

- CHAPTER 4 -

Transcendental Knowledge

Chapter 4—Text 1

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
imaṁ vivasvate yogam
proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt

SYNONYMS

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *imaṁ*—this; *vivasvate*—unto the sun-god; *yogam*—the science of one's relationship to the Supreme; *proktavān*—instructed; *aham*—I; *avyayam*—imperishable; *vivasvān*—Vivasvān (the sun-god's name); *manave*—unto the father of mankind (of the name Vaivasvata); *prāha*—told; *manuḥ*—the father of mankind; *ikṣvākave*—unto King Ikṣvāku; *abravīt*—said.

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

PURPORT

Herein we find the history of the *Bhagavad-gītā* traced from a remote time when it was delivered to the royal order of all planets, beginning from the sun planet. The kings of all planets are especially meant for the protection of the inhabitants, and therefore the royal order should understand the science of *Bhagavad-gītā* in order to be able to rule the citizens and protect them from material bondage to lust. Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens by education, culture and devotion. In other words, the executive heads of all states are intended to spread the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the people may take advantage of this great science and pursue a successful path, utilizing the opportunity of the human form of life.

In this millennium, the sun-god is known as Vivasvān, the king of the sun, which is the origin of all planets within the solar system. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.52) it is stated:

yac-cakṣur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇām
rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ
yasyājñayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

“Let me worship,” Lord Brahmā said, “the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the original person and under whose order the sun, which is the king of all planets, is assuming immense power and heat. The sun represents the eye of the Lord and traverses its orbit in obedience to His order.”

The sun is the king of the planets, and the sun-god (at present of the name Vivasvān) rules the sun planet, which is controlling all other planets by supplying heat and light. He is rotating under the order of Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Kṛṣṇa originally made Vivasvān His first disciple to understand the science of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The *Gītā* is not, therefore, a speculative treatise for the insignificant mundane scholar but is a standard book of knowledge coming down from time immemorial.

In the *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti-parva* 348.51–52) we can trace out the history of the *Gītā* as follows:

tretā-yugādaṁ ca tato
vivasvān manave dadau
manuś ca loka-bhṛty-artham
sutāyekṣvākave dadau

ikṣvākuṇā ca kathito
vyāpya lokān avasthitaḥ

“In the beginning of the millennium known as Tretā-yuga this science of the relationship with the Supreme was delivered by Vivasvān to Manu. Manu, being the father of mankind, gave it to his son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this earth planet and forefather of the Raghu dynasty, in which Lord Rāmacandra appeared.” Therefore, *Bhagavad-gītā* existed in human society from the time of Mahārāja Ikṣvāku.

At the present moment we have just passed through five thousand years of the Kali-yuga, which lasts 432,000 years. Before this there was Dvāpara-yuga (800,000 years), and before that there was Tretā-yuga (1,200,000 years). Thus, some 2,005,000 years ago, Manu spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to his disciple and son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this planet earth. The age of the current Manu is calculated to last some 305,300,000 years, of which 120,400,000 have passed. Accepting that before the birth of Manu the *Gītā* was spoken by the Lord to His disciple the sun-god Vivasvān, a rough estimate is that the *Gītā* was spoken at least 120,400,000 years ago; and in human society it has been extant for two million years. It was respoken by the Lord again to Arjuna about five thousand years ago. That is the rough estimate of the history of the *Gītā*, according to the *Gītā* itself and according to the version of the speaker, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It was spoken to the sun-god Vivasvān because he is also a *kṣatriya* and is the father of all *kṣatriyas* who are descendants of the sun-god, or the *sūrya-vamśa kṣatriyas*. Because *Bhagavad-gītā* is as good as the *Vedas*, being spoken by

the Supreme Personality of Godhead, this knowledge is *apauruṣeya*, superhuman. Since the Vedic instructions are accepted as they are, without human interpretation, the *Gītā* must therefore be accepted without mundane interpretation. The mundane wranglers may speculate on the *Gītā* in their own ways, but that is not *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. Therefore, *Bhagavad-gītā* has to be accepted as it is, from the disciplic succession, and it is described herein that the Lord spoke to the sun-god, the sun-god spoke to his son Manu and Manu spoke to his son Ikṣvāku.

Chapter 4—Text 2

*evam paramparā-prāptam
imam rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā
yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*

SYNONYMS

evam—thus; *paramparā*—by disciplic succession; *prāptam*—received; *imam*—this science; *rāja-rṣayaḥ*—the saintly kings; *viduḥ*—understood; *saḥ*—that knowledge; *kālena*—in the course of time; *iha*—in this world; *mahatā*—great; *yogaḥ*—the science of one’s relationship with the Supreme; *naṣṭaḥ*—scattered; *parantapa*—O Arjuna, subduer of the enemies.

TRANSLATION

This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost.

PURPORT

It is clearly stated that the *Gītā* was especially meant for the saintly kings because they were to execute its purpose in ruling over the citizens. Certainly *Bhagavad-gītā* was never meant for the demonic persons, who would dissipate its value for no one’s benefit and would devise all types of interpretations according to personal whims. As soon as the original purpose was scattered by the motives of the unscrupulous commentators, there arose the need to reestablish the disciplic succession. Five thousand years ago it was detected by the Lord Himself that the disciplic succession was broken, and therefore He declared that the purpose of the *Gītā* appeared to be lost. In the same way, at the present moment also there are so many editions of the *Gītā* (especially in English), but almost all of them are not according to authorized disciplic succession. There are innumerable interpretations rendered by different mundane scholars, but almost all of them do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, although they make a good business on the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This spirit is demonic, because demons do not believe in God but simply enjoy the property of the Supreme. Since there is a great need of an edition of the *Gītā* in English, as it is received by the *paramparā* (disciplic succession) system, an attempt is made herewith to fulfill this great want. *Bhagavad-gītā*—accepted as it is—is a great boon to humanity; but if it is accepted as a treatise of philosophical speculations, it is simply a waste of time.

Chapter 4—Text 3

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya
yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti
rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam*

SYNONYMS

saḥ—the same; *eva*—certainly; *ayaṁ*—this; *mayā*—by Me; *te*—unto you; *adya*—today; *yogaḥ*—the science of yoga; *proktaḥ*—spoken; *purātanaḥ*—very old; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *asi*—you are; *me*—My; *sakhā*—friend; *ca*—also; *iti*—therefore; *rahasyam*—mystery; *hi*—certainly; *etat*—this; *uttamam*—transcendental.

TRANSLATION

That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.

PURPORT

There are two classes of men, namely the devotee and the demon. The Lord selected Arjuna as the recipient of this great science owing to his being a devotee of the Lord, but for the demon it is not possible to understand this great mysterious science. There are a number of editions of this great book of knowledge. Some of them have commentaries by the devotees, and some of them have commentaries by the demons. Commentation by the devotees is real, whereas that of the demons is useless. Arjuna accepts Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and any commentary on the *Gītā* following in the footsteps of Arjuna is real devotional service to the cause of this great science. The demonic, however, do not accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is. Instead they concoct something about Kṛṣṇa and mislead general readers from the path of Kṛṣṇa's instructions. Here is a warning about such misleading paths. One should try to follow the disciplic succession from Arjuna, and thus be benefitted by this great science of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

Chapter 4—Text 4

arjuna uvāca
aṣaram bhavato janma
param janma vivasvataḥ
katham etad vijānīyām
tvam ādau proktavān iti

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *aṣaram*—junior; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *janma*—birth; *param*—superior; *janma*—birth; *vivasvataḥ*—of the sun-god; *katham*—how; *etad*—this; *vijānīyām*—shall I understand; *tvam*—You; *ādau*—in the beginning; *proktavān*—instructed; *iti*—thus.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: The sun-god Vivasvān is senior by birth to You. How am I to understand that in the beginning You instructed this science to him?

PURPORT

Arjuna is an accepted devotee of the Lord, so how could he not believe Kṛṣṇa's words? The fact is that Arjuna is not inquiring for himself but for those who do not believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead or for the demons who do not like the idea that Kṛṣṇa should be accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead; for them only Arjuna inquires on this point, as if he were himself not aware of the Personality of Godhead, or Kṛṣṇa. As it will be evident from the Tenth Chapter, Arjuna knew perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of everything and the last word in transcendence. Of course, Kṛṣṇa also appeared as the son of Devakī on this earth. How Kṛṣṇa remained the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal original person, is very difficult for an ordinary man to understand. Therefore, to clarify this point, Arjuna put this question before Kṛṣṇa so that He Himself could speak authoritatively. That Kṛṣṇa is the supreme authority is accepted by the whole world, not only at present but from time immemorial, and the demons alone reject Him. Anyway, since Kṛṣṇa is the authority accepted by all, Arjuna put this question before Him in order that Kṛṣṇa would describe Himself without being depicted by the demons, who always try to distort Him in a way understandable to the demons and their followers. It is necessary that everyone, for his own interest, know the science of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, when Kṛṣṇa Himself speaks about Himself, it is auspicious for all the worlds. To the demons, such explanations by Kṛṣṇa Himself may appear to be strange because the demons always study Kṛṣṇa from their own standpoint, but those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Kṛṣṇa when they are spoken by Kṛṣṇa Himself. The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Kṛṣṇa because they are always eager to know more and more about Him. The atheists, who consider Kṛṣṇa an ordinary man, may in this way come to know that Kṛṣṇa is

superhuman, that He is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* [Bs. 5.1]—the eternal form of bliss and knowledge—that He is transcendental, and that He is above the domination of the modes of material nature and above the influence of time and space. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa, like Arjuna, is undoubtedly above any misunderstanding of the transcendental position of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna’s putting this question before the Lord is simply an attempt by the devotee to defy the atheistic attitude of persons who consider Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary human being, subject to the modes of material nature.

Chapter 4—Text 5

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
bahūni me vyatītāni
janmāni tava cārjuna
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi
na tvaṁ vettha parantapa*

SYNONYMS

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Personality of Godhead said; *bahūni*—many; *me*—of Mine; *vyatītāni*—have passed; *janmāni*—births; *tava*—of yours; *ca*—and also; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *tāni*—those; *ahaṁ*—I; *veda*—do know; *sarvāṇi*—all; *na*—not; *tvam*—you; *vettha*—know; *parantapa*—O subduer of the enemy.

TRANSLATION

The Personality of Godhead said: Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!

PURPORT

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.33) we have information of many, many incarnations of the Lord. It is stated there:

*advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam
ādyam purāṇa-puruṣaṁ nava-yauvanaṁ ca
vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the original person—absolute, infallible, without beginning. Although expanded into unlimited forms, He is still the same original, the oldest, and the person always appearing as a fresh youth. Such eternal, blissful, all-knowing forms of the Lord are usually understood by the best Vedic scholars, but they are always manifest to pure, unalloyed devotees.”

It is also stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.39):

*rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvatāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is always situated in various incarnations such as Rāma, Nṛsiṁha and many subincarnations as well, but who is the original Personality of Godhead known as Kṛṣṇa, and who incarnates personally also.”

