

- CHAPTER 18 -

Conclusion—The Perfection of Renunciation

Chapter 18—Text 2

arjuna uvāca
sannyāsasya mahā-bāho
tattvam icchāmi veditum
tyāgasya ca hṛṣīkeśa
pr̥thak keśi-niṣūdana

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *sannyāsasya*—of renunciation; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *tattvam*—the truth; *icchāmi*—I wish; *veditum*—to understand; *tyāgasya*—of renunciation; *ca*—also; *hṛṣīkeśa*—O master of the senses; *pr̥thak*—differently; *keśi-niṣūdana*—O killer of the Keśi demon.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: O mighty-armed one, I wish to understand the purpose of renunciation [tyāga] and of the renounced order of life [sannyāsa], O killer of the Keśi demon, master of the senses.

PURPORT

Actually the *Bhagavad-gītā* is finished in seventeen chapters. The Eighteenth Chapter is a supplementary summarization of the topics discussed before. In every chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses that devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate goal of life. This same point is summarized in the Eighteenth Chapter as the most confidential path of knowledge. In the first six chapters, stress was given to devotional service: *yoginām api sarveṣāṃ*. .. “Of all *yogīs* or transcendentalists, one who always thinks of Me within himself is best.” In the next six chapters, pure devotional service and its nature and activity were discussed. In the third six chapters, knowledge, renunciation, the activities of material nature and transcendental nature, and devotional service were described. It was concluded that all acts should be performed in conjunction with the Supreme Lord, represented by the words *om tat sat*, which indicate Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person. The third part of *Bhagavad-gītā* has shown that devotional service, and nothing else, is the ultimate purpose of life. This has been established by citing past *ācāryas* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Certain impersonalists consider themselves to have a monopoly on the knowledge of *Vedānta-sūtra*, but actually the *Vedānta-sūtra* is

meant for understanding devotional service, for the Lord Himself is the composer of the *Vedānta-sūtra* and He is its knower. That is described in the Fifteenth Chapter. In every scripture, every *Veda*, devotional service is the objective. That is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

As in the Second Chapter a synopsis of the whole subject matter was described, in the Eighteenth Chapter also the summary of all instruction is given. The purpose of life is indicated to be renunciation and attainment of the transcendental position above the three material modes of nature. Arjuna wants to clarify the two distinct subject matters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, namely renunciation (*tyāga*) and the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*). Thus he is asking the meaning of these two words.

Two words used in this verse to address the Supreme Lord—Hṛṣīkeśa and Keśi-niṣūdana—are significant. Hṛṣīkeśa is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all senses, who can always help us attain mental serenity. Arjuna requests Him to summarize everything in such a way that he can remain equipoised. Yet he has some doubts, and doubts are always compared to demons. He therefore addresses Kṛṣṇa as Keśi-niṣūdana. Keśi was a most formidable demon who was killed by the Lord; now Arjuna is expecting Kṛṣṇa to kill the demon of doubt.

Chapter 18—Text 2

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsam
sannyāsam kavayo viduḥ
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam
prāhuḥ tyāgam vicakṣaṇāḥ

SYNONYMS

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *kāmyānām*—with desire; *karmaṇām*—of activities; *nyāsam*—renunciation; *sannyāsam*—the renounced order of life; *kavayaḥ*—the learned; *viduḥ*—know; *sarva*—of all; *karma*—activities; *phala*—of results; *tyāgam*—renunciation; *prāhuḥ*—call; *tyāgam*—renunciation; *vicakṣaṇāḥ*—the experienced.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The giving up of activities that are based on material desire is what great learned men call the renounced order of life [sannyāsa]. And giving up the results of all activities is what the wise call renunciation [tyāga].

PURPORT

The performance of activities for results has to be given up. This is the instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā*. But activities leading to advanced spiritual knowledge are not to be given up. This will be made clear in the next verses. In the Vedic literature there are many prescriptions of methods for performing sacrifice for some particular purpose. There are certain sacrifices to perform to attain a good son or to attain elevation to the higher planets, but sacrifices prompted by desires should be stopped. However, sacrifice for the purification of one's heart or for advancement in the spiritual science should not be given up.

Chapter 18—Text 3

*tyājyaṁ doṣa-vad ity eke
karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ
yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma
na tyājyaṁ iti cāpare*

SYNONYMS

tyājyaṁ—must be given up; *doṣa-vat*—as an evil; *iti*—thus; *eke*—one group; *karma*—work; *prāhuḥ*—they say; *manīṣiṇaḥ*—great thinkers; *yajña*—of sacrifice; *dāna*—charity; *tapaḥ*—and penance; *karma*—works; *na*—never; *tyājyaṁ*—are to be given up; *iti*—thus; *ca*—and; *āpare*—others.

TRANSLATION

Some learned men declare that all kinds of fruitive activities should be given up as faulty, yet other sages maintain that acts of sacrifice, charity and penance should never be abandoned.

PURPORT

There are many activities in the Vedic literature which are subjects of contention. For instance, it is said that an animal can be killed in a sacrifice, yet some maintain that animal killing is completely abominable. Although animal killing in a sacrifice is recommended in the Vedic literature, the animal is not considered to be killed. The sacrifice is to give a new life to the animal. Sometimes the animal is given a new animal life after being killed in the sacrifice, and sometimes the animal is promoted immediately to the human form of life. But there are different opinions among the sages. Some say that animal killing should always be avoided, and others say that for a specific sacrifice it is good. All these different opinions on sacrificial activity are now being clarified by the Lord Himself.

Chapter 18—Text 4

*niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra
tyāge bharata-sattama
tyāgo hi puruṣa-vyāghra
tri-vidhaḥ samprakīrtitaḥ*

SYNONYMS

niścayaṁ—certainty; *śṛṇu*—hear; *me*—from Me; *tatra*—therein; *tyāge*—in the matter of renunciation; *bharata-sat-tama*—O best of the Bhāratas; *tyāgaḥ*—renunciation; *hi*—certainly; *puruṣa-vyāghra*—O tiger among human beings; *tri-vidhaḥ*—of three kinds; *samprakīrtitaḥ*—is declared.

