya*—of unwanted population; *ca*—and; *upahanyām*—I would destroy; *imāḥ*—all these; *prajāḥ*—people.

If I did not perform *karma*, then everyone would become degraded and I would become the cause of promoting *varṇa-saṅkara*. In this way, I would be instrumental in the destruction of the entire population.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Utsideyuh means they will become degraded. “By following My example and not engaging in their prescribed duties, common people would become fallen. Consequently, I would be the cause of *varṇa-saṅkara* (unwanted population). By making humanity impure, I would be its destroyer.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “If I did not perform duties as prescribed in the Vedas, people would imitate Me. In this way, I would be the cause of their deviating from the path of *dharma* and going to hell.” Therefore, it is appropriate for the leaders of society to engage in that *karma* which is prescribed in the Vedas, and which promotes the people’s welfare. At the present time, most of the so-called religious, social, national and world leaders have fallen from the path of *dharma*, and consequently common men are also deviating from the proper path. This root problem of immorality, violence, envy and so forth is present everywhere. The only solution to this problem is the chanting of *hari-nāma* and the cultivation of *bhakti* in the association of genuine *sādhus*.

ŚLOKA 25

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चकीषुलोकसंग्रहम् ॥२५॥

saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso / yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryād vidvāṁs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham

bhārata—O Bhārata; *yathā*—just as; *avidvāṁsaḥ*—the ignorant; *saktāḥ*—being attached; *karmaṇi*—to their prescribed duties; *kurvanti*—perform (them); *tathā*—in the same way; *vidvān*—the learned; *kuryāt*—should act; *asaktaḥ*—without attachment; *cikīrṣuḥ*—desiring to effect; *loka-saṅgraham*—the protection of the people.

O descendant of Bhārata, ignorant people perform *karma* with attachment. Those who are wise should also work, but without attachment, to set an ideal for the people in general.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Thus, even a person who is firmly situated on the platform of *jñāna* must perform *karma*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic with this śloka beginning with the word *saktāḥ*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The ignorant perform *karma* with attachment both to the work and its fruits, but one who knows *tattva* performs *karma* without attachment. The activities performed by these two types of people appear to be the same, but there is a difference like heaven and hell between them. The difference lies in the *niṣṭhā* (staunch faith) of those who are performing *karma*; one is attached while the other is detached.

ŚLOKA 26

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम्।
योजयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥२६॥

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed / ajñānām karma-saṅginām
yojayet sarva-karmāṇi / vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran*

vidvān—the learned person; *na janayet*—should not create; *buddhi-bhedam*—confusion in the intelligence; *ajñānām*—of the ignorant; *karma-saṅginām*—who are attached to fruitive work; (rather) *yuktaḥ*—with a composed mind; *saṁacaran*—while acting nicely; *yojayet*—he should encourage (them) to engage; (in) *sarva*—all; *karmāṇi*—actions.

One who is learned and experienced in *jñāna-yoga* should not bewilder the intelligence of ignorant people

by inducing them to give up their prescribed duties (*karma*) to engage in the culture of *jñāna*. Rather, by properly performing all his own actions in a composed and detached state of mind, he should encourage them to engage in their own prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

“O Arjuna, a man of knowledge should not bewilder the ignorant who are *karma-saṅgī* (attached to their actions) by saying, ‘There is no purpose in performing mundane activities, so become perfect like me by renouncing *karma* and cultivating *jñāna*.’ The *karma-saṅgī* is especially attached to *karma* because his heart is impure. Although you may be perfect, by performing *niṣkāma-karma* you can encourage people to engage in their prescribed duties. You yourself become an ideal example by performing *karma* properly. If you say to Me, ‘In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.9.50) You have said:

*svayam niḥśreyasam vidvān / na vakty ajñāya karma hi
na rāti rogiṇo 'pathyam / vāñchato 'pi bhiṣaktamah*

“A good physician does not prescribe a diet that is indigestible, even though the patient may desire it. Similarly, a person knowing the highest welfare does not instruct an ignorant person to engage in *karma*,” so You therefore contradict Your own statements,’ then My response is, “This is correct, but I gave that instruction in relation to *bhakti* when the subject of instruction was *bhakti* itself. Now I am giving the instruction in relation to *jñāna*, so there is no contradiction. *Jñāna* depends on purity of heart, which in turn depends on *niṣkāma-karma*. But since *bhakti* is independently powerful, she does not depend upon purity of heart. If one is able to arouse *śraddhā* in *bhakti*, then it is considerate to disturb the intelligence of a person who is attached to *karma*. Those who have developed faith in *bhakti* have surpassed

the necessity to perform *karma*. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.9):

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta / na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā / śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

One should perform *karma* as long as he has not developed renunciation (from *karma*) or *śraddhā* in hearing and reciting topics about Me.

Furthermore:

*dharmaṁ santyajya yah sarvān
māṁ bhajeta sa tu sattamah*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.32

Those who give up all varieties of *varṇāśrama* and perform My *bhajana* are indeed the most elevated *sādhus*.

*sarva-dharmaṁ parityajya / māṁ ekāṁ śaraṇāṁ vraja
aham tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo / mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucah*
Gītā 18.66

Give up all varieties of *dharma* and just surrender unto Me.

*tyaktvā sva-dharmaṁ caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.17

One who gives up his *sva-dharma* because he is engaged in the service of Śrī Hari's lotus feet can never be unsuccessful, even if he falls down while in the immature stage.

One should deliberate upon all these statements.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The purpose of *karma*, action, is to attain that *jñāna* which leads to *bhakti*. Those who do not know this fact are *ajña* (ignorant), and those who are attached to *karma* because of this ignorance are called *karma-saṅgī*. A *jñānī* should only engage such *karma-saṅgīs* in the *karma* prescribed in *sāstra*, because,

if the intelligence of such ignorant persons is bewildered, they will lose faith in *karma*. Under such circumstances even *jñāna* will not be able to manifest in their hearts and thus they will deviate from the paths of *karma* and *jñāna*. However, this does not apply to instructions on *bhakti*, because according to *śāstra*, instructions on *bhakti* are auspicious for everyone under all circumstances. Therefore, by instructing *bhakti*, such a preacher of *bhakti* will make everyone perfect.