In the *Vedas* also it is said that the Lord, although one without a second, manifests Himself in innumerable forms. He is like the *vaidurya* stone, which changes color yet still remains one. All those multiforms are understood by the pure, unalloyed devotees, but not by a simple study of the *Vedas* (*vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau*). Devotees like Arjuna are constant companions of the Lord, and whenever the Lord incarnates, the associate devotees also incarnate in order to serve the Lord in different capacities. Arjuna is one of these devotees, and in this verse it is understood that some millions of years ago when Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to the sun-god Vivasvān, Arjuna, in a different capacity, was also present. But the difference between the Lord and Arjuna is that the Lord remembered the incident whereas Arjuna could not remember. That is the difference between the part-and-parcel living entity and the Supreme Lord. Although Arjuna is addressed herein as the mighty hero who could subdue the enemies, he is unable to recall what had happened in his various past births. Therefore, a living entity, however great he may be in the material estimation, can never equal the Supreme Lord. Anyone who is a constant companion of the Lord is certainly a liberated person, but he cannot be equal to the Lord. The Lord is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as infallible (*acyuta*), which means that He never forgets Himself, even though He is in material contact. Therefore, the Lord and the living entity can never be equal in all respects, even if the living entity is as liberated as Arjuna. Although Arjuna is a devotee of the Lord, he sometimes forgets the nature of the Lord, but by the divine grace a devotee can at once understand the infallible condition of the Lord, whereas a nondevotee or a demon cannot understand this transcendental nature. Consequently these descriptions in the *Gītā* cannot be understood by demonic brains. Kṛṣṇa remembered acts which were performed by Him millions of years before, but Arjuna could not, despite the fact that both Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are eternal in nature. We may also note herein that a living entity forgets everything due to his change of body, but the Lord remembers because He does not change His *sac-cid-ānanda* body. He is *advaita*, which means there is no distinction between His body and Himself. Everything in relation to Him is spirit—whereas the conditioned soul is different from his material body. And because the Lord's body and self are identical, His position is always different from that of the ordinary living entity, even when He descends to the material platform. The demons cannot adjust themselves to this transcendental nature of the Lord, which the Lord Himself explains in the following verse.

Chapter 4—Text 6

*ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā
bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya
sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*

SYNONYMS

ajaḥ—unborn; *api*—although; *san*—being so; *avyaya*—without deterioration; *ātmā*—body; *bhūtānām*—of all those who are born; *īśvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *api*—although; *san*—being so; *prakṛtiṁ*—in the transcendental form; *svām*—of Myself; *adhiṣṭhāya*—being so situated; *sambhavāmi*—I do incarnate; *ātma-māyayā*—by My internal energy.

TRANSLATION

Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form.

PURPORT

The Lord has spoken about the peculiarity of His birth: although He may appear like an ordinary person, He remembers everything of His many, many past “births,” whereas a common man cannot remember what he has done even a few hours before. If someone is asked what he did exactly at the same time one day earlier, it would be very difficult for a common man to answer immediately. He would surely have to dredge his memory to recall what he was doing exactly at the same time one day before. And yet, men often dare claim to be God, or Kṛṣṇa. One should not be misled by such meaningless claims. Then again, the Lord explains His *prakṛti*, or His form. *Prakṛti* means “nature,” as well as *svarūpa*, or “one’s own form.” The Lord says that He appears in His own body. He does not change His body, as the common living entity changes from one body to another. The conditioned soul may have one kind of body in the present birth, but he has a different body in the next birth. In the material world, the living entity has no fixed body but transmigrates from one body to another. The Lord, however, does not do so. Whenever He appears, He does so in the same original body, by His internal potency. In other words, Kṛṣṇa appears in this material world in His original eternal form, with two hands, holding a flute. He appears exactly in His eternal body, uncontaminated by this material world. Although He appears in the same transcendental body and is Lord of the universe, it still appears that He takes His birth like an ordinary living entity. And although His body does not deteriorate like a material body, it still appears that Lord Kṛṣṇa grows from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to youth. But astonishingly enough He never ages beyond youth. At the time of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, He had many grandchildren at home; or, in other words, He had sufficiently aged by material calculations. Still He looked just like a young man twenty or

twenty-five years old. We never see a picture of Kṛṣṇa in old age because He never grows old like us, although He is the oldest person in the whole creation—past, present, and future. Neither His body nor His intelligence ever deteriorates or changes. Therefore, it is clear that in spite of His being in the material world, He is the same unborn, eternal form of bliss and knowledge, changeless in His transcendental body and intelligence. Factually, His appearance and disappearance is like the sun's rising, moving before us, and then disappearing from our eyesight. When the sun is out of sight, we think that the sun is set, and when the sun is before our eyes, we think that the sun is on the horizon. Actually, the sun is always in its fixed position, but owing to our defective, insufficient senses, we calculate the appearance and disappearance of the sun in the sky. And because Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and disappearance are completely different from that of any ordinary, common living entity, it is evident that He is eternal, blissful knowledge by His internal potency—and He is never contaminated by material nature. The *Vedas* also confirm that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is unborn yet He still appears to take His birth in multimanifestations. The Vedic supplementary literatures also confirm that even though the Lord appears to be taking His birth, He is still without change of body. In the *Bhāgavatam*, He appears before His mother as Nārāyaṇa, with four hands and the decorations of the six kinds of full opulences. His appearance in His original eternal form is His causeless mercy, bestowed upon the living entities so that they can concentrate on the Supreme Lord as He is, and not on mental concoctions or imaginations, which the impersonalist wrongly thinks the Lord's forms to be. The word *māyā*, or *ātma-māyā*, refers to the Lord's causeless mercy, according to the *Viśva-kośa* dictionary. The Lord is conscious of all of His previous appearances and disappearances, but a common living entity forgets everything about his past body as soon as he gets another body. He is the Lord of all living entities because He performs wonderful and superhuman activities while He is on this earth. Therefore, the Lord is always the same Absolute Truth and is without differentiation between His form and self, or between His quality and body. A question may now be raised as to why the Lord appears and disappears in this world. This is explained in the next verse.

Chapter 4—Text 7

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*

SYNONYMS

yadā yadā—whenever and wherever; *hi*—certainly; *dharmasya*—of religion; *glāniḥ*—discrepancies; *bhavati*—become manifested; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *abhyutthānam*—predominance; *adharmasya*—of irreligion; *tadā*—at that time; *ātmānam*—self; *sṛjāmi*—manifest; *aham*—I.

TRANSLATION

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.

PURPORT

The word *sṛjāmi* is significant herein. *Sṛjāmi* cannot be used in the sense of creation, because, according to the previous verse, there is no creation of the Lord's form or body, since all of the forms are eternally existent. Therefore, *sṛjāmi* means that the Lord manifests Himself as He is. Although the Lord appears on schedule, namely at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga of the twenty-eighth millennium of the seventh Manu in one day of Brahmā, He has no obligation to adhere to such rules and regulations, because He is completely free to act in many ways at His will. He therefore appears by His own will whenever there is a predominance of irreligiosity and a disappearance of true religion. Principles of religion are laid down in the *Vedas*, and any discrepancy in the matter of properly executing the rules of the *Vedas* makes one irreligious. In the *Bhāgavatam* it is stated that such principles are the laws of the Lord. Only the Lord can manufacture a system of religion. The *Vedas* are also accepted as originally spoken by the Lord Himself to Brahmā, from within his heart. Therefore, the principles of *dharma*, or religion, are the direct orders of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam* [SB 6.3.19]). These principles are clearly indicated throughout the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The purpose of the *Vedas* is to establish such principles under the order of the Supreme Lord, and the Lord directly orders, at the end of the *Gītā*, that the highest principle of religion is to surrender unto Him only, and nothing more. The Vedic principles push one towards complete surrender unto Him; and whenever such principles are disturbed by the demoniac, the Lord appears. From the *Bhāgavatam* we understand that Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared when materialism was rampant and materialists were using the pretext of the authority of the *Vedas*. Although there are certain restrictive rules and regulations regarding animal sacrifice for particular purposes in the *Vedas*, people of

demonic tendency still took to animal sacrifice without reference to the Vedic principles. Lord Buddha appeared to stop this nonsense and to establish the Vedic principles of nonviolence. Therefore each and every *avatāra*, or incarnation of the Lord, has a particular mission, and they are all described in the revealed scriptures. No one should be accepted as an *avatāra* unless he is referred to by scriptures. It is not a fact that the Lord appears only on Indian soil. He can manifest Himself anywhere and everywhere, and whenever He desires to appear. In each and every incarnation, He speaks as much about religion as can be understood by the particular people under their particular circumstances. But the mission is the same—to lead people to God consciousness and obedience to the principles of religion. Sometimes He descends personally, and sometimes He sends His bona fide representative in the form of His son, or servant, or Himself in some disguised form.

The principles of the *Bhagavad-gītā* were spoken to Arjuna, and, for that matter, to other highly elevated persons, because he was highly advanced compared to ordinary persons in other parts of the world. Two plus two equals four is a mathematical principle that is true in the beginner's arithmetic class and in the advanced class as well. Still, there are higher and lower mathematics. In all incarnations of the Lord, therefore, the same principles are taught, but they appear to be higher and lower in varied circumstances. The higher principles of religion begin with the acceptance of the four orders and the four statuses of social life, as will be explained later. The whole purpose of the mission of incarnations is to arouse Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere. Such consciousness is manifest and nonmanifest only under different circumstances.

Chapter 4—Text 8

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

SYNONYMS

paritrāṇāya—for the deliverance; *sādḥūnām*—of the devotees; *vināśāya*—for the annihilation; *ca*—and; *duṣkṛtām*—of the miscreants; *dharma*—principles of religion; *saṁsthāpana-arthāya*—to reestablish; *sambhavāmi*—I do appear; *yuge*—millennium; *yuge*—after millennium.

TRANSLATION

To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium.

PURPORT

According to *Bhagavad-gītā*, a *sādhu* (holy man) is a man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A person may appear to be irreligious, but if he has the qualifications of Kṛṣṇa consciousness wholly and fully, he is to be understood to be a *sādhu*. And *duṣkṛtām* applies to those who do not care for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such miscreants, or *duṣkṛtām*, are described as foolish and the lowest of mankind, even though they may be decorated with mundane education, whereas a person who is one hundred percent engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is accepted as a *sādhu*, even though such a person may be neither learned nor well cultured. As far as the atheistic are concerned, it is not necessary for the Supreme Lord to appear as He is to destroy them, as He did with the demons Rāvaṇa and Kāṁsa. The Lord has many agents who are quite competent to vanquish demons. But the Lord especially descends to appease His unalloyed devotees, who are always harassed by the demoniac. The demon harasses the devotee, even though the latter may happen to be his kin. Although Prahlāda Mahārāja was the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, he was nonetheless persecuted by his father; although Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa, was the sister of Kāṁsa, she and her husband Vasudeva were persecuted only because Kṛṣṇa was to be born of them. So Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared primarily to deliver Devakī, rather than kill Kāṁsa, but both were performed simultaneously. Therefore it is said here that to deliver the devotee and vanquish the demon miscreants, the Lord appears in different incarnations.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the following verses (*Madhya* 20.263–264) summarize these principles of incarnation:

*sṛṣṭi-hetu yei mūrti prapañce avatare
sei īśvara-mūrti 'avatāra' nāma dhare*

*māyātīta paravyome sabāra avasthāna
viśve avatari' dhare 'avatāra' nāma*

“The *avatāra*, or incarnation of Godhead, descends from the kingdom of God for material manifestation. And the particular form of the Personality of Godhead who so descends is called an incarnation, or *avatāra*. Such incarnations are situated in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. When they descend to the material creation, they assume the name *avatāra*.”