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, now hear My judgment about renunciation. O tiger among men, renunciation is declared in the scriptures to be of three kinds.

PURPORT

Although there are differences of opinion about renunciation, here the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, gives His judgment, which should be taken as final. After all, the *Vedas* are different laws given by the Lord. Here the Lord is personally present, and His word should be taken as final. The Lord says that the process of renunciation should be considered in terms of the modes of material nature in which they are performed.

Chapter 18—Text 5

*yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma
na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat
yajño dānaṁ tapaś caiva
pāvanāni manīṣiṇām*

SYNONYMS

yajña—of sacrifice; *dāna*—charity; *tapaḥ*—and penance; *karma*—activity; *na*—never; *tyājyaṁ*—to be given up; *kāryam*—must be done; *eva*—certainly; *tat*—that; *yajñaḥ*—sacrifice; *dānam*—charity; *tapaḥ*—penance; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *pāvanāni*—purifying; *manīṣiṇām*—even for the great souls.

TRANSLATION

Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up; they must be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity and penance purify even the great souls.

PURPORT

The yogīs should perform acts for the advancement of human society. There are many purificatory processes for advancing a human being to spiritual life. The marriage ceremony, for example, is considered to be one of these sacrifices. It is called *vivāha-yajña*. Should a *sannyāsī*, who is in the renounced order of life and who has given up his family relations, encourage the marriage ceremony? The Lord says here that any sacrifice which is meant for human welfare should never be given up. *Vivāha-yajña*, the marriage ceremony, is meant to regulate the human mind so that it may become peaceful for spiritual advancement. For most men, this *vivāha-yajña* should be encouraged even by persons in the renounced order of life. *Sannyāsīs* should never associate with women, but that does not mean that one who is in the lower stages of life, a young man, should not accept a wife in the marriage ceremony. All prescribed sacrifices are meant for achieving the Supreme Lord. Therefore, in the lower stages, they should not be given up. Similarly, charity is for the purification of the heart. If charity is given to suitable persons, as described previously, it leads one to advanced spiritual life.

Chapter 18—Text 6

*etāny api tu karmāṇi
saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni ca
kartavyānīti me pārtha
niścitaṁ matam uttamam*

SYNONYMS

etāni—all these; *api*—certainly; *tu*—but; *karmāṇi*—activities; *saṅgam*—association; *tyaktvā*—renouncing; *phalāni*—results; *ca*—also; *kartavyāni*—should be done as duty; *iti*—thus; *me*—My; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *niścitaṁ*—definite; *matam*—opinion; *uttamam*—the best.

TRANSLATION

All these activities should be performed without attachment or any expectation of result. They should be performed as a matter of duty, O son of Pṛthā. That is My final opinion.

PURPORT

Although all sacrifices are purifying, one should not expect any result by such performances. In other words, all sacrifices which are meant for material advancement in life should be given up, but sacrifices that purify one's existence and elevate one to the spiritual plane should not be stopped. Everything that leads to Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be encouraged. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also it is said that any activity which leads to devotional service to the Lord should be accepted. That is the highest criterion of religion. A devotee of the Lord should accept any kind of work, sacrifice or charity which will help him in the discharge of devotional service to the Lord.

Chapter 18—Text 7

*niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ
karmaṇo nopapadyate
mohāt tasya parityāgas
tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*

SYNONYMS

niyatasya—prescribed; *tu*—but; *sannyāsaḥ*—renunciation; *karmaṇaḥ*—of activities; *na*—never; *upapadyate*—is deserved; *mohāt*—by illusion; *tasya*—of them; *parityāgaḥ*—renunciation; *tāmasaḥ*—in the mode of ignorance; *parikīrtitaḥ*—is declared.

TRANSLATION

Prescribed duties should never be renounced. If one gives up his prescribed duties because of illusion, such renunciation is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT

Work for material satisfaction must be given up, but activities which promote one to spiritual activity, like cooking for the Supreme Lord and offering the food to the Lord and then accepting the food, are recommended. It is said that a person in the renounced order of life should not cook for himself. Cooking for oneself is prohibited, but cooking for the Supreme Lord is not prohibited. Similarly, a *sannyāsī* may perform a marriage ceremony to help his disciple in the advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one renounces such activities, it is to be understood that he is acting in the mode of darkness.

Chapter 18—Text 8

*duḥkham ity eva yat karma
kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam
naiva tyāga-phalam labhet*

SYNONYMS

duḥkham—unhappy; *iti*—thus; *eva*—certainly; *yat*—which; *karma*—work; *kāya*—for the body; *kleśa*—trouble; *bhayāt*—out of fear; *tyajet*—gives up; *saḥ*—he; *kṛtvā*—after doing; *rājasam*—in the mode of passion; *tyāgam*—renunciation; *na*—not; *eva*—certainly; *tyāga*—of renunciation; *phalam*—the results; *labhet*—gains.

TRANSLATION

Anyone who gives up prescribed duties as troublesome or out of fear of bodily discomfort is said to have renounced in the mode of passion. Such action never leads to the elevation of renunciation.

PURPORT

One who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should not give up earning money out of fear that he is performing fruitive activities. If by working one can engage his money in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or if by rising early in the morning one can advance his transcendental Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one should not desist out of fear or because such activities are considered troublesome. Such renunciation is in the mode of passion. The result of passionate work is always miserable. If a person renounces work in that spirit, he never gets the result of renunciation.

Chapter 18—Text 9

*kāryam ity eva yat karma
niyatam kriyate 'rjuna
saṅgam tyaktvā phalam caiva
sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ*

SYNONYMS

kāryam—it must be done; *iti*—thus; *eva*—indeed; *yat*—which; *karma*—work; *niyatam*—prescribed; *kriyate*—is performed; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *saṅgam*—association; *tyaktvā*—giving up; *phalam*—the result; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *saḥ*—that; *tyāgaḥ*—renunciation; *sāttvikaḥ*—in the mode of goodness; *mataḥ*—in My opinion.