*putrāṁś ca śiṣyāṁś ca nṛpo gurur vā
 mal-loka-kāmo mad-anugrahārthaḥ
 itthāṁ vimanyur anuśiṣyād ataj-jñān
 na yojayet karmasu karma-mūḍhān
 kam yojayan manujo 'rthāṁ labheta
 nipātayan naṣṭa-dṛśāṁ hi garte*
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.15

Rṣabhadeva said, “Only My abode and My mercy are worth praying for. Instructions on *bhakti* unto Me should be given by fathers to their sons, teachers to their disciples and kings to their subjects. One should not become angry with a person who receives instructions, but does not follow them. Even those who are ignorant of *tattva-jñāna* and who are bewildered about the performance of proper duty should not be engaged in *karma*. What *puruṣārtha* (destination) will be attained by engaging a person blinded by delusion in *kāmya-karma* (fruitive activities), thus throwing him further into the dark well of this material world? Nothing will be achieved.”

While commenting on this *śloka* of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “If, instead of giving instruction on *bhakti*, someone instructs others about engaging in *karma*, he incurs sin.”

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the present *śloka*, (Gītā 3.26): *yojayet sarva-karmāṇi*, is not for those who are preaching the message of *bhakti*, but it is for the consideration of those who give instructions on *jñāna*.

ŚLOKA 27

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्त्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥२७॥

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni / guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśah
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍha-ātmā / karttāham iti manyate*

sarvaśah—in every respect; *karmāṇi*—activities; *kriyamāṇāni*—are performed; *guṇaiḥ*—by the modes of material nature; *prakṛteḥ*—of material nature; *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍha-ātmā*—a person bewildered by false ego; *manyate*—thinks; *iti*—thus; *aham*—I; (am) *karttā*—the doer.

All aspects of material activity are performed by the modes of material nature but a person whose intelligence is bewildered by false ego thinks himself to be the doer.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

If a learned man also has to perform *karma*, what is the difference between his work and that of an ignorant man? This doubt is being addressed. The difference is shown in two ślokas beginning with the present one, *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni*. Ignorant people believe that they themselves perform all activity (*karma*), but in reality it is performed by the senses, which are impelled by the modes of material nature.

ŚLOKA 28

तत्त्ववित् तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥२८॥

*tattvavit tu mahā-bāho / guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta / iti matvā na sajjate*

mahā-bāho—O mighty-armed one; *tu*—but; *tattva-vit*—a knower of the science; *vibhāgayoh*—of the distinctions; (between the *ātmā*) *guṇa-karma*—and the material modes and the laws of *karma*; *matvā*—considering; *iti*—that; *guṇāḥ*—the senses; *varttante*—are engaged; *guṇeṣu*—in their sense objects, like form etc.; *na sajjate*—does not become attached.

O Mahā-bāho Arjuna, one who is *tattva-vit*, who knows that the soul is aloof from the *guṇas* and also knows the laws of *karma* (actions), does not falsely identify himself as the doer. Because he understands that the senses are engaged in their respective sense objects, he is aloof from them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Those who know the distinctive characteristics of *guṇa* and *karma* are called *tattva-vit*, knowers of the truth. There are three categories of *guṇa*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The respective categories of *karma* are the different types of activities which are influenced by the *guṇas*, the *devas*, the various prominent senses, and the objects of the senses. One who is *tattva-vit* knows the truth about both *guṇa* and *karma*. The *devas* or the *guṇas* preside over the respective senses, such as sight, and also the sense objects, such as form. However, a learned person knows that he is not the *guṇas*, nor is he the effect or activity of any *guṇa*. He has nothing to do with the *guṇas* or their activities. Understanding this, a wise and learned person does not become attached to them.

ŚLOKA 29

प्रकृतेगुणसम्भाः सजन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्सनविदो मन्दान्कृत्सनविन विचालयेत् ॥२९॥

*prakṛter guṇa-samṁūḍhāḥ / sajjante guṇa-karmasu
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān / kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet*

(persons) *samīmūdhāḥ*—bewildered; *guṇa*—by the modes; *prakṛteḥ*—of material nature; *sajjante*—become attached; *guṇa-karmasu*—to the modes and *karma*; *kṛtsna-vit*—one who is in complete knowledge; *na vicālayet*—should not agitate; *tān*—those; *mandān*—less intelligent persons; *akṛtsna-vidah*—of incomplete knowledge.

Those absorbed in the three *guṇas* become attached to sense objects, but those who are complete in knowledge should not unsettle such uninformed and less intelligent persons.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŞINI

One may raise the question, “If all *jīvas* are distinct from the *guṇas* and have no relationship with them and their activities, why are they seen to be attached to sense objects?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa answers with this *śloka* beginning with *prakṛteḥ*. “They become bewildered by the *guṇas*. In other words, they become deluded because of their absorption in the *guṇas*. Just as a man haunted by a ghost considers himself a ghost, so the *jīvas* absorbed in the *guṇas* identify themselves as the *guṇas*. Thus influenced by the effect of the modes, they become attached to sense objects. One who is *kṛtsna-vit* (a man of complete knowledge) should not unsettle those who are *akṛtsna-vit* (of incomplete knowledge). This means that a man of complete knowledge should not try to force these thoughts on ignorant persons by saying, ‘You are a *jīva* distinct from the *guṇas*. You are not the modes.’ Just as a person who is haunted by a ghost will never understand that he is actually not a ghost but a human being, even if he is told hundreds of times. His conviction can only be removed by the medicine of *mantras*. Similarly, no amount of verbal instruction will help a bewildered *jīva* to stop identifying himself with the modes of material nature. Such people should simply be engaged in *niṣkāma-karma*, which automatically frees them from their absorption in the *guṇas*.”