There are various kinds of *avatāras*, such as *puruṣāvatāras*, *guṇāvatāras*, *līlāvatāras*, *śakty-āveśa avatāras*, *manvantara-avatāras* and *yugāvatāras*—all appearing on schedule all over the universe. But Lord Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord, the fountainhead of all *avatāras*. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends for the specific purpose of mitigating the anxieties of the pure devotees, who are very anxious to see Him in His original Vṛndāvana pastimes. Therefore, the prime purpose of the Kṛṣṇa *avatāra* is to satisfy His unalloyed devotees.

The Lord says that He incarnates Himself in every millennium. This indicates that He incarnates also in the Age of Kali. As stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the incarnation in the Age of Kali is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who spread the worship of Kṛṣṇa by the *saṅkīrtana* movement (congregational chanting of the holy names) and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout India. He predicted that this culture of *saṅkīrtana* would be broadcast all over the world, from town to town and village to village. Lord Caitanya as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is described secretly but not directly in the confidential parts of the revealed scriptures, such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Mahābhārata* and *Bhāgavatam*. The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very much attracted by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya. This *avatāra* of the Lord does not kill the miscreants, but delivers them by His causeless mercy.

Chapter 4—Text 9

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

SYNONYMS

janma—birth; *karma*—work; *ca*—also; *me*—of Mine; *divyam*—transcendental; *evam*—like this; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *veti*—knows; *tattvataḥ*—in reality; *tyaktvā*—leaving aside; *deham*—this body; *punaḥ*—again; *janma*—birth; *na*—never; *eti*—does attain; *mām*—unto Me; *eti*—does attain; *saḥ*—he; *arjuna*—O Arjuna.

TRANSLATION

One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna.

PURPORT

The Lord's descent from His transcendental abode is already explained in the 6th verse. One who can understand the truth of the appearance of the Personality of Godhead is already liberated from material bondage, and therefore he returns to the kingdom of God immediately after quitting this present material body. Such liberation of the living entity from material bondage is not at all easy. The impersonalists and the *yogīs* attain liberation only after much trouble and many, many births. Even then, the liberation they achieve—merging into the impersonal *brahmajyoti* of the Lord—is only partial, and there is the risk of returning to this material world. But the devotee, simply by understanding the transcendental nature of the body and activities of the Lord, attains the abode of the Lord after ending this body and does not run the risk of returning to this material world. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.33) it is stated that the Lord has many, many forms and incarnations: *advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam*. Although there are many transcendental forms of the Lord, they are still one and the same Supreme Personality of Godhead. One has to understand this fact with conviction, although it is incomprehensible to mundane scholars and empiric philosophers. As stated in the *Vedas* (*Puruṣa-bodhinī Upaniṣad*):

*eko devo nitya-līlānuraṅkto
bhakta-vyāpī hṛdy antar-ātmā*

“The one Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternally engaged in many, many transcendental forms in relationships with His unalloyed devotees.” This Vedic version is confirmed in this verse of the *Gītā* personally by the Lord. He who accepts this truth on the strength of the authority of the *Vedas* and of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and

who does not waste time in philosophical speculations attains the highest perfectional stage of liberation. Simply by accepting this truth on faith, one can, without a doubt, attain liberation. The Vedic version *tat tvam asi* is actually applied in this case. Anyone who understands Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme, or who says unto the Lord “You are the same Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead,” is certainly liberated instantly, and consequently his entrance into the transcendental association of the Lord is guaranteed. In other words, such a faithful devotee of the Lord attains perfection, and this is confirmed by the following Vedic assertion:

*tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya*

“One can attain the perfect stage of liberation from birth and death simply by knowing the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and there is no other way to achieve this perfection.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8) That there is no alternative means that anyone who does not understand Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is surely in the mode of ignorance and consequently he will not attain salvation simply, so to speak, by licking the outer surface of the bottle of honey, or by interpreting the *Bhagavad-gītā* according to mundane scholarship. Such empiric philosophers may assume very important roles in the material world, but they are not necessarily eligible for liberation. Such puffed-up mundane scholars have to wait for the causeless mercy of the devotee of the Lord. One should therefore cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness with faith and knowledge, and in this way attain perfection.

Chapter 4—Text 10

*vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā
man-mayā mām upāśritāḥ
bahavo jñāna-tapasā
pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ*

SYNONYMS

vīta—freed from; *rāga*—attachment; *bhaya*—fear; *krodhāḥ*—and anger; *mat-mayā*—fully in Me; *mām*—in Me; *upāśritāḥ*—being fully situated; *bahavaḥ*—many; *jñāna*—of knowledge; *tapasā*—by the penance; *pūtāḥ*—being purified; *mat-bhāvam*—transcendental love for Me; *āgatāḥ*—attained.

TRANSLATION

Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me—and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.

PURPORT

As described above, it is very difficult for a person who is too materially affected to understand the personal nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Generally, people who are attached to the bodily conception of life are so absorbed in materialism that it is almost impossible for them to understand how the Supreme can be a person. Such materialists cannot even imagine that there is a transcendental body which is imperishable, full of knowledge and eternally blissful. In the materialistic concept, the body is perishable, full of ignorance and completely miserable. Therefore, people in general keep this same bodily idea in mind when they are informed of the personal form of the Lord. For such materialistic men, the form of the gigantic material manifestation is supreme. Consequently they consider the Supreme to be impersonal. And because they are too materially absorbed, the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter frightens them. When they are informed that spiritual life is also individual and personal, they become afraid of becoming persons again, and so they naturally prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void. Generally, they compare the living entities to the bubbles of the ocean, which merge into the ocean. That is the highest perfection of spiritual existence attainable without individual personality. This is a kind of fearful stage of life, devoid of perfect knowledge of spiritual existence. Furthermore there are many persons who cannot understand spiritual existence at all. Being embarrassed by so many theories and by contradictions of various types of philosophical speculation, they become disgusted or angry and foolishly conclude that there is no supreme cause and that everything is ultimately void. Such people are in a diseased condition of life. Some people are too materially attached and therefore do not give attention to spiritual life, some of

them want to merge into the supreme spiritual cause, and some of them disbelieve in everything, being angry at all sorts of spiritual speculation out of hopelessness. This last class of men take to the shelter of some kind of intoxication, and their affective hallucinations are sometimes accepted as spiritual vision. One has to get rid of all three stages of attachment to the material world: negligence of spiritual life, fear of a spiritual personal identity, and the conception of void that arises from frustration in life. To get free from these three stages of the material concept of life, one has to take complete shelter of the Lord, guided by the bona fide spiritual master, and follow the disciplines and regulative principles of devotional life. The last stage of the devotional life is called *bhāva*, or transcendental love of Godhead.

According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16), the science of devotional service:

ādaṁ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ

athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudāñcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

“In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in *bhāva*, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called *prema*, the highest perfectional stage of life.” In the *prema* stage there is constant engagement in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. So, by the slow process of devotional service, under the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, one can attain the highest stage, being freed from all material attachment, from the fearfulness of one’s individual spiritual personality, and from the frustrations that result in void philosophy. Then one can ultimately attain to the abode of the Supreme Lord.

Chapter 4—Text 11

*ye yathā mām prapadyante
tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

SYNONYMS

ye—all who; *yathā*—as; *mām*—unto Me; *prapadyante*—surrender; *tān*—them; *tathā*—so; *eva*—certainly; *bhajāmi*—reward; *aham*—I; *mama*—My; *vartma*—path; *anuvartante*—follow; *manuṣyāḥ*—all men; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *sarvaśaḥ*—in all respects.

TRANSLATION

As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.

PURPORT

Everyone is searching for Kṛṣṇa in the different aspects of His manifestations. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is partially realized in His impersonal *brahmajyoti* effulgence and as the all-pervading Supersoul dwelling within everything, including the particles of atoms. But Kṛṣṇa is fully realized only by His pure devotees. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa is the object of everyone's realization, and thus anyone and everyone is satisfied according to one's desire to have Him. In the transcendental world also, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with His pure devotees in the transcendental attitude, just as the devotee wants Him. One devotee may want Kṛṣṇa as supreme master, another as his personal friend, another as his son, and still another as his lover. Kṛṣṇa rewards all the devotees equally, according to their different intensities of love for Him. In the material world, the same reciprocations of feelings are there, and they are equally exchanged by the Lord with the different types of worshipers. The pure devotees both here and in the transcendental abode associate with Him in person and are able to render personal service to the Lord and thus derive transcendental bliss in His loving service. As for those who are impersonalists and who want to commit spiritual suicide by annihilating the individual existence of the living entity, Kṛṣṇa helps also by absorbing them into His effulgence. Such impersonalists do not agree to accept the eternal, blissful Personality of Godhead; consequently they cannot relish the bliss of transcendental personal service to the Lord, having extinguished their individuality. Some of them, who are not firmly situated even in the impersonal existence, return to this material field to exhibit their dormant desires for activities. They are not admitted into the spiritual planets, but they are again given a chance to act on the material planets. For those who are fruitive workers, the Lord awards the desired results of their prescribed duties, as the *yajñeśvara*; and those who are *yogīs* seeking mystic powers are awarded such powers. In other words, everyone is dependent for success upon His

mercy alone, and all kinds of spiritual processes are but different degrees of success on the same path. Unless, therefore, one comes to the highest perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all attempts remain imperfect, as is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10):

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

“Whether one is without desire [the condition of the devotees], or is desirous of all fruitive results, or is after liberation, one should with all efforts try to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead for complete perfection, culminating in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Chapter 4—Text 12

*kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhim
yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣīpram hi mānuṣe loke
siddhir bhavati karma-jā*

SYNONYMS

kāṅkṣantaḥ—desiring; *karmaṇām*—of fruitive activities; *siddhim*—perfection; *yajante*—they worship by sacrifices; *iha*—in the material world; *devatāḥ*—the demigods; *kṣīpram*—very quickly; *hi*—certainly; *mānuṣe*—in human society; *loke*—within this world; *siddhiḥ*—success; *bhavati*—comes; *karma-jā*—from fruitive work.

TRANSLATION

Men in this world desire success in fruitive activities, and therefore they worship the demigods. Quickly, of course, men get results from fruitive work in this world.