TRANSLATION

O Arjuna, when one performs his prescribed duty only because it ought to be done, and renounces all material association and all attachment to the fruit, his renunciation is said to be in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

Prescribed duties must be performed with this mentality. One should act without attachment for the result; he should be disassociated from the modes of work. A man working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a factory does not associate himself with the work of the factory, nor with the workers of the factory. He simply works for Kṛṣṇa. And when he gives up the result for Kṛṣṇa, he is acting transcendently.

Chapter 18—Text 10

*na dveṣṭy akuśalam karma
kuśale nānuṣajjate
tyāgī sattva-samāviṣṭo
medhāvī chinna-saṁśayaḥ*

SYNONYMS

na—never; *dveṣṭi*—hates; *akuśalam*—inauspicious; *karma*—work; *kuśale*—in the auspicious; *na*—nor; *anuṣajjate*—becomes attached; *tyāgī*—the renouncer; *sattva*—in goodness; *samāviṣṭaḥ*—absorbed; *medhāvī*—intelligent; *chinna*—having cut off; *saṁśayaḥ*—all doubts.

TRANSLATION

The intelligent renouncer situated in the mode of goodness, neither hateful of inauspicious work nor attached to auspicious work, has no doubts about work.

PURPORT

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness or in the mode of goodness does not hate anyone or anything which troubles his body. He does work in the proper place and at the proper time without fearing the troublesome effects of his duty. Such a person situated in transcendence should be understood to be most intelligent and beyond all doubts in his activities.

Chapter 18—Text 11

*na hi deha-bhṛtā śakyam
tyaktum karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ
yaś tu karma-phala-tyāgī
sa tyāgīty abhidhīyate*

SYNONYMS

na—never; *hi*—certainly; *deha-bhṛtā*—by the embodied; *śakyam*—is possible; *tyaktum*—to be renounced; *karmāṇi*—activities; *aśeṣataḥ*—altogether; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *tu*—but; *karma*—of work; *phala*—of the result; *tyāgī*—the renouncer; *saḥ*—he; *tyāgī*—the renouncer; *iti*—thus; *abhidhīyate*—is said.

TRANSLATION

It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to give up all activities. But he who renounces the fruits of action is called one who has truly renounced.

PURPORT

It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one can never give up work at any time. Therefore he who works for Kṛṣṇa and does not enjoy the fruitive results, who offers everything to Kṛṣṇa, is actually a renouncer. There are many members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness who work very hard in their office or in the factory or some other place, and whatever they earn they give to the Society. Such highly elevated souls are actually *sannyāsīs* and are situated in the renounced order of life. It is clearly outlined here how to renounce the fruits of work and for what purpose fruits should be renounced.

Chapter 18—Text 12

*aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśram ca
tri-vidham karmaṇaḥ phalam
bhavaty atyāginām pretya
na tu sannyāsinām kvacit*

SYNONYMS

aniṣṭam—leading to hell; *iṣṭam*—leading to heaven; *miśram*—mixed; *ca*—and; *tri-vidham*—of three kinds; *karmaṇaḥ*—of work; *phalam*—the result; *bhavati*—comes; *atyāginām*—for those who are not renounced; *pretya*—after death; *na*—not; *tu*—but; *sannyāsinām*—for the renounced order; *kvacit*—at any time.

TRANSLATION

For one who is not renounced, the threefold fruits of action—desirable, undesirable and mixed—accrue after death. But those who are in the renounced order of life have no such result to suffer or enjoy.

PURPORT

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness acting in knowledge of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa is always liberated. Therefore he does not have to enjoy or suffer the results of his acts after death.

Chapter 18—Text 13

*pañcaitāni mahā-bāho
kāraṇāni nibodha me
sāṅkhye kṛtānte proktāni
siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām*

SYNONYMS

pañca—five; *etāni*—these; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *kāraṇāni*—causes; *nibodha*—just understand; *me*—from Me; *sāṅkhye*—in the *Vedānta*; *kṛta-ante*—in the conclusion; *proktāni*—said; *siddhaye*—for the perfection; *sarva*—of all; *karmaṇām*—activities.

TRANSLATION

O mighty-armed Arjuna, according to the Vedānta there are five causes for the accomplishment of all action. Now learn of these from Me.

PURPORT

A question may be raised that since any activity performed must have some reaction, how is it that the person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not suffer or enjoy the reactions of work? The Lord is citing *Vedānta* philosophy to show how this is possible. He says that there are five causes for all activities, and for success in all activity one should consider these five causes. *Sāṅkhya* means the stalk of knowledge, and *Vedānta* is the final stalk of knowledge accepted by all leading *ācāryas*. Even Śaṅkara accepts *Vedānta-sūtra* as such. Therefore such authority should be consulted.

The ultimate control is invested in the Supersoul. As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ*. He is engaging everyone in certain activities by reminding him of his past actions. And Kṛṣṇa conscious acts done under His direction from within yield no reaction, either in this life or in the life after death.

Chapter 18—Text 14

*adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā
karaṇam ca pṛthag-vidham
vividhāś ca pṛthak ceṣṭā
daivam caivātra pañcamam*

SYNONYMS

adhiṣṭhānam—the place; *tathā*—also; *kartā*—the worker; *karaṇam*—instruments; *ca*—and; *pṛthag-vidham*—of different kinds; *vividhāḥ*—various; *ca*—and; *pṛthak*—separate; *ceṣṭāḥ*—the endeavors; *daivam*—the Supreme; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *atra*—here; *pañcamam*—the fifth.

TRANSLATION

The place of action [the body], the performer, the various senses, the many different kinds of endeavor, and ultimately the Supersoul—these are the five factors of action.