ŚLOKA 30

**मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३०॥**

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi / sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā / yudhyasva vigata-jvarah*

adhyātma-cetasā—with the mind fixed in the self; *sannyasya*—giving up completely; *sarvāṇi*—all; *karmāṇi*—activities; *mayi*—unto Me; *bhūtvā*—being; *nirāśīr*—free from desire; *nirmamah*—without a sense of possessiveness; (and) *vigata-jvarah*—without lamentation; *yudhyasva*—fight.

With your mind fixed in the self and offering all your activities to Me, being freed from desire, possessiveness and lamentation, fight.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Therefore, O Arjuna, fight with your mind fixed in the self (*adhyātma-cetah*), offering all *karma* (actions) unto Me, and being free from all material hopes and desires. Do not let your mind dwell on the sense objects, and give up any sense of possessiveness towards them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VR̄TTI

Śrī Bhagavān makes Arjuna the instrument through which He instructs common men to perform their prescribed *karma*, free from the false ego of being the doer, and the desire for the fruits of their actions. Here the word *karma* refers to all types of *karma*, both *laukika* (mundane) and Vedic (as prescribed in the *Vedas*). *Nirmamah* indicates that one should perform action without any sense of possessiveness towards sense objects such as the body, house, son, wife and brother. Here *yudhyasva* (a fight) means one should engage in prescribed actions.

ŚLOKA 31

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥३१॥

*ye me matam idam nityam / anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto ‘nasūyanto / mucyante te ‘pi karmabhiḥ*

te—those; mānavāḥ—human beings; ye—who; (are) anasūyantah—free from enmity or fault-finding; śraddhāvantaḥ—who have complete faith; (and who) nityam—always; anutiṣṭhanti—abide by; idam—this; matam—teaching, opinion; me—of Mine; mucyante—are liberated; api—also; karmabhiḥ—from the bondage of fruitive actions.

Those who are free from fault finding, who have complete faith in Me, and who always abide by this desire of Mine (to perform *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*), are liberated from the bondage of *karma* (fruitive activities).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān is speaking the present śloka beginning with *ye me*, in order to engage people in following His instructions.

ŚLOKA 32

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढास्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥३२॥

*ye tv etad abhyasūyanto / nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāṁs tān / viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ*

tu—but; ye—those; abhyasūyantah—while fault finding; (who do) na anutiṣṭhanti—not follow; etat—this; matam—teaching; me—of Mine; viddhi—know; tān—them; acetasaḥ—devoid of sense of discrimination; vimūḍhāṁs—befooled; sarva-jñāna—in all sorts of knowledge; (and) naṣṭān—ruined.

But know that those envious persons who do not follow these instructions of Mine are bereft of discrimination, devoid of all true *jñāna*, and are ruined in all their endeavours for perfection.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

In speaking this śloka beginning with the words *ye tu*, Bhagavān is explaining the ill-effect of not following His instructions.

ŚLOKA 33

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥३३॥

*sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ / prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni / nigrahaḥ kim kariṣyati*

api—even; *jñāna-vān*—a wise man; *ceṣṭate*—endeavours; *sadṛśam*—in accordance; *svasyāḥ*—with his own; *prakṛteḥ*—disposition; *bhūtāni*—all beings; *yānti*—follow; *prakṛtim*—(their) nature; *kim*—what?; *nigrahaḥ*—suppression; *kariṣyati*—can do.

Even a wise man acts according to his own acquired disposition, for all beings follow their respective natures. What can be achieved by repression?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

One may raise the following question: “A person who does not obey the order of a king is punished, so if one does not follow the order of Parameśvara, is he not punished as well? Should he not fear punishment from Him?” In response, Parameśvara says, “Yes, this is true. However, those who are engaged only in satisfying their senses are unable to follow the order of the king or of Parameśvara, even though they have

discrimination. Their nature has become like this.” The present *śloka* beginning with *sadyam* is spoken to explain this.

“People may know that sinful activity will lead to punishment from the royal court, or even going to hell, and may understand that this will bring infamy and criticism. Still, because of the nature that they have acquired over a prolonged period, they endeavour according to the temperament resulting from their sinful deeds, which brings only misery. Such people only follow their own disposition. They can, however, be restrained by My discipline or that of a king. *Saṁskāras* (purifying impressions) can be made in a person with an impure heart by *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and in a person of pure heart through *jñāna-yoga*. Both types of people can be enlightened. It is true that neither of these processes can help a person whose heart is extremely impure, but *bhakti*, which appears by My mercy, can easily deliver even sinful people.”

As it is said in the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

*aho dhanyo' si devarṣe kṛpayā yasya te kṣaṇat
nīco'py utpulako lebhe lubdhako ratim acyute*

O Devarṣi, all glories to you. Because of your mercy, this low-class hunter has, in just one moment, attained *rati* for the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, and is manifesting the symptom of *pulaka* in which one’s bodily hairs stand on end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VR̄TTI

A person with uncontrolled senses may have discrimination, but cannot restrain his senses by knowledge of *śāstra*.

*stambhayann ātmanātmānam / yāvat sattvam yathā-śrutam
na śāśaka samādhātum / mano madana-vepitam*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.62

After seeing the prostitute, the mind of Ajāmila became agitated. He tried hard to control his mind by fortitude and knowledge of *śāstra* but, being agitated by Cupid, he was unable to do so.

All uncontrolled, degraded desires can be removed by the powerful influence of *sādhu-saṅga*.

tato duḥsaṅgam utsṛjya / satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsyā cchindanti / mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.26.26

Saintly people can, by their powerful speech, completely cut asunder all the unfavourable attachments of the mind.