PURPORT

There is a great misconception about the gods or demigods of this material world, and men of less intelligence, although passing as great scholars, take these demigods to be various forms of the Supreme Lord. Actually, the demigods are not different forms of God, but they are God's different parts and parcels. God is one, and the parts and parcels are many. The *Vedas* say, *nityo nityānām*: God is one. *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*. The Supreme God is one—Kṛṣṇa—and the demigods are delegated with powers to manage this material world. These demigods are all living entities (*nityānām*) with different grades of material power. They cannot be equal to the Supreme God—Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. Anyone who thinks that God and the demigods are on the same level is called an atheist, or *pāṣaṇḍī*. Even the great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva cannot be compared to the Supreme Lord. In fact, the Lord is worshiped by demigods such as Brahmā and Śiva (*śiva-viriñci-nutam*). Yet curiously enough there are many human leaders who are worshiped by foolish men under the misunderstanding of anthropomorphism or zoomorphism. *Iha devatāḥ* denotes a powerful man or demigod of this material world. But Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, does not belong to this world. He is above, or transcendental to, material creation. Even Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, the leader of the impersonalists, maintains that Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, is beyond this material creation. However, foolish people (*hṛta-jñāna*) worship the demigods because they want immediate results. They get the results, but do not know that results so obtained are temporary and are meant for less intelligent persons. The intelligent person is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he has no need to worship the paltry demigods for some immediate, temporary benefit. The demigods of this material world, as well as their worshipers, will vanish with the annihilation of this material world. The boons of the demigods are material and temporary.

Both the material worlds and their inhabitants, including the demigods and their worshipers, are bubbles in the cosmic ocean. In this world, however, human society is mad after temporary things such as the material opulence of possessing land, family and enjoyable paraphernalia. To achieve such temporary things, people worship the demigods or powerful men in human society. If a man gets some ministership in the government by worshiping a political leader, he considers that he has achieved a great boon. All of them are therefore kowtowing to the so-called leaders or “big guns” in order to achieve temporary boons, and they indeed achieve such things. Such foolish men are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the permanent solution to the hardships of material existence. They are all after sense enjoyment, and to get a little facility for sense enjoyment they are attracted to worship empowered living entities known as demigods. This verse indicates that people are rarely interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are mostly interested in material enjoyment, and therefore they worship some powerful living entity.

Chapter 4—Text 13

*cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām
viddhy akartāram avyayam*

SYNONYMS

cātuḥ-varṇyam—the four divisions of human society; *mayā*—by Me; *sṛṣṭam*—created; *guṇa*—of quality; *karma*—and work; *vibhāgaśaḥ*—in terms of division; *tasya*—of that; *kartāram*—the father; *api*—although; *mām*—Me; *viddhi*—you may know; *akartāram*—as the nondoer; *avyayam*—unchangeable.

TRANSLATION

According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the nondoer, being unchangeable.

PURPORT

The Lord is the creator of everything. Everything is born of Him, everything is sustained by Him, and everything, after annihilation, rests in Him. He is therefore the creator of the four divisions of the social order, beginning with the intelligent class of men, technically called *brāhmaṇas* due to their being situated in the mode of goodness. Next is the administrative class, technically called the *kṣatriyas* due to their being situated in the mode of passion. The mercantile men, called the *vaiśyas*, are situated in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, and the *śūdras*, or laborer class, are situated in the ignorant mode of material nature. In spite of His creating the four divisions of human society, Lord Kṛṣṇa does not belong to any of these divisions, because He is not one of the conditioned souls, a section of whom form human society. Human society is similar to any other animal society, but to elevate men from the animal status, the above-mentioned divisions are created by the Lord for the systematic development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The tendency of a particular man toward work is determined by the modes of material nature which he has acquired. Such symptoms of life, according to the different modes of material nature, are described in the Eighteenth Chapter of this book. A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is above even the *brāhmaṇas*. Although *brāhmaṇas* by quality are supposed to know about Brahman, the Supreme Absolute Truth, most of them approach only the impersonal Brahman manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. But a man who transcends the limited knowledge of a *brāhmaṇa* and reaches the knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, becomes a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—or, in other words, a Vaiṣṇava. Kṛṣṇa consciousness includes knowledge of all different plenary expansions of Kṛṣṇa, namely Rāma, Nṛsimha, Varāha, etc. And as Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to this system

of the four divisions of human society, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is also transcendental to all divisions of human society, whether we consider the divisions of community, nation or species.

Chapter 4—Text 14

*na mām karmāṇi limpanti
na me karma-phale sprhā
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti
karmabhir na sa badhyate*

SYNONYMS

na—never; *mām*—Me; *karmāṇi*—all kinds of work; *limpanti*—do affect; *na*—nor; *me*—My; *karma-phale*—in fruitive action; *sprhā*—aspiration; *iti*—thus; *mām*—Me; *yaḥ*—one who; *abhijānāti*—does know; *karmabhiḥ*—by the reaction of such work; *na*—never; *saḥ*—he; *badhyate*—becomes entangled.

TRANSLATION

There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work.

PURPORT

As there are constitutional laws in the material world stating that the king can do no wrong, or that the king is not subject to the state laws, similarly the Lord, although He is the creator of this material world, is not affected by the activities of the material world. He creates and remains aloof from the creation, whereas the living entities are entangled in the fruitive results of material activities because of their propensity for lording it over material resources. The proprietor of an establishment is not responsible for the right and wrong activities of the workers, but the workers are themselves responsible. The living entities are engaged in their respective activities of sense gratification, and these activities are not ordained by the Lord. For advancement of sense gratification, the living entities are engaged in the work of this world, and they aspire to heavenly happiness after death. The Lord, being full in Himself, has no attraction for so-called heavenly happiness. The heavenly demigods are only His engaged servants. The proprietor never desires the low-grade happiness such as the workers may desire. He is aloof from the material actions and reactions. For example, the rains are not responsible for different types of vegetation that appear on the earth, although without such rains there is no possibility of vegetative growth. Vedic *smṛti* confirms this fact as follows:

*nimitta-mātram evāsau
sṛjyānām sarga-karmaṇi
pradhāna-kāraṇī-bhūtā
yato vai sṛjya-śaktayaḥ*

“In the material creations, the Lord is only the supreme cause. The immediate cause is

material nature, by which the cosmic manifestation is made visible.” The created beings are of many varieties, such as the demigods, human beings and lower animals, and all of them are subject to the reactions of their past good or bad activities. The Lord only gives them the proper facilities for such activities and the regulations of the modes of nature, but He is never responsible for their past and present activities. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.1.34) it is confirmed, *vaiṣamya-nairghṛṇye na sāpekṣatvāt*: the Lord is never partial to any living entity. The living entity is responsible for his own acts. The Lord only gives him facilities, through the agency of material nature, the external energy. Anyone who is fully conversant with all the intricacies of this law of *karma*, or fruitive activities, does not become affected by the results of his activities. In other words, the person who understands this transcendental nature of the Lord is an experienced man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and thus he is never subjected to the laws of *karma*. One who does not know the transcendental nature of the Lord and who thinks that the activities of the Lord are aimed at fruitive results, as are the activities of the ordinary living entities, certainly becomes entangled himself in fruitive reactions. But one who knows the Supreme Truth is a liberated soul fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Chapter 4—Text 15

*evam jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma
pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam
pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam*

SYNONYMS

evam—thus; *jñātvā*—knowing well; *kṛtam*—was performed; *karma*—work; *pūrvaiḥ*—by past authorities; *api*—indeed; *mumukṣubhiḥ*—who attained liberation; *kuru*—just perform; *karma*—prescribed duty; *eva*—certainly; *tasmāt*—therefore; *tvam*—you; *pūrvaiḥ*—by the predecessors; *pūrva-taram*—in ancient times; *kṛtam*—as performed.

TRANSLATION

All the liberated souls in ancient times acted with this understanding of My transcendental nature. Therefore you should perform your duty, following in their footsteps.

PURPORT

There are two classes of men. Some of them are full of polluted material things within their hearts, and some of them are materially free. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is equally beneficial for both of these persons. Those who are full of dirty things can take to the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a gradual cleansing process, following the regulative principles of devotional service. Those who are already cleansed of the impurities may continue to act in the same Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that others may follow their exemplary activities and thereby be benefited. Foolish persons or neophytes in Kṛṣṇa consciousness often want to retire from activities without having knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Arjuna's desire to retire from activities on the battlefield was not approved by the Lord. One need only know how to act. To retire from the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to sit aloof making a show of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is less important than actually engaging in the field of activities for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna is here advised to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, following in the footsteps of the Lord's previous disciples, such as the sun-god Vivasvān, as mentioned hereinbefore. The Supreme Lord knows all His past activities, as well as those of persons who acted in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the past. Therefore He recommends the acts of the sun-god, who learned this art from the Lord some millions of years before. All such students of Lord Kṛṣṇa are mentioned here as past liberated persons, engaged in the discharge of duties allotted by Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 4—Text 16

*kiṁ karma kim akarmeti
kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt*

SYNONYMS

kim—what is; *karma*—action; *kim*—what is; *akarma*—inaction; *iti*—thus; *kavayaḥ*—the intelligent; *api*—also; *atra*—in this matter; *mohitāḥ*—are bewildered; *tat*—that; *te*—unto you; *karma*—work; *pravakṣyāmi*—I shall explain; *yaj*—which; *jñātvā*—knowing; *mokṣyase*—you will be liberated; *aśubhāt*—from ill fortune.

TRANSLATION

Even the intelligent are bewildered in determining what is action and what is inaction. Now I shall explain to you what action is, knowing which you shall be liberated from all misfortune.

PURPORT

Action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to be executed in accord with the examples of previous bona fide devotees. This is recommended in the 15th verse. Why such action should not be independent will be explained in the text to follow.

To act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one has to follow the leadership of authorized persons who are in a line of disciplic succession as explained in the beginning of this chapter. The system of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was first narrated to the sun-god, the sun-god explained it to his son Manu, Manu explained it to his son Ikṣvāku, and the system is current on this earth from that very remote time. Therefore, one has to follow in the footsteps of previous authorities in the line of disciplic succession. Otherwise even the most intelligent men will be bewildered regarding the standard actions of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For this reason, the Lord decided to instruct Arjuna in Kṛṣṇa consciousness directly. Because of the direct instruction of the Lord to Arjuna, anyone who follows in the footsteps of Arjuna is certainly not bewildered.

It is said that one cannot ascertain the ways of religion simply by imperfect experimental knowledge. Actually, the principles of religion can only be laid down by the Lord Himself. *Dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam (Bhāg. 6.3.19)*. No one can manufacture a religious principle by imperfect speculation. One must follow in the footsteps of great authorities like Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada, Manu, the Kumāras, Kapila, Prahlāda, Bhīṣma, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Yamarāja, Janaka, and Bali Mahārāja. By mental speculation one cannot ascertain what is religion or self-realization. Therefore, out of causeless mercy to His devotees, the Lord explains directly to Arjuna what action is and what inaction is. Only action performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can deliver a person from the entanglement of

material existence.