PURPORT

The word *adhiṣṭhānam* refers to the body. The soul within the body is acting to bring about the results of activity and is therefore known as *kartā*, “the doer.” That the soul is the knower and the doer is stated in the *śruti*. *Eṣa hi draṣṭā sraṣṭā* (*Praśna Upaniṣad* 4.9). It is also confirmed in the *Vedānta-sūtra* by the verses *jñāta eva* (2.3.18) and *kartā śāstrārthavattvāt* (2.3.33). The instruments of action are the senses, and by the senses the soul acts in various ways. For each and every action there is a different endeavor. But all one’s activities depend on the will of the Supersoul, who is seated within the heart as a friend. The Supreme Lord is the supercause. Under these circumstances, he who is acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the direction of the Supersoul situated within the heart is naturally not bound by any activity. Those in complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness are not ultimately responsible for their actions. Everything is dependent on the supreme will, the Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 18—Text 15

*śarīra-vān-manobhir yat
karma prārabhate naraḥ
nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā
pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ*

SYNONYMS

śarīra—by the body; *vāk*—speech; *manobhiḥ*—and mind; *yat*—which; *karma*—work; *prārabhate*—begins; *naraḥ*—a person; *nyāyyaṁ*—right; *vā*—or; *viparītaṁ*—the opposite; *vā*—or; *pañca*—five; *ete*—all these; *tasya*—its; *hetavaḥ*—causes.

TRANSLATION

Whatever right or wrong action a man performs by body, mind or speech is caused by these five factors.

PURPORT

The words “right” and “wrong” are very significant in this verse. Right work is work done in terms of the prescribed directions in the scriptures, and wrong work is work done against the principles of the scriptural injunctions. But whatever is done requires these five factors for its complete performance.

Chapter 18—Text 16

*tatraivaṁ sati kartāram
ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ
paśyaty akṛta-buddhitvān
na sa paśyati durmatih*

SYNONYMS

tatra—there; *evam*—thus; *sati*—being; *kartāram*—the worker; *ātmānaṁ*—himself; *kevalam*—only; *tu*—but; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *paśyati*—sees; *akṛta-buddhitvāt*—due to unintelligence; *na*—never; *saḥ*—he; *paśyati*—sees; *durmatih*—foolish.

TRANSLATION

Therefore one who thinks himself the only doer, not considering the five factors, is certainly not very intelligent and cannot see things as they are.

PURPORT

A foolish person cannot understand that the Supersoul is sitting as a friend within and conducting his actions. Although the material causes are the place, the worker, the endeavor and the senses, the final cause is the Supreme, the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, one should see not only the four material causes but the supreme efficient cause as well. One who does not see the Supreme thinks himself to be the doer.

Chapter 18—Text 17

*yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo
buddhir yasya na līpyate
hatvāpi sa imāṁ lokān
na hanti na nibadhyate*

SYNONYMS

yasya—one whose; *na*—never; *ahaṅkṛtaḥ*—of false ego; *bhāvaḥ*—nature; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *yasya*—one whose; *na*—never; *līpyate*—is attached; *hatvā*—killing; *api*—even; *saḥ*—he; *imān*—this; *lokān*—world; *na*—never; *hanti*—kills; *na*—never; *nibadhyate*—becomes entangled.

TRANSLATION

One who is not motivated by false ego, whose intelligence is not entangled, though he kills men in this world, does not kill. Nor is he bound by his actions.

PURPORT

In this verse the Lord informs Arjuna that the desire not to fight arises from false ego. Arjuna thought himself to be the doer of action, but he did not consider the supreme sanction within and without. If one does not know that a supersanction is there, why should he act? But one who knows the instruments of work, himself as the worker, and the Supreme Lord as the supreme sanctioner is perfect in doing everything. Such a person is never in illusion. Personal activity and responsibility arise from false ego and godlessness, or a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Anyone who is acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the direction of the Supersoul or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even though killing, does not kill. Nor is he ever affected by the reaction of such killing. When a soldier kills under the command of a superior officer, he is not subject to be judged. But if a soldier kills on his own personal account, then he is certainly judged by a court of law.

Chapter 18—Text 18

*jñānam jñeyam parijñātā
tri-vidhā karma-codanā
karaṇam karma karteti
tri-vidhaḥ karma-saṅgrahaḥ*

SYNONYMS

jñānam—knowledge; *jñeyam*—the objective of knowledge; *parijñātā*—the knower; *tri-vidhā*—of three kinds; *karma*—of work; *codanā*—the impetus; *karaṇam*—the senses; *karma*—the work; *kartā*—the doer; *iti*—thus; *tri-vidhaḥ*—of three kinds; *karma*—of work; *saṅgrahaḥ*—the accumulation.

TRANSLATION

Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower are the three factors that motivate action; the senses, the work and the doer are the three constituents of action.

PURPORT

There are three kinds of impetus for daily work: knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower. The instruments of work, the work itself and the worker are called the constituents of work. Any work done by any human being has these elements. Before one acts, there is some impetus, which is called inspiration. Any solution arrived at before work is actualized is a subtle form of work. Then work takes the form of action. First one has to undergo the psychological processes of thinking, feeling and willing, and that is called impetus. The inspiration to work is the same if it comes from the scripture or from the instruction of the spiritual master. When the inspiration is there and the worker is there, then actual activity takes place by the help of the senses, including the mind, which is the center of all the senses. The sum total of all the constituents of an activity are called the accumulation of work.

Chapter 18—Text 19

*jñānam karma ca kartā ca
tridhaiva guṇa-bhedaḥ
procyate guṇa-saṅkhyāne
yathāvac chṛṇu tāny api*

SYNONYMS

jñānam—knowledge; *karma*—work; *ca*—also; *kartā*—worker; *ca*—also; *tridhā*—of three kinds; *eva*—certainly; *guṇa-bhedaḥ*—in terms of different modes of material nature; *procyate*—are said; *guṇa-saṅkhyāne*—in terms of different modes; *yathā-vat*—as they are; *śṛṇu*—hear; *tāni*—all of them; *api*—also.

TRANSLATION

According to the three different modes of material nature, there are three kinds of knowledge, action and performer of action. Now hear of them from Me.