Vyāsaṅga means attachments which make one averse to Śrī Bhagavān. Here, the word *eva* implies the powerful speech of saintly persons alone. Pious actions, holy places, *devas* and knowledge of *śāstra* are by themselves not able to destroy unfavourable attachments. This should be understood.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, don’t think that a man of knowledge will attain auspiciousness (liberation from bondage) if he simply deliberates on spirit and matter, and accepts the shelter of *sannyāsa-dharma* by impetuously giving up material *guṇa* and *karma*. Even after the *baddha-jīva* has become enriched with *jñāna*, he should still endeavour according to his long-acquired disposition. It is not true that one can give up one’s nature by suddenly restraining it. All *baddha-jīvas* should continue to endeavour according to the disposition they have naturally acquired over a prolonged period. The proper way to give up this nature is to carefully perform all *karma* (action) in accordance with that nature, while being situated in it. As long as *vairāgya* enriched with the symptoms of *bhakti-yoga* does not appear in the heart, then the only means to attain self-auspiciousness is *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offered to Śrī

Bhagavān. By this practice, a person can perform his prescribed duties (*sva-dharma*), and also benefit from the *samskāras* generated by them. Renunciation of one's *sva-dharma* will ultimately result in deviation from the path of perfection.

When, by My mercy or by the mercy of My *bhakta*, *bhakti-yoga* appears in the heart, there is no need to follow one's *sva-dharma*, because this path of *bhakti* is superior to *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Otherwise, if *bhakti-yoga* has not awakened, to follow *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offered to Me is auspicious in all cases."

SLOKA 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्नवशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥३४॥

*indriyasyendriyasyārthe / rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet / tau hy asya paripanthinau*

indriyasya arthe—within (each sense object); *indriyasya*—of (each) sense; *rāga*—attachment; (and) *dveṣau*—detachment; *vyavasthitau*—are situated; *na āgacchet*—one should not become; *vaśam*—controlled; *tayoh*—by them; *tau*—they (attachment and aversion); *hi paripanthinau*—are certainly obstacles; *asya*—for him (the spiritual practitioner).

All the senses are invariably controlled by attachment and aversion to their respective objects. Therefore, one should never come under their sway because such attachment and aversion impede auspiciousness for the *sādhaka*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Since it is beyond the control of *śāstra* to enforce injunctions on a person who has an extremely wicked nature, one

should not allow his senses to wander wilfully. By regularly engaging in sinful activities, a person becomes depraved. Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *sloka* beginning with the word *indriyasya* to explain this. The repetition of the word *indriya* here indicates the sense objects of each respective sense. Although to look at another's wife, touch her, or allure her by giving her gifts is forbidden in *śāstra*, still an immoral man is attracted to such behaviour. On the other hand, although it is prescribed in *śāstra* to see, touch, serve and offer charity to the *guru*, *brāhmaṇas*, holy places and guests, an impious man is averse to such behaviour. To come under the influence of either of these mentalities is not proper. In other words, it is not proper either to develop attachment to a woman by seeing her, or to be malicious to someone who obstructs that attachment. Similarly, a *sādhaka* on the path of self-realisation should neither be attached to rich and palatable foodstuffs which are to his taste, nor averse to dry, unpalatable food items and objects which are not to his taste. In the same way, he should not be attached to seeing and hearing about his own son, nor should he be averse to seeing and hearing about his enemy's son. It is inappropriate to come under the influence of such attachments and aversions. This has been explained.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARSINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VR̄TTI

The senses are of two types: *jñānendriya* (knowledge-acquiring senses) and *karmendriya* (working senses). There are five *jñānendriyas*: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, which accept form, sound, smell, taste and touch as their respective objects of gratification. There are also five *karmendriyas*: speech, hands, legs, anus and genitals, which perform the actions of speaking, accepting, moving, evacuating and procreating. The *sādhaka* of *bhakti* engages these eleven senses, including the mind, in various types of service for the

pleasure of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, instead of enjoying the various sense objects himself. In this way, he can easily overpower the uncontrolled senses and, by the use of his controlled senses, he can attain the supreme goal of life.

Śrila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, if you think that the jīvas’ acceptance of sense objects will make most of them more addicted to worldliness and that liberation from the bondage of *karma* will thus become impossible, then listen to My words. It is not true that all objects are detrimental to the spiritual progress of the jīvas. It is only the attachment and aversion to the sense objects which are the greatest enemies of the *jīva*. As long as you have this material body, you have to accept sense objects. For this reason, you should accept sense objects, and at the same time control attachment and aversion towards them. If you act in this way, you can deal with sense objects without becoming bound to them. You will become detached from sense objects by gradually eliminating the attachment and aversion which develops when one falsely identifies the body with the self. In brief, you will develop *yukta-vairāgya*. I have not instructed you to subdue attachment to objects and activities related to Me, Śrī Bhagavān, which stimulate one’s *bhakti*. Nor have I instructed you not to be averse to objects or activities which are obstacles to *bhakti*. Rather, I have only instructed you to control that attachment and aversion which is related to selfish pleasure and which promotes a temperament that is opposed to *bhakti*. This should be understood.”

ŚLOKA 35

श्रेयन् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मं निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥३५॥

śreyān sva-dharma viguṇah / para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt
sva-dharme nidhanam śreyah / para-dharma bhayāvahaḥ

śreyān—better; (to perform) *sva-dharmaḥ*—one's prescribed duties; *viguṇah*—defectively; *para-dharmāt*—than another's duties; *su-anuṣṭhitāt*—perfectly performed; *nidhanam*—death; *śreyah*—is better; *sva-dharme*—in (discharging) one's prescribed duties; *para-dharmaḥ*—duties prescribed for others; *bhaya-āvahah*—bring danger.

It is far better to execute one's *sva-dharma*, even though imperfectly, than to perform another's duty perfectly. It is better to die discharging one's own duty in accordance with the *varṇāśrama* system than to engage in another's duty, for it is dangerous to follow another's path.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān sees that due to attachment and aversion, Arjuna is becoming unable to engage in his own prescribed duty of fighting. Instead, he considers it easier to engage in *ahimsā* (non-violence) which is *para-dharma* (the duty of others). Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *śloka* beginning with the word *śreyān*. The word *viguṇa* means that, although one's *sva-dharma* may have some defects and one may be unable to execute it properly, it is still superior to performing *para-dharma*, which may contain all good qualities and be executed correctly (*sv-anuṣṭhitāt*). For this reason, this *śloka*, *śreyān sva-dharme*, is spoken.