Chapter 4—Text 17

*karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṁ
boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṁ
gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*

SYNONYMS

karmaṇaḥ—of work; *hi*—certainly; *api*—also; *boddhavyaṁ*—should be understood; *boddhavyaṁ*—should be understood; *ca*—also; *vikarmaṇaḥ*—of forbidden work; *akarmaṇaḥ*—of inaction; *ca*—also; *boddhavyaṁ*—should be understood; *gahanā*—very difficult; *karmaṇaḥ*—of work; *gatiḥ*—entrance.

TRANSLATION

The intricacies of action are very hard to understand. Therefore one should know properly what action is, what forbidden action is, and what inaction is.

PURPORT

If one is serious about liberation from material bondage, one has to understand the distinctions between action, inaction and unauthorized actions. One has to apply oneself to such an analysis of action, reaction and perverted actions because it is a very difficult subject matter. To understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness and action according to its modes, one has to learn one's relationship with the Supreme; i.e., one who has learned perfectly knows that every living entity is an eternal servitor of the Lord and that consequently one has to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The entire *Bhagavad-gītā* is directed toward this conclusion. Any other conclusions, against this consciousness and its attendant actions, are *vikarmas*, or prohibited actions. To understand all this one has to associate with authorities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and learn the secret from them; this is as good as learning from the Lord directly. Otherwise, even the most intelligent persons will be bewildered.

Chapter 4—Text 18

*karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed
akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu
sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*

SYNONYMS

karmaṇi—in action; *akarma*—inaction; *yaḥ*—one who; *paśyet*—observes; *akarmaṇi*—in inaction; *ca*—also; *karma*—fruitive action; *yaḥ*—one who; *saḥ*—he; *buddhi-mān*—is intelligent; *manuṣyeṣu*—in human society; *saḥ*—he; *yuktaḥ*—is in the transcendental position; *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*—although engaged in all activities.

TRANSLATION

One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is intelligent among men, and he is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities.

PURPORT

A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is naturally free from the bonds of *karma*. His activities are all performed for Kṛṣṇa; therefore he does not enjoy or suffer any of the effects of work. Consequently he is intelligent in human society, even though he is engaged in all sorts of activities for Kṛṣṇa. *Akarma* means without reaction to work. The impersonalist ceases fruitive activities out of fear, so that the resultant action may not be a stumbling block on the path of self-realization, but the personalist knows rightly his position as the eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore he engages himself in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because everything is done for Kṛṣṇa, he enjoys only transcendental happiness in the discharge of this service. Those who are engaged in this process are known to be without desire for personal sense gratification. The sense of eternal servitorship to Kṛṣṇa makes one immune to all sorts of reactionary elements of work.

Chapter 4—Text 19

*yasya sarve samārambhāḥ
kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam
tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ*

SYNONYMS

yasya—one whose; *sarve*—all sorts of; *samārambhāḥ*—attempts; *kāma*—based on desire for sense gratification; *saṅkalpa*—determination; *varjitāḥ*—are devoid of; *jñāna*—of perfect knowledge; *agni*—by the fire; *dagdha*—burned; *karmāṇam*—whose work; *tam*—him; *āhuḥ*—declare; *paṇḍitaṁ*—learned; *budhāḥ*—those who know.

TRANSLATION

One is understood to be in full knowledge whose every endeavor is devoid of desire for sense gratification. He is said by sages to be a worker for whom the reactions of work have been burned up by the fire of perfect knowledge.

PURPORT

Only a person in full knowledge can understand the activities of a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because the person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is devoid of all kinds of sense-gratificatory propensities, it is to be understood that he has burned up the reactions of his work by perfect knowledge of his constitutional position as the eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is actually learned who has attained to such perfection of knowledge. Development of this knowledge of eternal servitorship to the Lord is compared to fire. Such a fire, once kindled, can burn up all kinds of reactions to work.

Chapter 4—Text 20

*tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgaṁ
nitya-tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi
naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ*

SYNONYMS

tyaktvā—having given up; *karma-phala-āsaṅgaṁ*—attachment for fruitive results; *nitya*—always; *tṛptaḥ*—being satisfied; *nirāśrayaḥ*—without any shelter; *karmaṇi*—in activity; *abhipravṛttaḥ*—being fully engaged; *api*—in spite of; *na*—does not; *eva*—certainly; *kiñcit*—anything; *karoti*—do; *saḥ*—he.

TRANSLATION

Abandoning all attachment to the results of his activities, ever satisfied and independent, he performs no fruitive action, although engaged in all kinds of undertakings.

PURPORT

This freedom from the bondage of actions is possible only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, when one is doing everything for Kṛṣṇa. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person acts out of pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore he has no attraction for the results of the action. He is not even attached to his personal maintenance, for everything is left to Kṛṣṇa. Nor is he anxious to secure things, nor to protect things already in his possession. He does his duty to the best of his ability and leaves everything to Kṛṣṇa. Such an unattached person is always free from the resultant reactions of good and bad; it is as though he were not doing anything. This is the sign of *akarma*, or actions without fruitive reactions. Any other action, therefore, devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is binding upon the worker, and that is the real aspect of *vikarma*, as explained hereinbefore.

Chapter 4—Text 21

*nirāśīr yata-cittātmā
tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
śārīram kevalam karma
kurvan nāṇnoti kilbiṣam*

SYNONYMS

nirāśīḥ—without desire for the result; *yata*—controlled; *citta-ātmā*—mind and intelligence; *tyakta*—giving up; *sarva*—all; *parigrahaḥ*—sense of proprietorship over possessions; *śārīram*—in keeping body and soul together; *kevalam*—only; *karma*—work; *kurvan*—doing; *na*—never; *āṇnoti*—does acquire; *kilbiṣam*—sinful reactions.

TRANSLATION

Such a man of understanding acts with mind and intelligence perfectly controlled, gives up all sense of proprietorship over his possessions, and acts only for the bare necessities of life. Thus working, he is not affected by sinful reactions.

PURPORT

A Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not expect good or bad results in his activities. His mind and intelligence are fully controlled. He knows that because he is part and parcel of the Supreme, the part played by him, as a part and parcel of the whole, is not his own activity but is only being done through him by the Supreme. When the hand moves, it does not move out of its own accord, but by the endeavor of the whole body. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is always dovetailed with the supreme desire, for he has no desire for personal sense gratification. He moves exactly like a part of a machine. As a machine part requires oiling and cleaning for maintenance, so a Kṛṣṇa conscious man maintains himself by his work just to remain fit for action in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. He is therefore immune to all the reactions of his endeavors. Like an animal, he has no proprietorship even over his own body. A cruel proprietor of an animal sometimes kills the animal in his possession, yet the animal does not protest. Nor does it have any real independence. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, fully engaged in self-realization, has very little time to falsely possess any material object. For maintaining body and soul, he does not require unfair means of accumulating money. He does not, therefore, become contaminated by such material sins. He is free from all reactions to his actions.

Chapter 4—Text 22

*yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭo
dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ
samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca
kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate*

SYNONYMS

yadṛcchā—out of its own accord; *lābha*—with gain; *santuṣṭaḥ*—satisfied; *dvandva*—duality; *atītaḥ*—surpassed; *vimatsaraḥ*—free from envy; *samaḥ*—steady; *siddhau*—in success; *asiddhau*—failure; *ca*—also; *kṛtvā*—doing; *api*—although; *na*—never; *nibadhyate*—becomes affected.

TRANSLATION

He who is satisfied with gain which comes of its own accord, who is free from duality and does not envy, who is steady in both success and failure, is never entangled, although performing actions.

PURPORT

A Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not make much endeavor even to maintain his body. He is satisfied with gains which are obtained of their own accord. He neither begs nor borrows, but he labors honestly as far as is in his power, and is satisfied with whatever is obtained by his own honest labor. He is therefore independent in his livelihood. He does not allow anyone's service to hamper his own service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. However, for the service of the Lord he can participate in any kind of action without being disturbed by the duality of the material world. The duality of the material world is felt in terms of heat and cold, or misery and happiness. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is above duality because he does not hesitate to act in any way for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he is steady both in success and in failure. These signs are visible when one is fully in transcendental knowledge.

Chapter 4—Text 23

*gata-saṅgasya muktasya
jñānāvasthita-cetasaḥ
yajñāyācarataḥ karma
samagram pravilīyate*

SYNONYMS

gata-saṅgasya—of one unattached to the modes of material nature; *muktasya*—of the liberated; *jñāna-avasthita*—situated in transcendence; *cetasaḥ*—whose wisdom; *yajñāya*—for the sake of Yajña (Kṛṣṇa); *ācarataḥ*—acting; *karma*—work; *samagram*—in total; *pravilīyate*—merges entirely.

TRANSLATION

The work of a man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully situated in transcendental knowledge merges entirely into transcendence.

PURPORT

Becoming fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, one is freed from all dualities and thus is free from the contaminations of the material modes. He can become liberated because he knows his constitutional position in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and thus his mind cannot be drawn from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Consequently, whatever he does, he does for Kṛṣṇa, who is the primeval Viṣṇu. Therefore, all his works are technically sacrifices because sacrifice aims at satisfying the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa. The resultant reactions to all such work certainly merge into transcendence, and one does not suffer material effects.

Chapter 4—Text 24

*brahmārpaṇam brahma havir
brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam
brahma-karma-samādhinā*

SYNONYMS

brahma—spiritual in nature; *arpaṇam*—contribution; *brahma*—the Supreme; *haviḥ*—butter; *brahma*—spiritual; *agnau*—in the fire of consummation; *brahmaṇā*—by the spirit soul; *hutam*—offered; *brahma*—spiritual kingdom; *eva*—certainly; *tena*—by him; *gantavyam*—to be reached; *brahma*—spiritual; *karma*—in activities; *samādhinā*—by complete absorption.

TRANSLATION

A person who is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature.