PURPORT

In the Fourteenth Chapter the three divisions of the modes of material nature were elaborately described. In that chapter it was said that the mode of goodness is illuminating, the mode of passion materialistic, and the mode of ignorance conducive to laziness and indolence. All the modes of material nature are binding; they are not sources of liberation. Even in the mode of goodness one is conditioned. In the Seventeenth Chapter, the different types of worship by different types of men in different modes of material nature were described. In this verse, the Lord says that He wishes to speak about the different types of knowledge, workers and work itself according to the three material modes.

Chapter 18—Text 20

*sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikam
bhāvam avyayam ikṣate
avibhaktam vibhakteṣu
tat jñānam viddhi sāttvikam*

SYNONYMS

sarva-bhūteṣu—in all living entities; *yena*—by which; *ekam*—one; *bhāvam*—situation; *avyayam*—imperishable; *ikṣate*—one sees; *avibhaktam*—undivided; *vibhakteṣu*—in the numberless divided; *tat*—that; *jñānam*—knowledge; *viddhi*—know; *sāttvikam*—in the mode of goodness.

TRANSLATION

That knowledge by which one undivided spiritual nature is seen in all living entities, though they are divided into innumerable forms, you should understand to be in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

A person who sees one spirit soul in every living being, whether a demigod, human being, animal, bird, beast, aquatic or plant, possesses knowledge in the mode of goodness. In all living entities, one spirit soul is there, although they have different bodies in terms of their previous work. As described in the Seventh Chapter, the manifestation of the living force in every body is due to the superior nature of the Supreme Lord. Thus to see that one superior nature, that living force, in every body is to see in the mode of goodness. That living energy is imperishable, although the bodies are perishable. Differences are perceived in terms of the body; because there are many forms of material existence in conditional life, the living force appears to be divided. Such impersonal knowledge is an aspect of self-realization.

Chapter 18—Text 21

*pr̥thaktvena tu yaj jñānaṁ
nānā-bhāvān pr̥thag-vidhān
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu
taj jñānaṁ viddhi rājasam*

SYNONYMS

pr̥thaktvena—because of division; *tu*—but; *yaj*—which; *jñānaṁ*—knowledge; *nānā-bhāvān*—multifarious situations; *pr̥thag-vidhān*—different; *vetti*—knows; *sarveṣu*—in all; *bhūteṣu*—living entities; *taj*—that; *jñānaṁ*—knowledge; *viddhi*—must be known; *rājasam*—in terms of passion.

TRANSLATION

That knowledge by which one sees that in every different body there is a different type of living entity you should understand to be in the mode of passion.

PURPORT

The concept that the material body is the living entity and that with the destruction of the body the consciousness is also destroyed is called knowledge in the mode of passion. According to that knowledge, bodies differ from one another because of the development of different types of consciousness, otherwise there is no separate soul which manifests consciousness. The body is itself the soul, and there is no separate soul beyond the body. According to such knowledge, consciousness is temporary. Or else there are no individual souls, but there is an all-pervading soul, which is full of knowledge, and this body is a manifestation of temporary ignorance. Or beyond this body there is no special individual or supreme soul. All such conceptions are considered products of the mode of passion.

Chapter 18—Text 22

*yat tu kṛtsna-vad ekasmin
kārye saktam ahaitukam
atattvārtha-vad alpam ca
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

SYNONYMS

yat—that which; *tu*—but; *kṛtsna-vat*—as all in all; *ekasmin*—in one; *kārye*—work; *saktam*—attached; *ahaitukam*—without cause; *atattva-artha-vat*—without knowledge of reality; *alpam*—very meager; *ca*—and; *tat*—that; *tāmasam*—in the mode of darkness; *udāhṛtam*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

And that knowledge by which one is attached to one kind of work as the all in all, without knowledge of the truth, and which is very meager, is said to be in the mode of darkness.

PURPORT

The “knowledge” of the common man is always in the mode of darkness or ignorance because every living entity in conditional life is born into the mode of ignorance. One who does not develop knowledge through the authorities or scriptural injunctions has knowledge that is limited to the body. He is not concerned about acting in terms of the directions of scripture. For him God is money, and knowledge means the satisfaction of bodily demands. Such knowledge has no connection with the Absolute Truth. It is more or less like the knowledge of the ordinary animals: the knowledge of eating, sleeping, defending and mating. Such knowledge is described here as the product of the mode of darkness. In other words, knowledge concerning the spirit soul beyond this body is called knowledge in the mode of goodness, knowledge producing many theories and doctrines by dint of mundane logic and mental speculation is the product of the mode of passion, and knowledge concerned only with keeping the body comfortable is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 23

*niyatam saṅga-rahitam
arāga-dveṣataḥ kṛtam
aphala-prepsunā karma
yat tat sāttvikam ucyate*

SYNONYMS

niyatam—regulated; *saṅga-rahitam*—without attachment; *arāga-dveṣataḥ*—without love or hatred; *kṛtam*—done; *aphala-prepsunā*—by one without desire for fruitive result; *karma*—action; *yat*—which; *tat*—that; *sāttvikam*—in the mode of goodness; *ucyate*—is called.

TRANSLATION

That action which is regulated and which is performed without attachment, without love or hatred, and without desire for fruitive results is said to be in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

Regulated occupational duties, as prescribed in the scriptures in terms of the different orders and divisions of society, performed without attachment or proprietary rights and therefore without any love or hatred, and performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the satisfaction of the Supreme, without self-satisfaction or self-gratification, are called actions in the mode of goodness.

Chapter 18—Text 24

*yat tu kāmepsunā karma
sāhaṅkāreṇa vā punaḥ
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ
tad rājasam udāhṛtam*

SYNONYMS

yat—that which; *tu*—but; *kāma-īpsunā*—by one with desires for fruitive results; *karma*—work; *sa-ahaṅkāreṇa*—with ego; *vā*—or; *punaḥ*—again; *kriyate*—is performed; *bahulāyāsaṁ*—with great labor; *tat*—that; *rājasam*—in the mode of passion; *udāhṛtam*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

But action performed with great effort by one seeking to gratify his desires, and enacted from a sense of false ego, is called action in the mode of passion.