It is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.15.12):

vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca / ābhāsa upamā cchalaḥ
adharma-śākhāḥ pañcemā / dharma-jño 'dharmavat tyajet

The tree of *adharma* has five branches—*vidharma* (activities opposed to *dharma*), *para-dharma* (following another's *dharmika* principles), *ābhāsa* (making a show of *dharmika* principles), *upamā* or *upa-dharma* (practising principles that only appear to be *dharmika*) and *chala-dharma* (cheating *dharma*). A knower of *dharma* (*dharma-jña*) will abandon all of them as forbidden acts.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Activities such as non-violence are prescribed for *brāhmaṇas* situated in *sattva-guṇa*. For *kṣatriyas* in *rajo-guṇa*, the prescribed duty is fighting. Therefore, the *sva-dharma* for *kṣatriyas* is to engage in battle. Even if a *kṣatriya* dies in battle he attains Svarga; therefore, it is better for him to fight.

Śrila Bhaktivinoda Thākura says, “One who follows *sva-dharma* may die before attaining a more elevated state of *dharma* (a higher *adhikāra*). Still it is auspicious, because to perform *para-dharma* is always fearful and dangerous in any circumstance. This consideration, however, does not apply to *nirguṇa-bhakti*. When the stage of *nirguṇa-bhakti* is attained, one can give up *sva-dharma* without hesitation because at that time his *nitya-dharma* or *svarūpa-dharma* (constitutional nature) manifests as his *sva-dharma*. Here *sva* means the real self and *dharma* means the *jīva*’s eternal function. In that stage the *sva-dharma* which one previously accepted in relation to the body and mind becomes *para-dharma*, that is, secondary to the duties of the awakened self.”

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇāṁ pitṛṇāṁ
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam
gato mukundam pariḥṛtya kartam*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.41

Those who have taken exclusive shelter of Śrī Mukunda, who is the only shelter, and who have renounced all varieties of *karma*, no longer remain indebted to the *devas*, sages, living entities, perfected persons and forefathers.

*tāvat karmāni kurvīta / na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā / śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.9

One who has not become fully detached from enjoying the fruits of his activities (*karma*), and whose faith in the process of *bhakti* and the hearing of My pastimes is not yet sufficiently developed, must certainly engage in *karma* (prescribed duties). *Tyāgīs* or *bhaktas* of Bhagavān, on the other hand, have no purpose to achieve by engaging in *karma*.

ŚLOKA 36

अर्जुन उवाच—
अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापञ्चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्ण्य बलादिव नियोजितः ॥३६॥

arjuna uvāca
atha kena prayukto 'yam / pāpañ carati pūruṣah
anicchann api vārṣṇeya / balād iva niyojitaḥ

arjuna uvāca—Arjuna said; *vārṣṇeya*—O descendant of Vṛṣṇi;
atha—then; *kena*—by whom?; *ayampūruṣah*—a person;
prayuktaḥ—is engaged; *api*—even; *anicchann*—unwillingly; (so that) *carati*—he performs; *pāpam*—sin; *iva*—as if; *niyojitaḥ*—engaged; *balāt*—by force.

Arjuna said: O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, what is it that forcibly impels a person to engage in sinful activities, although he is unwilling to do so?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Earlier (in *Gītā* 3.34) it was said: *rāga-dveśau vyavasthitau*. “Even a man of discrimination can develop attachment to sensual activities such as the desire to enjoy another’s wife, which are forbidden in *śāstra*.” In this connection, Arjuna asks this question beginning with *atha*. “What is it that impels a man to engage in sinful activities as if by force, even though he performs such activities unwillingly, well aware of the

regulations as well as the injunctions of *śāstra*? In other words, by whom is a person impelled to desire to engage in sinful activities?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In this *śloka* Arjuna has addressed Śrī Bhagavān, ‘O Vārṣṇeya.’ Kṛṣṇa appeared in the Vṛṣṇi-varṇa (dynasty) of Arjuna’s maternal grandfather and grandmother. Śūrasena was also born in the Vṛṣṇi-varṇa. His son was Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa’s father) and his daughter, Pṛthī, was Arjuna’s mother. The hidden indication in Arjuna’s prayer to Kṛṣṇa is, “Since I belong to the same dynasty as You, You should not neglect me. At present I have fallen into a pit of doubts. You have just said that the *ātmā* is completely distinct from inert qualities or mundane relationships (*Gītā* 2.13-31). Who, then, impels the *jīvas* to engage in sinful acts, if such action is not their constitutional nature?”

ŚLOKA 37

श्रीभगवानुवाच—
काम एष क्रोध एष रजेगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३७॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa / rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahā-śano mahā-pāpmā / viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

śrī bhagavān uvāca—Śrī Bhagavān said; (it is) *eṣaḥ kāmaḥ*—this desire to enjoy sense objects; (and) *eṣaḥ krodhah*—this wrath; *samudbhavaḥ*—which is born of; *rajaḥ-guṇa*—the mode of passion; (it is) *mahā-āśanah*—all devouring; (and) *mahā-pāpmā*—extremely envious; *viddhi*—know; *enam*—this; (to be) *vairiṇam*—the enemy; *iha*—in this world.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This desire to enjoy sense objects, which indeed transforms into wrath, is born of passion. It is all-devouring and extremely formidable. Know it to be the primary enemy of the *jīvas* in this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Kāma, the desire for sense objects, invariably engages a person in sinful actions; impelled by it, he acts sinfully. *Kāma* also appears differently and is seen directly as anger (*krodha*). When the desire for sense objects is obstructed, it transforms into *krodha*. *Kāma*, which is born from *rāgo-guṇa*, gives rise to anger which is in *tamo-guṇa*. If one asks, “Once a person’s expectations are fulfilled, will the desire for sense objects be satiated?” then Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying: *mahāśanah*, “It is all-devouring.” In *smṛti* it is said:

*yat prthivyām vrihi-yavam / hiranyam paśavah striyah
nālam ekasya tat sarvam / iti matvā śamam vrajet*

All the grains, barley, gold, animals and women on earth cannot satisfy the *kāma* of even one man. It is best to understand this and become content.