PURPORT

How activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can lead one ultimately to the spiritual goal is described here. There are various activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and all of them will be described in the following verses. But, for the present, just the principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is described. A conditioned soul, entangled in material contamination, is sure to act in the material atmosphere, and yet he has to get out of such an environment. The process by which the conditioned soul can get out of the material atmosphere is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, a patient who is suffering from a disorder of the bowels due to overindulgence in milk products is cured by another milk product, namely curds. The materially absorbed conditioned soul can be cured by Kṛṣṇa consciousness as set forth here in the *Gītā*. This process is generally known as *yajña*, or activities (sacrifices) simply meant for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. The more the activities of the material world are performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or for Viṣṇu only, the more the atmosphere becomes spiritualized by complete absorption. The word *brahma* (Brahman) means “spiritual.” The Lord is spiritual, and the rays of His transcendental body are called *brahmajyoti*, His spiritual effulgence. Everything that exists is situated in that *brahmajyoti*, but when the *jyoti* is covered by illusion (*māyā*) or sense gratification, it is called material. This material veil can be removed at once by Kṛṣṇa consciousness; thus the offering for the sake of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the consuming agent of such an offering or contribution, the process of consumption, the contributor, and the result are—all combined together—Brahman, or the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth covered by *māyā* is called matter. Matter dovetailed for the cause of the Absolute Truth regains its spiritual quality. Kṛṣṇa

consciousness is the process of converting the illusory consciousness into Brahman, or the Supreme. When the mind is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is said to be in *samādhī*, or trance. Anything done in such transcendental consciousness is called *yajña*, or sacrifice for the Absolute. In that condition of spiritual consciousness, the contributor, the contribution, the consumption, the performer or leader of the performance, and the result or ultimate gain—everything—becomes one in the Absolute, the Supreme Brahman. That is the method of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Chapter 4—Text 25

*daivam evāpare yajñam
yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāv apare yajñam
yajñenaivopajuhvati*

SYNONYMS

daivam—in worshiping the demigods; *eva*—like this; *apare*—some others; *yajñam*—sacrifices; *yoginaḥ*—mystics; *paryupāsate*—worship perfectly; *brahma*—of the Absolute Truth; *agnau*—in the fire; *apare*—others; *yajñam*—sacrifice; *yajñena*—by sacrifice; *eva*—thus; *opajuhvati*—offer.

TRANSLATION

Some yogīs perfectly worship the demigods by offering different sacrifices to them, and some of them offer sacrifices in the fire of the Supreme Brahman.

PURPORT

As described above, a person engaged in discharging duties in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is also called a perfect yogī or a first-class mystic. But there are others also, who perform similar sacrifices in the worship of demigods, and still others who sacrifice to the Supreme Brahman, or the impersonal feature of the Supreme Lord. So there are different kinds of sacrifices in terms of different categories. Such different categories of sacrifice by different types of performers only superficially demark varieties of sacrifice. Factually sacrifice means to satisfy the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, who is also known as Yajña. All the different varieties of sacrifice can be placed within two primary divisions: namely, sacrifice of worldly possessions and sacrifice in pursuit of transcendental knowledge. Those who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sacrifice all material possessions for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, while others, who want some temporary material happiness, sacrifice their material possessions to satisfy demigods such as Indra, the sun-god, etc. And others, who are impersonalists, sacrifice their identity by merging into the existence of impersonal Brahman. The demigods are powerful living entities appointed by the Supreme Lord for the maintenance and supervision of all material functions like the heating, watering and lighting of the universe. Those who are interested in material benefits worship the demigods by various sacrifices according to the Vedic rituals. They are called *bahv-īśvara-vādī*, or believers in many gods. But others, who worship the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth and regard the forms of the demigods as temporary, sacrifice their individual selves in the supreme fire and thus end their individual existences by merging into the existence of the Supreme. Such impersonalists sacrifice their time in philosophical speculation to understand the transcendental nature of the Supreme. In other words, the fruitive workers sacrifice their material possessions for material enjoyment, whereas the

impersonalist sacrifices his material designations with a view to merging into the existence of the Supreme. For the impersonalist, the fire altar of sacrifice is the Supreme Brahman, and the offering is the self being consumed by the fire of Brahman. The Kṛṣṇa conscious person, like Arjuna, however, sacrifices everything for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and thus all his material possessions as well as his own self—everything—is sacrificed for Kṛṣṇa. Thus, he is the first-class *yogī*; but he does not lose his individual existence.

Chapter 4—Text 26

*śrotrādīnīndriyāṇy anye
saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīn viṣayān anyā
indriyāgniṣu juhvati*

SYNONYMS

śrotra-ādīni—such as the hearing process; *indriyāṇi*—senses; *anye*—others; *saṁyama*—of restraint; *agniṣu*—in the fires; *juhvati*—offer; *śabda-ādīn*—sound vibration, etc.; *viṣayān*—objects of sense gratification; *anye*—others; *indriya*—of the sense organs; *agniṣu*—in the fires; *juhvati*—they sacrifice.

TRANSLATION

Some [the unadulterated brahmacārīs] sacrifice the hearing process and the senses in the fire of mental control, and others [the regulated householders] sacrifice the objects of the senses in the fire of the senses.

PURPORT

The members of the four divisions of human life, namely the *brahmacārī*, the *gṛhastha*, the *vānaprastha* and the *sannyāsī*, are all meant to become perfect yogīs or transcendentalists. Since human life is not meant for our enjoying sense gratification like the animals, the four orders of human life are so arranged that one may become perfect in spiritual life. The *brahmacārīs*, or students under the care of a bona fide spiritual master, control the mind by abstaining from sense gratification. A *brahmacārī* hears only words concerning Kṛṣṇa consciousness; hearing is the basic principle for understanding, and therefore the pure *brahmacārī* engages fully in *harer nāmānukīrtanam*—chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord. He restrains himself from the vibrations of material sounds, and his hearing is engaged in the transcendental sound vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the householders, who have some license for sense gratification, perform such acts with great restraint. Sex life, intoxication and meat-eating are general tendencies of human society, but a regulated householder does not indulge in unrestricted sex life and other sense gratification. Marriage on the principles of religious life is therefore current in all civilized human society because that is the way for restricted sex life. This restricted, unattached sex life is also a kind of *yajña* because the restricted householder sacrifices his general tendency toward sense gratification for higher, transcendental life.

Chapter 4—Text 27

sarvāṇīndriya-karmāṇi
prāṇa-karmāṇi cāpare
ātma-saṁyama-yogāgnau
juhvati jñāna-dīpīte

SYNONYMS

sarvāṇi—of all; *indriya*—the senses; *karmāṇi*—functions; *prāṇa-karmāṇi*—functions of the life breath; *ca*—also; *āpare*—others; *ātma-saṁyama*—of controlling the mind; *yoga*—the linking process; *agnau*—in the fire of; *juhvati*—offer; *jñāna-dīpīte*—because of the urge for self-realization.

TRANSLATION

Others, who are interested in achieving self-realization through control of the mind and senses, offer the functions of all the senses, and of the life breath, as oblations into the fire of the controlled mind.

PURPORT

The *yoga* system conceived by Patañjali is referred to herein. In the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali, the soul is called *pratyag-ātmā* and *parāg-ātmā*. As long as the soul is attached to sense enjoyment it is called *parāg-ātmā*, but as soon as the same soul becomes detached from such sense enjoyment it is called *pratyag-ātmā*. The soul is subjected to the functions of ten kinds of air at work within the body, and this is perceived through the breathing system. The Patañjali system of *yoga* instructs one on how to control the functions of the body's air in a technical manner so that ultimately all the functions of the air within become favorable for purifying the soul of material attachment. According to this *yoga* system, *pratyag-ātmā* is the ultimate goal. This *pratyag-ātmā* is withdrawn from activities in matter. The senses interact with the sense objects, like the ear for hearing, eyes for seeing, nose for smelling, tongue for tasting, hand for touching, and all of them are thus engaged in activities outside the self. They are called the functions of the *prāṇa-vāyu*. The *apāna-vāyu* goes downwards, *vyāna-vāyu* acts to shrink and expand, *samāna-vāyu* adjusts equilibrium, *udāna-vāyu* goes upwards—and when one is enlightened, one engages all these in searching for self-realization.

Chapter 4—Text 28

*dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā
yoga-yajñās tathāpare
svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāś ca
yatayaḥ saṁśīta-vratāḥ*

SYNONYMS

dravya-yajñāḥ—sacrificing one’s possessions; *tapo-yajñāḥ*—sacrifice in austerities; *yoga-yajñāḥ*—sacrifice in eightfold mysticism; *tathā*—thus; *apare*—others; *svādhyāya*—sacrifice in the study of the *Vedas*; *jñāna-yajñāḥ*—sacrifice in advancement of transcendental knowledge; *ca*—also; *yatayaḥ*—enlightened persons; *saṁśīta-vratāḥ*—taken to strict vows.

TRANSLATION

Having accepted strict vows, some become enlightened by sacrificing their possessions, and others by performing severe austerities, by practicing the yoga of eightfold mysticism, or by studying the *Vedas* to advance in transcendental knowledge.

PURPORT

These sacrifices may be fitted into various divisions. There are persons who are sacrificing their possessions in the form of various kinds of charities. In India, the rich mercantile community or princely orders open various kinds of charitable institutions like *dharma-śālā*, *anna-kṣetra*, *atithi-śālā*, *anāthālaya* and *vidyā-pīṭha*. In other countries, too, there are many hospitals, old age homes and similar charitable foundations meant for distributing food, education and medical treatment free to the poor. All these charitable activities are called *dravyamaya-yajña*. There are others who, for higher elevation in life or for promotion to higher planets within the universe, voluntarily accept many kinds of austerities such as *candrāyaṇa* and *cāturmāsya*. These processes entail severe vows for conducting life under certain rigid rules. For example, under the *cāturmāsya* vow the candidate does not shave for four months during the year (July to October), he does not eat certain foods, does not eat twice in a day or does not leave home. Such sacrifice of the comforts of life is called *tapomaya-yajña*. There are still others who engage themselves in different kinds of mystic yogas like the Patañjali system (for merging into the existence of the Absolute), or *haṭha-yoga* or *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (for particular perfections). And some travel to all the sanctified places of pilgrimage. All these practices are called *yoga-yajña*, sacrifice for a certain type of perfection in the material world. There are others who engage themselves in the studies of different Vedic literatures, specifically the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtras*, or the Sāṅkhya philosophy. All of these are called *svādhyāya-yajña*, or engagement in the sacrifice of studies. All these *yogīs* are faithfully engaged in different types of sacrifice and are seeking a higher status of life. Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is different from these because it is the direct service of the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa

consciousness cannot be attained by any one of the above-mentioned types of sacrifice but can be attained only by the mercy of the Lord and His bona fide devotees. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is transcendental.

Chapter 4—Text 29

*apāne juhvati prāṇam
prāṇe 'pānam tathāpare
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā
prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ
apare niyatāhārāḥ
prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati*

SYNONYMS

apāne—in the air which acts downward; *juhvati*—offer; *prāṇam*—the air which acts outward; *prāṇe*—in the air going outward; *apānam*—the air going downward; *tathā*—as also; *apare*—others; *prāṇa*—of the air going outward; *apāna*—and the air going downward; *gatī*—the movement; *ruddhvā*—checking; *prāṇa-āyāma*—trance induced by stopping all breathing; *parāyaṇāḥ*—so inclined; *apare*—others; *niyata*—having controlled; *āhārāḥ*—eating; *prāṇān*—the outgoing air; *prāṇeṣu*—in the outgoing air; *juhvati*—sacrifice.

TRANSLATION

Still others, who are inclined to the process of breath restraint to remain in trance, practice by offering the movement of the outgoing breath into the incoming, and the incoming breath into the outgoing, and thus at last remain in trance, stopping all breathing. Others, curtailing the eating process, offer the outgoing breath into itself as a sacrifice.