Chapter 18—Text 25

*anubandham kṣayam himsām
anapekṣya ca pauruṣam
mohād ārabhyate karma
yat tat tāmasam ucyate*

SYNONYMS

anubandham—of future bondage; *kṣayam*—destruction; *himsām*—and distress to others; *anapekṣya*—without considering the consequences; *ca*—also; *pauruṣam*—self-sanctioned; *mohāt*—by illusion; *ārabhyate*—is begun; *karma*—work; *yat*—which; *tat*—that; *tāmasam*—in the mode of ignorance; *ucyate*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

That action performed in illusion, in disregard of scriptural injunctions, and without concern for future bondage or for violence or distress caused to others is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT

One has to give account of one's actions to the state or to the agents of the Supreme Lord called the Yamadūtas. Irresponsible work is destructive because it destroys the regulative principles of scriptural injunction. It is often based on violence and is distressing to other living entities. Such irresponsible work is carried out in the light of one's personal experience. This is called illusion. And all such illusory work is a product of the mode of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 26

*mukta-saṅgo 'naḥam-vādī
dhṛty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ
kartā sāttvika ucyate*

SYNONYMS

mukta-saṅgaḥ—liberated from all material association; *anaham-vādī*—without false ego; *dhṛti*—with determination; *utsāha*—and great enthusiasm; *samanvitaḥ*—qualified; *siddhi*—in perfection; *asiddhyoḥ*—and failure; *nirvikāraḥ*—without change; *kartā*—worker; *sāttvikaḥ*—in the mode of goodness; *ucyate*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

One who performs his duty without association with the modes of material nature, without false ego, with great determination and enthusiasm, and without wavering in success or failure is said to be a worker in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always transcendental to the material modes of nature. He has no expectations for the result of the work entrusted to him, because he is above false ego and pride. Still, he is always enthusiastic till the completion of such work. He does not worry about the distress undertaken; he is always enthusiastic. He does not care for success or failure; he is equal in both distress and happiness. Such a worker is situated in the mode of goodness.

Chapter 18—Text 27

*rāgī karma-phala-prepsur
lubdho himsātmako 'śuciḥ
harṣa-śokānvitaḥ kartā
rājasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ*

SYNONYMS

rāgī—very much attached; *karma-phala*—the fruit of the work; *prepsuḥ*—desiring; *lubdhaḥ*—greedy; *himsā-ātmakaḥ*—always envious; *aśuciḥ*—unclean; *harṣa-śoka-anvitaḥ*—subject to joy and sorrow; *kartā*—such a worker; *rājasaḥ*—in the mode of passion; *parikīrtitaḥ*—is declared.

TRANSLATION

The worker who is attached to work and the fruits of work, desiring to enjoy those fruits, and who is greedy, always envious, impure, and moved by joy and sorrow, is said to be in the mode of passion.

PURPORT

A person is too much attached to a certain kind of work or to the result because he has too much attachment for materialism or hearth and home, wife and children. Such a person has no desire for higher elevation in life. He is simply concerned with making this world as materially comfortable as possible. He is generally very greedy, and he thinks that anything attained by him is permanent and never to be lost. Such a person is envious of others and prepared to do anything wrong for sense gratification. Therefore such a person is unclean, and he does not care whether his earning is pure or impure. He is very happy if his work is successful and very much distressed when his work is not successful. Such is the worker in the mode of passion.

Chapter 18—Text 28

*ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ
śaṭho naiṣkṛtiko 'lasaḥ
viṣādī dīrgha-sūtrī ca
kartā tāmasa ucyate*

SYNONYMS

ayuktaḥ—not referring to the scriptural injunctions; *prākṛtaḥ*—materialistic; *stabdhaḥ*—obstinate; *śaṭhaḥ*—deceitful; *naiṣkṛtikaḥ*—expert in insulting others; *alasaḥ*—lazy; *viṣādī*—morose; *dīrgha-sūtrī*—procrastinating; *ca*—also; *kartā*—worker; *tāmasaḥ*—in the mode of ignorance; *ucyate*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

The worker who is always engaged in work against the injunctions of the scripture, who is materialistic, obstinate, cheating and expert in insulting others, and who is lazy, always morose and procrastinating is said to be a worker in the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT

In the scriptural injunctions we find what sort of work should be performed and what sort of work should not be performed. Those who do not care for those injunctions engage in work not to be done, and such persons are generally materialistic. They work according to the modes of nature, not according to the injunctions of the scripture. Such workers are not very gentle, and generally they are always cunning and expert in insulting others. They are very lazy; even though they have some duty, they do not do it properly, and they put it aside to be done later on. Therefore they appear to be morose. They procrastinate; anything which can be done in an hour they drag on for years. Such workers are situated in the mode of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 29

*buddher bhedaṁ dhṛteś caiva
guṇatas tri-vidhaṁ śṛṇu
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa
pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya*

SYNONYMS

buddheḥ—of intelligence; *bhedam*—the differences; *dhṛteḥ*—of steadiness; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *guṇataḥ*—by the modes of material nature; *tri-vidham*—of three kinds; *śṛṇu*—just hear; *procyamānam*—as described by Me; *aśeṣeṇa*—in detail; *pṛthaktvena*—differently; *dhanañjaya*—O winner of wealth.

TRANSLATION

O winner of wealth, now please listen as I tell you in detail of the different kinds of understanding and determination, according to the three modes of material nature.

PURPORT

Now after explaining knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower, in three different divisions according to the modes of material nature, the Lord is explaining the intelligence and determination of the worker in the same way.

Chapter 18—Text 30

*pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca
kāryākārye bhayābhaye
bandham mokṣam ca yā vetti
buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī*

SYNONYMS

pravṛttim—doing; *ca*—also; *nivṛttim*—not doing; *ca*—and; *kārya*—what ought to be done; *akārye*—and what ought not to be done; *bhaya*—fear; *abhaye*—and fearlessness; *bandham*—bondage; *mokṣam*—liberation; *ca*—and; *yā*—that which; *vetti*—knows; *buddhiḥ*—understanding; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *sāttvikī*—in the mode of goodness.