According to the above statement of *smṛti*, it is beyond a person’s ability to satisfy his *kāma*. Again, if the question is raised, “If there is no possibility of controlling this lust by offering its desired ends as a truce, then do we have to control it by pacifying it?” then in response, Śrī Bhagavān says, *mahā-pāpmā*. “It is extremely formidable and difficult to control.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Kāma and *krodha* have been described as the prime enemies of the *jīvas* on the path of liberation. *Kāma*, the desire to enjoy sense objects, is specifically the original enemy; *krodha*, anger, is just its transformation. *Kāma* has been described as *mahat*, or an enemy whose belly is never filled. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

(9.19.14) this is seen in the life history of Yayāti Mahārāja:

*na jātu kāmaḥ kāmānām / upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva / bhūya evābhivardhate*

By adding ghee to a fire, the fire becomes intensified. Similarly, by the fulfillment of *kāma*, one's desires are intensified. They do not disappear.

*yat pṛthivyāṁ vrīhi-yavāṁ / hiraṇyāṁ paśavāḥ striyah
na duhyanti manah-pritim / puṁsaḥ kāma-hatasya te*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.19.13

All the grains, gold, animals, and women on earth cannot satisfy the *kāma* of a lusty man.

An enemy is controlled by the four principles of *sāma* (ap-peasement), *dāma* (bribe), *bheda* (division) and *daṇḍa* (punishment). Here Śrī Bhagavān is explaining that this formidable enemy, *kāma*, cannot be controlled by the principles of *sāma*, *dāma* and *bheda*. He is thus indicating that one should use the principle of *daṇḍa* (a rod of chastisement) to control the desire for sense objects. This will be further clarified in the next sloka. The enemy, *kāma*, can be destroyed when one acquires the weapon of *ātma-jñāna*, self-knowledge.

ŚLOKA 38

*धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्थादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥३८॥*

*dhūmenāvriyate vahnir / yathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas / tathā tenedam āvṛtam*

yathā—just as; *vahniḥ*—fire; *āvriyate*—is covered; *dhūmena*—by smoke; *ādarśah*—a mirror; *malena*—by dust; *ca*—and; *yathā*—just as; *garbhah*—an embryo; *āvṛtaḥ*—is covered; *ulbena*—by the womb; *tathā*—in the same way; *idam*—this (knowledge); *āvṛtam*—is covered; *tena*—by that (lust).

Just as fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dust,
and an embryo by the womb, true knowledge of the
jīva remains covered by degrees of lust.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Kāma is the enemy of everyone, not just a particular person. This is explained through these examples. Although fire may be dirty and covered by smoke, it can still perform its function of burning; but when a mirror is covered by dust, it loses the characteristic of cleanliness and cannot perform its function of reflecting the image of the object in front of it. However, it is still accepted as a mirror. An embryo covered by the womb cannot move its hands and feet nor can it be recognised as a baby. One can remember the supreme goal only when *kāma* is not very deep. When *kāma* becomes intense, such remembrance is impossible and when it is very intense, the world itself appears to be devoid of consciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

The knowledge of those *jīvas* averse to self-realisation is covered by three degrees of *kāma*: *mṛdu* (mild), *madhya* (moderate) and *tīvra* (intense). A person whose *jñāna* is covered by *mṛdu-kāma* can accept instruction on *ātma-tattva* to a certain extent. When a person's *jñāna* is covered by *mādhyā-kāma*, it is completely impossible for him to understand even a little *tattva-jñāna*, and when *jñāna* is covered by *tīvra-kāma*, *jñāna* is not perceived at all.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "This whole world is covered by that very *kāma*, in some places mildly, in some places deeply and in some places very deeply. I will illustrate this with an example. Please listen. A conscious *jīva* who is mildly covered by *kāma*, just as a fire is covered by smoke, can perform activities such as *bhāgavat-smaraṇam*. This is the situation of *jīvas* who have taken

shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and whose consciousness is *mukulita-cetana*, a little open, as in the budding stage of a flower. Even if the conscious *jīva* has a human body, when his consciousness is deeply covered by *kāma*, like a mirror covered by dust, it is not possible for him to remember Parameśvara. This is the condition of the extreme moralist and atheist, that is, a *jīva* whose consciousness is *saṅkucitacetana*, shrunken or contracted. They are like animals and birds. A *jīva* whose consciousness is covered by intense *kāma*, like the embryo covered by the womb, has a consciousness like creepers, stones and trees and is *ācchādita-cetana*, completely covered.”

ŚLOKA 39

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥३९॥

*āvṛtam jñānam etena / jñānino nitya-vairiṇā
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya / duṣpūreṇānalena ca*

kaunteya—O Arjuna; *jñānam*—discrimination; *jñāninah*—of the wise (*ātmā*); (is) *āvṛtam*—covered; *etena nitya-vairiṇā*—by this eternal enemy; *kāma-rūpeṇa*—in the form of lust; *ca*—also; *duṣpūreṇa*—never to be satisfied; *analena*—like fire.

O Kaunteya, the true knowledge of the wise is covered by the eternal enemy in the form of *kāma*, which burns like fire and can never be satiated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Kāma is indeed ignorance for all *jīvas*, as Śrī Bhagavān is explaining in this śloka beginning with *āvṛtam*. This desire to enjoy the sense objects has been described as the eternal enemy; therefore, it must be destroyed by all means. *Kāma-rūpa* means in the form of *kāma*. It is indeed ignorance which envelops the real nature of the *jīva*. Here the word *ca* has been used to mean

'like'. Just as fire cannot be satiated by pouring ghee into it, similarly, *kāma* cannot be fulfilled by enjoying the sense objects.