PURPORT

This system of *yoga* for controlling the breathing process is called *prāṇāyāma*, and in the beginning it is practiced in the *haṭha-yoga* system through different sitting postures. All of these processes are recommended for controlling the senses and for advancement in spiritual realization. This practice involves controlling the airs within the body so as to reverse the directions of their passage. The *apāna* air goes downward, and the *prāṇa* air goes up. The *prāṇāyāma-yogī* practices breathing the opposite way until the currents are neutralized into *pūṛaka*. equilibrium. Offering the exhaled breath into the inhaled breath is called *recaka*. When both air currents are completely stopped, one is said to be in *kumbhaka-yoga*. By practice of *kumbhaka-yoga*. one can increase the duration of life for perfection in spiritual realization. The intelligent *yogī* is interested in attaining perfection in one life, without waiting for the next. For by practicing *kumbhaka-yoga*. the *yogīs* increase the duration of life by many, many years. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, being always situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, automatically becomes the controller of the senses. His senses, being always engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, have no chance of becoming otherwise engaged. So at the end of life, he is naturally transferred to the transcendental plane of Lord Kṛṣṇa; consequently he makes no attempt to increase his longevity. He is at once raised to the platform of liberation, as stated in

Bhagavad-gītā (14.26):

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Lord transcends the modes of material nature and is immediately elevated to the spiritual platform.” A Kṛṣṇa conscious person begins from the transcendental stage, and he is constantly in that consciousness. Therefore, there is no falling down, and ultimately he enters into the abode of the Lord without delay. The practice of reduced eating is automatically done when one eats only *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, or food which is offered first to the Lord. Reducing the eating process is very helpful in the matter of sense control. And without sense control there is no possibility of getting out of the material entanglement.

Chapter 4—Text 30

*sarve 'py ete yajña-vido
yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ
yajña-śiṣṭāmr̥ta-bhujo
yānti brahma sanātanam*

SYNONYMS

sarve—all; *api*—although apparently different; *ete*—these; *yajña-vidaḥ*—conversant with the purpose of performing sacrifices; *yajña-kṣapita*—being cleansed as the result of such performances; *kalmaṣāḥ*—of sinful reactions; *yajña-śiṣṭa*—of the result of such performances of *yajña*; *amṛta-bhujaḥ*—those who have tasted such nectar; *yānti*—do approach; *brahma*—the supreme; *sanātanam*—eternal atmosphere.

TRANSLATION

All these performers who know the meaning of sacrifice become cleansed of sinful reactions, and, having tasted the nectar of the results of sacrifices, they advance toward the supreme eternal atmosphere.

PURPORT

From the foregoing explanation of different types of sacrifice (namely sacrifice of one's possessions, study of the *Vedas* or philosophical doctrines, and performance of the *yoga* system), it is found that the common aim of all is to control the senses. Sense gratification is the root cause of material existence; therefore, unless and until one is situated on a platform apart from sense gratification, there is no chance of being elevated to the eternal platform of full knowledge, full bliss and full life. This platform is in the eternal atmosphere, or Brahman atmosphere. All the above-mentioned sacrifices help one to become cleansed of the sinful reactions of material existence. By this advancement in life, not only does one become happy and opulent in this life, but also, at the end, he enters into the eternal kingdom of God, either merging into the impersonal Brahman or associating with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 4—Text 31

*nāyam loko 'sty ayajñasya
kuto 'nyaḥ kuru-sattama*

SYNONYMS

na—never; *ayam*—this; *lokaḥ*—planet; *asti*—there is; *ayajñasya*—for one who performs no sacrifice; *kutaḥ*—where is; *anyaḥ*—the other; *kuru-sat-tama*—O best amongst the Kurus.

TRANSLATION

O best of the Kuru dynasty, without sacrifice one can never live happily on this planet or in this life: what then of the next?

PURPORT

Whatever form of material existence one is in, one is invariably ignorant of his real situation. In other words, existence in the material world is due to the multiple reactions to our sinful lives. Ignorance is the cause of sinful life, and sinful life is the cause of one's dragging on in material existence. The human form of life is the only loophole by which one may get out of this entanglement. The *Vedas*, therefore, give us a chance for escape by pointing out the paths of religion, economic comfort, regulated sense gratification and, at last, the means to get out of the miserable condition entirely. The path of religion, or the different kinds of sacrifice recommended above, automatically solves our economic problems. By performance of *yajña* we can have enough food, enough milk, etc.—even if there is a so-called increase of population. When the body is fully supplied, naturally the next stage is to satisfy the senses. The *Vedas* prescribe, therefore, sacred marriage for regulated sense gratification. Thereby one is gradually elevated to the platform of release from material bondage, and the highest perfection of liberated life is to associate with the Supreme Lord. Perfection is achieved by performance of *yajña* (sacrifice), as described above. Now, if a person is not inclined to perform *yajña* according to the *Vedas*, how can he expect a happy life even in this body, and what to speak of another body on another planet? There are different grades of material comforts in different heavenly planets, and in all cases there is immense happiness for persons engaged in different kinds of *yajña*. But the highest kind of happiness that a man can achieve is to be promoted to the spiritual planets by practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is therefore the solution to all the problems of material existence.

Chapter 4—Text 32

*evam̐ bahu-vidhā yajñā
vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe
karma-jān viddhi tān sarvān
evam̐ jñātvā vimokṣyase*

SYNONYMS

evam—thus; *bahu-vidhāḥ*—various kinds of; *yajñāḥ*—sacrifices; *vitatāḥ*—are spread; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of the *Vedas*; *mukhe*—through the mouth; *karma-jān*—born of work; *viddhi*—you should know; *tān*—them; *sarvān*—all; *evam*—thus; *jñātvā*—knowing; *vimokṣyase*—you will be liberated.

TRANSLATION

All these different types of sacrifice are approved by the *Vedas*, and all of them are born of different types of work. Knowing them as such, you will become liberated.

PURPORT

Different types of sacrifice, as discussed above, are mentioned in the *Vedas* to suit the different types of worker. Because men are so deeply absorbed in the bodily concept, these sacrifices are so arranged that one can work either with the body, with the mind, or with the intelligence. But all of them are recommended for ultimately bringing about liberation from the body. This is confirmed by the Lord herewith from His own mouth.

Chapter 4—Text 33

*śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj
jñāna-yajñaḥ parantapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha
jñāne parisamāpyate*

SYNONYMS

śreyān—greater; *dravya-mayāt*—of material possessions; *yajñāt*—than the sacrifice; *jñāna-yajñaḥ*—sacrifice in knowledge; *parantapa*—O chastiser of the enemy; *sarvam*—all; *karma*—activities; *akhilam*—in totality; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *jñāne*—in knowledge; *parisamāpyate*—end.

TRANSLATION

O chastiser of the enemy, the sacrifice performed in knowledge is better than the mere sacrifice of material possessions. After all, O son of Pṛthā, all sacrifices of work culminate in transcendental knowledge.

PURPORT

The purpose of all sacrifices is to arrive at the status of complete knowledge, then to gain release from material miseries, and, ultimately, to engage in loving transcendental service to the Supreme Lord (Kṛṣṇa consciousness). Nonetheless, there is a mystery about all these different activities of sacrifice, and one should know this mystery. Sacrifices sometimes take different forms according to the particular faith of the performer. When one's faith reaches the stage of transcendental knowledge, the performer of sacrifices should be considered more advanced than those who simply sacrifice material possessions without such knowledge, for without attainment of knowledge, sacrifices remain on the material platform and bestow no spiritual benefit. Real knowledge culminates in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the highest stage of transcendental knowledge. Without the elevation of knowledge, sacrifices are simply material activities. When, however, they are elevated to the level of transcendental knowledge, all such activities enter onto the spiritual platform. Depending on differences in consciousness, sacrificial activities are sometimes called *karma-kāṇḍa* (fruitive activities) and sometimes *jñāna-kāṇḍa* (knowledge in the pursuit of truth). It is better when the end is knowledge.

Chapter 4—Text 34

"*tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

SYNONYMS

tat—that knowledge of different sacrifices; *viddhi*—try to understand; *praṇipātena*—by approaching a spiritual master; *paripraśnena*—by submissive inquiries; *sevayā*—by the rendering of service; *upadekṣyanti*—they will initiate; *te*—you; *jñānam*—into knowledge; *jñāninaḥ*—the self-realized; *tattva*—of the truth; *darśinaḥ*—seers.

TRANSLATION

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.

PURPORT

The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself. No one can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession. The Lord is the original spiritual master, and a person in the disciplic succession can convey the message of the Lord as it is to his disciple. No one can be spiritually realized by manufacturing his own process, as is the fashion of the foolish pretenders. The *Bhāgavatam* (6.3.19) says, *dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam*: the path of religion is directly enunciated by the Lord. Therefore, mental speculation or dry arguments cannot help lead one to the right path. Nor by independent study of books of knowledge can one progress in spiritual life. One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge. Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding. Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective. One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master, and when he sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding. In this verse, both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned. Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries. A

bona fide spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple. Therefore when the student is submissive and is always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiries becomes perfect.

Chapter 4—Text 35

*yaj jñātvā na punar moham
evam yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtāny aśeṣāṇi
drakṣyasi ātmany atho mayi*

SYNONYMS

yat—which; *jñātvā*—knowing; *na*—never; *punar*—again; *moham*—to illusion; *evam*—like this; *yāsyasi*—you shall go; *pāṇḍava*—O son of Pāṇḍu; *yena*—by which; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *aśeṣāṇi*—all; *drakṣyasi*—you will see; *ātmani*—in the Supreme Soul; *atha u*—or in other words; *mayi*—in Me.

TRANSLATION

Having obtained real knowledge from a self-realized soul, you will never fall again into such illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine.

PURPORT

The result of receiving knowledge from a self-realized soul, or one who knows things as they are, is learning that all living beings are parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sense of an existence separate from Kṛṣṇa is called *māyā* (*mā*—not, *yā*—this). Some think that we have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa, that Kṛṣṇa is only a great historical personality and that the Absolute is the impersonal Brahman. Factually, as it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, this impersonal Brahman is the personal effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the cause of everything. In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is clearly stated that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes. Even the millions of incarnations are only His different expansions. Similarly, the living entities are also expansions of Kṛṣṇa. The Māyāvādī philosophers wrongly think that Kṛṣṇa loses His own separate existence in His many expansions. This thought is material in nature. We have experience in the material world that a thing, when fragmentally distributed, loses its own original identity. But the Māyāvādī philosophers fail to understand that *absolute* means that one plus one is equal to one, and that one minus one is also equal to one. This is the case in the absolute world. For want of sufficient knowledge in the absolute science, we are now covered with illusion, and therefore we think that we are separate from Kṛṣṇa. Although we are separated parts of Kṛṣṇa, we are nevertheless not different from Him. The bodily difference of the living entities is *māyā*, or not actual fact. We are all meant to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. By *māyā* alone Arjuna thought that the temporary bodily relationship with his kinsmen was more important than his eternal spiritual relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The whole teaching of the *Gītā* is targeted toward this end: that a living being, as Kṛṣṇa's eternal

servitor, cannot be separated from Kṛṣṇa, and his sense of being an identity apart from Kṛṣṇa is called *māyā*. The living entities, as separate parts and parcels of the Supreme, have a purpose to fulfill. Having forgotten that purpose since time immemorial, they are situated in different bodies, as men, animals, demigods, etc. Such bodily differences arise from forgetfulness of the transcendental service of the Lord. But when one is engaged in transcendental service through Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one becomes at once liberated from this illusion. One can acquire such pure knowledge only from the bona fide spiritual master and thereby avoid the delusion that the living entity is equal to Kṛṣṇa. Perfect knowledge is that the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme shelter for all living entities, and giving up such shelter, the living entities are deluded by the material energy, imagining themselves to have a separate identity. Thus, under different standards of material identity, they become forgetful of Kṛṣṇa. When, however, such deluded living entities become situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is to be understood that they are on the path of liberation, as confirmed in the *Bhāgavatam* (2.10.6): *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ*. Liberation means to be situated in one's constitutional position as an eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa consciousness).