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, that understanding by which one knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, what is binding and what is liberating, is in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

Performing actions in terms of the directions of the scriptures is called *pravṛtti*, or executing actions that deserve to be performed. And actions which are not so directed are not to be performed. One who does not know the scriptural directions becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of work. Understanding which discriminates by intelligence is situated in the mode of goodness.

Chapter 18—Text 31

*yayā dharmam adharmam ca
kāryam cākāryam eva ca
ayathāvat prajānāti
buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī*

SYNONYMS

yayā—by which; *dharmam*—the principles of religion; *adharmam*—irreligion; *ca*—and; *kāryam*—what ought to be done; *ca*—also; *akāryam*—what ought not to be done; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *ayathā-vat*—imperfectly; *prajānāti*—knows; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *rājasī*—in the mode of passion.

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, that understanding which cannot distinguish between religion and irreligion, between action that should be done and action that should not be done, is in the mode of passion.

Chapter 18—Text 32

*adharmam dharmam iti yā
manyate tamasāvṛtā
sarvārthān viparītāṁś ca
buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī*

SYNONYMS

adharmam—irreligion; *dharmam*—religion; *iti*—thus; *yā*—which; *manyate*—thinks; *tamasā*—by illusion; *āvṛtā*—covered; *sarva-arthān*—all things; *viparītān*—in the wrong direction; *ca*—also; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *tāmasī*—in the mode of ignorance.

TRANSLATION

That understanding which considers irreligion to be religion and religion to be irreligion, under the spell of illusion and darkness, and strives always in the wrong direction, O Pārtha, is in the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT

Intelligence in the mode of ignorance is always working the opposite of the way it should. It accepts religions which are not actually religions and rejects actual religion. Men in ignorance understand a great soul to be a common man and accept a common man as a great soul. They think truth to be untruth and accept untruth as truth. In all activities they simply take the wrong path; therefore their intelligence is in the mode of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 33

*dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate
manaḥ-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ
yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā
dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī*

SYNONYMS

dhṛtyā—determination; *yayā*—by which; *dhārayate*—one sustains; *manaḥ*—of the mind; *prāṇa*—life; *indriya*—and senses; *kriyāḥ*—the activities; *yogena*—by yoga practice; *avyabhicāriṇyā*—without any break; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *sāttvikī*—in the mode of goodness.

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, that determination which is unbreakable, which is sustained with steadfastness by yoga practice, and which thus controls the activities of the mind, life and senses is determination in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

Yoga is a means to understand the Supreme Soul. One who is steadily fixed in the Supreme Soul with determination, concentrating one's mind, life and sensory activities on the Supreme, engages in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That sort of determination is in the mode of goodness. The word *avyabhicāriṇyā* is very significant, for it indicates that persons who are engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are never deviated by any other activity.

Chapter 18—Text 34

*yayā tu dharma-kāmāṛthān
dhṛtyā dhārayate 'rjuna
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī
dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī*

SYNONYMS

yayā—by which; *tu*—but; *dharma*—religiosity; *kāma*—sense gratification; *arthān*—and economic development; *dhṛtyā*—by determination; *dhārayate*—one sustains; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *prasaṅgena*—because of attachment; *phala-ākāṅkṣī*—desiring fruitive results; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *rājasī*—in the mode of passion.

TRANSLATION

But that determination by which one holds fast to fruitive results in religion, economic development and sense gratification is of the nature of passion, O Arjuna.

PURPORT

Any person who is always desirous of fruitive results in religious or economic activities, whose only desire is sense gratification, and whose mind, life and senses are thus engaged is in the mode of passion.

Chapter 18—Text 35

*yayā swapnam bhayaṁ śokaṁ
viṣādaṁ madam eva ca
na vimuñcati durmedhā
dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī*

SYNONYMS

yayā—by which; *swapnam*—dreaming; *bhayaṁ*—fearfulness; *śokaṁ*—lamentation; *viṣādaṁ*—moroseness; *madam*—illusion; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *na*—never; *vimuñcati*—one gives up; *durmedhā*—unintelligent; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *sā*—that; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *tāmasī*—in the mode of ignorance.

TRANSLATION

And that determination which cannot go beyond dreaming, fearfulness, lamentation, moroseness and illusion—such unintelligent determination, O son of Pṛthā, is in the mode of darkness.

PURPORT

It should not be concluded that a person in the mode of goodness does not dream. Here “dream” means too much sleep. Dreaming is always present; either in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance, dreaming is a natural occurrence. But those who cannot avoid oversleeping, who cannot avoid the pride of enjoying material objects, who are always dreaming of lording it over the material world, and whose life, mind and senses are thus engaged, are considered to have determination in the mode of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 36

*sukham tv idānīm tri-vidham
śṛṇu me bharatarṣabha
abhyāsād ramate yatra
duḥkhāntam ca nigacchati*

SYNONYMS

sukham—happiness; *tu*—but; *idānīm*—now; *tri-vidham*—of three kinds; *śṛṇu*—hear; *me*—from Me; *bharata-rṣabha*—O best amongst the Bhāratas; *abhyāsāt*—by practice; *ramate*—one enjoys; *yatra*—where; *duḥkha*—of distress; *antam*—the end; *ca*—also; *nigacchati*—gains.

TRANSLATION

O best of the Bhāratas, now please hear from Me about the three kinds of happiness by which the conditioned soul enjoys, and by which he sometimes comes to the end of all distress.

PURPORT

A conditioned soul tries to enjoy material happiness again and again. Thus he chews the chewed. But sometimes, in the course of such enjoyment, he becomes relieved from material entanglement by association with a great soul. In other words, a conditioned soul is always engaged in some type of sense gratification, but when he understands by good association that it is only a repetition of the same thing, and he is awakened to his real Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is sometimes relieved from such repetitive so-called happiness.