It is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.19.14):

*na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām / upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva / bhūya evābhivardhate*

Fire is not satiated by ghee, rather it increases. Similarly by enjoying sense objects, the thirst for sense enjoyment increases more and more. It does not become pacified.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI

Kāma is the root cause of lamentation and distress, and has been compared to fire.

*kāmānalām madhu-lavaiḥ śamayan durāpaiḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.25*

Kāma can never be satisfied by enjoying the sense objects. It is like a fire which cannot be extinguished by drops of honey in the form of momentary satisfaction.

*evam gṛheśv abhirato / viṣayān vividhaiḥ sukhaiḥ
sevamāno na cātuṣyad / ājya-stokair ivānalaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.6.48*

The sage Saubhari Muni was not able to attain peace by profusely enjoying sense objects, just as fire is not pacified when drops of ghee are poured into it.

*sevato varṣa-pūgān me / urvaśyā adharāśavam
na tr̥pyaty ātma-bhūḥ kāmo / vahnir āhutibhir yathā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.26.14*

Even after I had served the so-called nectar of the lips of Urvaśi for many years, my lusty desires kept rising again and again within my heart and were never satisfied, just like a fire that can never be extinguished by the oblations of ghee poured into its flames.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “This *kāma* is indeed *avidyā* for the *jīvas* and it is their only eternal enemy. It covers the conscious *jīvas* like an irresistible fire. Just as I, Śrī Bhagavān, am a conscious being, similarly the *jīva* is also a conscious entity. The difference between My nature and that of the *jīva* is that I am infinitely conscious and omnipotent, whereas the *jīva* is atomically conscious and can only act by the energy given by Me. The *nitya-dharma*, eternal occupation, of the *jīva* is to be My eternal servant. This is called *prema* or *niṣkāma-jaiva-dharma*, the eternal function of the *jīva* whose motivation is unalloyed. Every conscious being is, by his constitutional nature, endowed with free will, thus he is My eternal servant by his own free will. According to the degree to which he properly uses this free will, he can act as My eternal servant. The misuse of that pure free will is called *avidyā* or *kāma*. Those *jīvas* who do not serve Me by correctly using their free will have to accept *kāma*, an enjoying mood, which is the perverted form of the *jīvas'* pure state, *prema*. Their *svarūpa* becomes *ācchādita-cetana* (covered consciousness) as they are covered more and more by *kāma*. This is called *karma-bandhana*, the bondage of the *jīva*, or *saṁsāra-yātanā*, the sufferings of birth and death.”

ŚLOKA 40

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥४०॥

*indriyāṇi mano buddhir / asyādhīṣṭhānam ucyate
etair vimohayaty eṣa / jñānam āvṛtya dehinam*

ucyate—it is said (that); *indriyāṇi*—the senses; *manah*—mind; (and) *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; (are) *adhiṣṭhānam*—the residences; *asya*—of this lust; *etaiḥ*—by these; *eṣah*—this lust; *āvṛtya*—covering; *jñānam*—his knowledge; *vimohayati*—bewilders; *dehinam*—the embodied being.

The senses, mind and intelligence are said to be the dwelling places of this desire to enjoy. With their help, this lust covers the knowledge of the *jīva* and completely bewilders him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Where does this *kāma* reside? In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *śloka* beginning with *indriyāṇi*. The senses, mind and intelligence, which are like a great fort or capital city, are the abode of this enemy, *kāma*. The sense objects, such as sound, are like the kingdom of the king. The embodied soul, *dehī*, is bewildered by all of them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

One can easily conquer one's enemy when one has discovered his hiding-place and destroyed it. The senses are the shelter or hiding place of *kāma*. Therefore, by subduing the senses *kāma* can be easily defeated. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has compared *kāma* to a very powerful king, the senses to his capital which is protected by the great fort of the mind, intelligence and false ego, and the various sense objects to the kingdom and the subjects of the king.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "When the pure cognisant *jīva* accepts a body, he is known as *dehī* (embodied). *Kāma* keeps the *jñāna* of the *jīva* covered as long as it dwells in the senses, mind and intelligence. The subtle state of *kāma* is *avidyā* (ignorance). It is this *avidyā* only which originally offers the initial veil of ignorance in the form of material *ahaṅkāra* (false ego) to the *jīva*, who is an atomic conscious entity with pure ego. Material intelligence acts as a shelter for this *kāma* or *avidyā*. Later, when the *ahaṅkāra* develops, the material intelligence provides the mind as a second shelter. The mind, which runs after sense objects, then provides the senses as the third place of shelter for *kāma*. Taking shelter of these three

places, *kāma* casts the *jīva* into worldly enjoyment. When a *jīva* turns towards Śrī Bhagavān by his own will, it is called *vidyā*, and when he wilfully becomes averse to Śrī Bhagavān, it is called *avidyā*.”

ŚLOKA 41

तस्मात् त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥४१॥

*tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau / niyamya bharatarṣabha
pāpmānam prajahi hy enam / jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam*

tasmāt—therefore; *bharata-ṛṣabha*—O best of the descendants of Bharata; *ādau*—first of all; *niyamya*—by regulating; *indriyāṇi*—the senses; *hi*—certainly; *tvam prajahi*—you must destroy; *enam*—this; *pāpmānam*—evil; *nāśanam*—destroyer; *jñāna*—of knowledge; (and) *vijñāna*—of realisation of Me.

Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, first control your senses in order to completely slay this evil *kāma*, which is the destroyer of both *jñāna* (wisdom) and *vijñāna* (realisation of Me).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

By conquering the enemy’s place of shelter, the enemy is conquered. This is the strategy. It is progressively more difficult to control the senses, the mind and the intelligence, which are the seats of *kāma* (the desire to enjoy). It is very difficult to control the senses, but they are easier to control than the mind and intelligence. “Therefore, first conquer your senses.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this śloka beginning with the word *tasmāt* just to explain this point. Although the mind, which is very difficult to control, runs after enjoying another’s wife and wealth, you should understand what is happening; this is only the work of the senses, such as the eyes, ears, hands and legs. One should control these senses by not allowing them

to pursue their respective objects. *Pāpmānam* means to give up this ferocious desire to enjoy. In this way, if a person gradually controls his senses, his mind will also become free from *kāma* in due course of time.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Assisted by the senses, this powerful *kāma* uses the ropes of delusion to bind *jīvas* who are averse to Śrī Bhagavān. Therefore, it is imperative from the outset to control the senses such as the eyes. When the external senses are thus controlled, the mind, whose function is *sāṅkalpa* (the determination to accept) and *vikalpa* (the choice to reject), will also be controlled.