Chapter 4—Text 36

*api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ
sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva
vṛjinam santariṣyasi*

SYNONYMS

api—even; *ced*—if; *asi*—you are; *pāpebhyaḥ*—of sinners; *sarvebhyaḥ*—of all; *pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ*—the greatest sinner; *sarvaṁ*—all such sinful reactions; *jñāna-plavena*—by the boat of transcendental knowledge; *eva*—certainly; *vṛjinam*—the ocean of miseries; *santariṣyasi*—you will cross completely.

TRANSLATION

Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries.

PURPORT

Proper understanding of one's constitutional position in relationship to Kṛṣṇa is so nice that it can at once lift one from the struggle for existence which goes on in the ocean of nescience. This material world is sometimes regarded as an ocean of nescience and sometimes as a blazing forest. In the ocean, however expert a swimmer one may be, the struggle for existence is very severe. If someone comes forward and lifts the struggling swimmer from the ocean, he is the greatest savior. Perfect knowledge, received from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the path of liberation. The boat of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very simple, but at the same time the most sublime.

Chapter 4—Text 37

*yathaidhāṁsi samiddho 'gnir
bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi
bhasma-sāt kurute tathā*

SYNONYMS

yathā—just as; *edhāṁsi*—firewood; *samiddhaḥ*—blazing; *agniḥ*—fire; *bhasma-sāt*—ashes; *kurute*—turns; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *jñāna-agniḥ*—the fire of knowledge; *sarva-karmāṇi*—all reactions to material activities; *bhasma-sāt*—to ashes; *kurute*—it turns; *tathā*—similarly.

TRANSLATION

As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities.

PURPORT

Perfect knowledge of self and Superself and of their relationship is compared herein to fire. This fire not only burns up all reactions to impious activities, but also all reactions to pious activities, turning them to ashes. There are many stages of reaction: reaction in the making, reaction fructifying, reaction already achieved, and reaction *a priori*. But knowledge of the constitutional position of the living entity burns everything to ashes. When one is in complete knowledge, all reactions, both *a priori* and *a posteriori*, are consumed. In the *Vedas* (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22) it is stated, *ubhe uhaivaiṣa ete taraty amṛtaḥ sādhu-asādhūnī*: “One overcomes both the pious and impious reactions of work.”

Chapter 4—Text 38

*na hi jñānena sadṛśam
pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayaṁ yoga-saṁsiddhaḥ
kālenātmāni vindati*

SYNONYMS

na—nothing; *hi*—certainly; *jñānena*—with knowledge; *sadṛśam*—in comparison; *pavitram*—sanctified; *iha*—in this world; *vidyate*—exists; *tat*—that; *svayaṁ*—himself; *yoga*—in devotion; *saṁsiddhaḥ*—he who is mature; *kālena*—in course of time; *ātmāni*—in himself; *vindati*—enjoys.

TRANSLATION

In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has become accomplished in the practice of devotional service enjoys this knowledge within himself in due course of time.

PURPORT

When we speak of transcendental knowledge, we do so in terms of spiritual understanding. As such, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Ignorance is the cause of our bondage, and knowledge is the cause of our liberation. This knowledge is the mature fruit of devotional service, and when one is situated in transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself. In other words, this knowledge and peace culminate in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the last word in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Chapter 4—Text 39

*śraddhāvāl labhate jñānam
tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānam labdhvā parām śāntim
acireṇādhigacchati*

SYNONYMS

śraddhā-vān—a faithful man; *labhate*—achieves; *jñānam*—knowledge; *tat-paraḥ*—very much attached to it; *saṁyata*—controlled; *indriyaḥ*—senses; *jñānam*—knowledge; *labdhvā*—having achieved; *parām*—transcendental; *śāntim*—peace; *acireṇa*—very soon; *adhigacchati*—attains.

TRANSLATION

A faithful man who is dedicated to transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses is eligible to achieve such knowledge, and having achieved it he quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.

PURPORT

Such knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be achieved by a faithful person who believes firmly in Kṛṣṇa. One is called a faithful man who thinks that simply by acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he can attain the highest perfection. This faith is attained by the discharge of devotional service, and by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, which cleanses one's heart of all material dirt. Over and above this, one should control the senses. A person who is faithful to Kṛṣṇa and who controls the senses can easily attain perfection in the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness without delay.

Chapter 4—Text 40

*ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca
saṁśayaātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro
na sukhaṁ saṁśayaātmanaḥ*

SYNONYMS

ajñāḥ—a fool who has no knowledge in standard scriptures; *ca*—and; *aśraddadhānaḥ*—without faith in revealed scriptures; *ca*—also; *saṁśaya*—of doubts; *ātmā*—a person; *vinaśyati*—falls back; *na*—never; *ayaṁ*—in this; *lokaḥ*—world; *asti*—there is; *na*—nor; *paraḥ*—in the next life; *na*—not; *sukhaṁ*—happiness; *saṁśaya*—doubtful; *ātmanaḥ*—of the person.

TRANSLATION

But ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness; they fall down. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next.

PURPORT

Out of many standard and authoritative revealed scriptures, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is the best. Persons who are almost like animals have no faith in, or knowledge of, the standard revealed scriptures; and some, even though they have knowledge of, or can cite passages from, the revealed scriptures, have actually no faith in these words. And even though others may have faith in scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā*, they do not believe in or worship the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such persons cannot have any standing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They fall down. Out of all the above-mentioned persons, those who have no faith and are always doubtful make no progress at all. Men without faith in God and His revealed word find no good in this world, nor in the next. For them there is no happiness whatsoever. One should therefore follow the principles of revealed scriptures with faith and thereby be raised to the platform of knowledge. Only this knowledge will help one become promoted to the transcendental platform of spiritual understanding. In other words, doubtful persons have no status whatsoever in spiritual emancipation. One should therefore follow in the footsteps of great *ācāryas* who are in the disciplic succession and thereby attain success.

Chapter 4—Text 41

*yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ
jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayam
ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi
nibadhnanti dhanañjaya*

SYNONYMS

yoga—by devotional service in *karma-yoga*; *sannyasta*—one who has renounced; *karmāṇaṁ*—the fruits of actions; *jñāna*—by knowledge; *sañchinna*—cut; *saṁśayam*—doubts; *ātma-vantaṁ*—situated in the self; *na*—never; *karmāṇi*—works; *nibadhnanti*—do bind; *dhanañjaya*—O conqueror of riches.

TRANSLATION

One who acts in devotional service, renouncing the fruits of his actions, and whose doubts have been destroyed by transcendental knowledge, is situated factually in the self. Thus he is not bound by the reactions of work, O conqueror of riches.

PURPORT

One who follows the instruction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, as it is imparted by the Lord, the Personality of Godhead Himself, becomes free from all doubts by the grace of transcendental knowledge. He, as a part and parcel of the Lord, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is already established in self-knowledge. As such, he is undoubtedly above bondage to action.

Chapter 4—Text 42

*tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ
hṛt-sthaṁ jñānāsinātmanaḥ
chittvainaṁ saṁśayaṁ yogam
ātiṣṭhottīṣṭha bhārata*

SYNONYMS

tasmāt—therefore; *ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ*—born of ignorance; *hṛt-sthaṁ*—situated in the heart; *jñāna*—of knowledge; *asinā*—by the weapon; *ātmanaḥ*—of the self; *chittvā*—cutting off; *enam*—this; *saṁśayaṁ*—doubt; *yogam*—in yoga; *ātiṣṭha*—be situated; *uttiṣṭha*—stand up to fight; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata.

TRANSLATION

Therefore the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, O Bhārata, stand and fight.

PURPORT

The yoga system instructed in this chapter is called *sanātana-yoga*, or eternal activities performed by the living entity. This yoga has two divisions of sacrificial actions: one is called sacrifice of one's material possessions, and the other is called knowledge of self, which is pure spiritual activity. If sacrifice of one's material possessions is not dovetailed for spiritual realization, then such sacrifice becomes material. But one who performs such sacrifices with a spiritual objective, or in devotional service, makes a perfect sacrifice. When we come to spiritual activities, we find that these are also divided into two: namely, understanding of one's own self (or one's constitutional position), and the truth regarding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who follows the path of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is can very easily understand these two important divisions of spiritual knowledge. For him there is no difficulty in obtaining perfect knowledge of the self as part and parcel of the Lord. And such understanding is beneficial, for such a person can easily understand the transcendental activities of the Lord. In the beginning of this chapter, the transcendental activities of the Lord were discussed by the Supreme Lord Himself. One who does not understand the instructions of the *Gītā* is faithless, and is to be considered to be misusing the fragmental independence awarded to him by the Lord. In spite of such instructions, one who does not understand the real nature of the Lord as the eternal, blissful, all-knowing Personality of Godhead is certainly fool number one. Ignorance can be removed by gradual acceptance of the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is awakened by different types of sacrifices to the demigods, sacrifice to Brahman, sacrifice in celibacy, in household life, in controlling the senses, in practicing mystic yoga, in penance, in forgoing material possessions, in studying the *Vedas*, and in partaking of the social institution called *varṇāśrama-dharma*. All of these are known as sacrifice, and all of them

are based on regulated action. But within all these activities, the important factor is self-realization. One who seeks *that* objective is the real student of *Bhagavad-gītā*, but one who doubts the authority of Kṛṣṇa falls back. One is therefore advised to study *Bhagavad-gītā*, or any other scripture, under a bona fide spiritual master, with service and surrender. A bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal, and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord as they were imparted millions of years ago to the sun-god, from whom the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* have come down to the earthly kingdom. One should, therefore, follow the path of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is expressed in the *Gītā* itself and beware of self-interested people after personal aggrandizement who deviate others from the actual path. The Lord is definitely the supreme person, and His activities are transcendental. One who understands this is a liberated person from the very beginning of his study of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta Purports to the Fourth Chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā in the matter of Transcendental Knowledge.