Śrī Bhagavān also spoke thus to Uddhava:

viśayendriya-saṁyogān / manah kṣubhyati nānyathā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.26.22

The mind becomes restless only when the senses come in contact with the sense objects, otherwise not.

asamprayuñjataḥ prāṇān / śāmyati stimitāṁ manah
Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.26.23

Therefore, the mind of a person who has control over his senses becomes stable and peaceful.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Therefore, best of the Bharatas, by first controlling the senses and mind, conquer this extremely formidable *kāma* which destroys *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, devotion to Me. Destroying its distorted nature (lust), reinstate its own constitutional nature, *prema*. Thus take shelter of the inherent nature of *prema*. The first commendable duty of a *baddha-jīva* is to follow the principles of *yukta-vairāgya*, genuine renunciation, and to pursue *sva-dharma*, prescribed duties. Thus, by gradually attaining *sādhana-bhakti*, he should perform *sādhana* to attain

prema-bhakti. Nirapekṣa-bhakti unalloyed *bhakti* independent of *jñāna*, *karma* or personal endeavour, is attained by My mercy or by the mercy of My *bhakta*. Although it is very rare, in some cases it manifests without any cause.”

ŚLOKA 42

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेयः परतस्तु सः ॥४२॥

*indriyāṇi parāṇyāhurinḍriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ*

āhuḥ—they (the sages) say that; *indriyāṇi*—the senses; *parāṇi*—are higher than dull matter; *manah*—the mind; *param*—is higher; *indriyebhyah*—than the senses; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *tu parā*—is indeed higher; *manasah*—than the mind; *tu*—but; (it is) *sah*—he (the soul); *yaḥ*—who; (is) *parataḥ*—still higher; *buddheḥ*—than intelligence.

The senses are said to be superior to inert matter, and the mind is superior to the senses. The intelligence is superior to the mind, and he, the *ātmā*, is superior even to the intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

It is impractical to try to control the mind and intelligence in the initial stages; to do so is impossible. But to explain the process, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this *śloka* beginning with the words *indriyāṇi parāṇi*. He is saying, “The senses are more powerful than a courageous warrior who has conquered the ten directions. Indeed, they are superior to him, for even he cannot have control over his senses. The mind is more powerful than the senses, and superior to them, for it remains active even during dreams when the senses are dissolved. Intelligence which is endowed with realisation is still more powerful than and superior to the mind because

resolute intelligence remains active even during deep sleep, when the mind is dissolved. Over and above this, the *ātma* is more powerful than the intelligence and superior to it, for it continues to exist even when the intelligence is destroyed. It is this glorious soul alone that can conquer *kāma*. This *jīvātmā*, which is more powerful than everything else, can definitely control *kāma*, once it has controlled the senses, mind and intelligence. Of this you should have no doubt.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

In śrutiś it is also said:

*indriyebhyah parā hy arthā / arthebhyaś ca param manah
manasas tu parā buddhir / buddher ātmā mahan paraḥ*
Katha Upanisad 1.3.10

Certainly, reason is superior to the senses, and mind is higher than reason. Higher than the mind is intelligence, and the great one, the *ātmā* (soul) is highest of all.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am explaining the gradation to you in brief. Your real identity is that you are a *jīva*. You have a constitutional function of rendering loving service to Me, but you have accidentally become bound by inert matter, so that you now identify yourself with the senses, mind and intelligence. This is delusion, and it is created by ignorance. The senses are superior to and more subtle than inert objects. Superior and more subtle than the senses is the mind. The intelligence is superior to and more subtle than the mind, and the *ātmā*, which is the *jīva*, is superior even to the intelligence.”

ŚLOKA 43

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तश्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥४३॥

*evam buddheḥ param buddhvā / saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatrum mahā-bāho / kāma-rūpam durāsadam*

mahā-bāho—O mighty-armed one; *evam*—in this way; *buddhvā*—knowing; (the soul to be) *param*—superior; *buddheḥ*—to intelligence; *saṁstabhya*—by firmly establishing; *atmānam*—the mind; *ātmanā*—through intelligence; *jahi*—destroy; *durāsadam*—this difficult-to-vanquish; *śatrum*—enemy; *kāma-rūpam*—in the form of the desire to enjoy.

O Mahā-bāho, in this way, knowing the *jīvātmā* to be superior to the intelligence, control the mind with the pure intelligence that is related to the true self, and destroy this insatiable enemy in the form of *kama*, the desire to enjoy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ

Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter with this *śloka* beginning with *evam*. “Knowing the *jīva* to be superior to the intelligence and distinct from all mundane designations, and making the *ātmā* steady with the *ātmā* himself, destroy this *kāma* which is very difficult to conquer.”

In this chapter, the *sādhana* of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and the merits of *jñāna*, which is its aim, have been described.

Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda of the Sārārtha-Varṣinī Tīkā, by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, on the Third Chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā, which gives pleasure to the bhaktas and is accepted by all saintly persons.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARŚINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “In this way, with the help of transcendental knowledge of the *jīvātmā*, know yourself to be *aprākṛta-tattva*, superior to all mundane identification with the senses, body, mind and in-

telligence, and also know yourself to be My eternal servant. Thus, become steady by the grace of My *cit-śakti*, and destroy this formidable *kāma* by following the gradual steps of devotional practice.”

*Thus ends the Sārārtha-Varṣinī Prakāśikā-vṛtti,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja,
on the Third Chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā.*