Chapter 18—Text 37

*yat tad agre viṣam iva
pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam
tat sukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam
ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam*

SYNONYMS

yat—which; *tat*—that; *agre*—in the beginning; *viṣam iva*—like poison; *pariṇāme*—at the end; *amṛta*—nectar; *upamam*—compared to; *tat*—that; *sukham*—happiness; *sāttvikam*—in the mode of goodness; *proktam*—is said; *ātma*—in the self; *buddhi*—of intelligence; *prasāda-jam*—born of the satisfaction.

TRANSLATION

That which in the beginning may be just like poison but at the end is just like nectar and which awakens one to self-realization is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness.

PURPORT

In the pursuit of self-realization, one has to follow many rules and regulations to control the mind and the senses and to concentrate the mind on the self. All these procedures are very difficult, bitter like poison, but if one is successful in following the regulations and comes to the transcendental position, he begins to drink real nectar, and he enjoys life.

Chapter 18—Text 38

*viṣayendriya-saṁyogād
yat tad agre 'mṛtopamam
pariṇāme viṣam iva
tat sukhaṁ rājasam smṛtam*

SYNONYMS

viṣaya—of the objects of the senses; *indriya*—and the senses; *saṁyogāt*—from the combination; *yat*—which; *tat*—that; *agre*—in the beginning; *amṛta-upamam*—just like nectar; *pariṇāme*—at the end; *viṣam iva*—like poison; *tat*—that; *sukham*—happiness; *rājasam*—in the mode of passion; *smṛtam*—is considered.

TRANSLATION

That happiness which is derived from contact of the senses with their objects and which appears like nectar at first but poison at the end is said to be of the nature of passion.

PURPORT

A young man and a young woman meet, and the senses drive the young man to see her, to touch her and to have sexual intercourse. In the beginning this may be very pleasing to the senses, but at the end, or after some time, it becomes just like poison. They are separated or there is divorce, there is lamentation, there is sorrow, etc. Such happiness is always in the mode of passion. Happiness derived from a combination of the senses and the sense objects is always a cause of distress and should be avoided by all means.

Chapter 18—Text 39

*yad agre cānubandhe ca
sukhaṁ mohanam ātmanaḥ
nidrālasya-pramādottham
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam*

SYNONYMS

yat—that which; *agre*—in the beginning; *ca*—also; *anubandhe*—at the end; *ca*—also; *sukham*—happiness; *mohanam*—illusory; *ātmanaḥ*—of the self; *nidrā*—sleep; *ālasya*—laziness; *pramāda*—and illusion; *uttham*—produced of; *tat*—that; *tāmasam*—in the mode of ignorance; *udāhṛtam*—is said to be.

TRANSLATION

And that happiness which is blind to self-realization, which is delusion from beginning to end and which arises from sleep, laziness and illusion is said to be of the nature of ignorance.

PURPORT

One who takes pleasure in laziness and in sleep is certainly in the mode of darkness, ignorance, and one who has no idea how to act and how not to act is also in the mode of ignorance. For the person in the mode of ignorance, everything is illusion. There is no happiness either in the beginning or at the end. For the person in the mode of passion there might be some kind of ephemeral happiness in the beginning and at the end distress, but for the person in the mode of ignorance there is only distress both in the beginning and at the end.

Chapter 18—Text 40

*na tad asti pṛthivyām vā
divi deveṣu vā punaḥ
sattvaṁ prakṛti-jaiḥ muktam
yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

na—not; *tad*—that; *asti*—there is; *pṛthivyām*—on the earth; *vā*—or; *divi*—in the higher planetary system; *deveṣu*—amongst the demigods; *vā*—or; *punaḥ*—again; *sattvaṁ*—existence; *prakṛti-jaiḥ*—born of material nature; *muktam*—liberated; *yad*—that; *ebhiḥ*—from the influence of these; *syāt*—is; *tribhiḥ*—three; *guṇaiḥ*—modes of material nature.

TRANSLATION

There is no being existing, either here or among the demigods in the higher planetary systems, which is freed from these three modes born of material nature.

PURPORT

The Lord here summarizes the total influence of the three modes of material nature all over the universe.

Chapter 18—Text 41

*brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśām
śūdrāṇām ca parantapa
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni
svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

brāhmaṇa—of the *brāhmaṇas*; *kṣatriya*—the *kṣatriyas*; *viśām*—and the *vaiśyas*; *śūdrāṇām*—of the *śūdras*; *ca*—and; *parantapa*—O subduer of the enemies; *karmāṇi*—the activities; *pravibhaktāni*—are divided; *svabhāva*—their own nature; *prabhavaiḥ*—born of; *guṇaiḥ*—by the modes of material nature.

TRANSLATION

Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are distinguished by the qualities born of their own natures in accordance with the material modes, O chastiser of the enemy.

Chapter 18—Text 42

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam
kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca
jñānam vijñānam āstikyam
brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

SYNONYMS

śamaḥ—peacefulness; *damaḥ*—self-control; *tapaḥ*—austerity; *śaucam*—purity; *kṣāntiḥ*—tolerance; *ārjavam*—honesty; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *jñānam*—knowledge; *vijñānam*—wisdom; *āstikyam*—religiousness; *brahma*—of a *brāhmaṇa*; *karma*—duty; *svabhāva-jam*—born of his own nature.

TRANSLATION

Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiousness—these are the natural qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work.

Chapter 18—Text 43

*śauryam tejo dhṛtir dākṣyam
yuddhe cāpy apalāyanam
dānam īśvara-bhāvaś ca
kṣātram karma svabhāva-jam*

SYNONYMS

śauryam—heroism; *tejaḥ*—power; *dhṛtiḥ*—determination; *dākṣyam*—resourcefulness; *yuddhe*—in battle; *ca*—and; *api*—also; *apalāyanam*—not fleeing; *dānam*—generosity; *īśvara*—of leadership; *bhāvaḥ*—the nature; *ca*—and; *kṣātram*—of a *kṣatriya*; *karma*—duty; *svabhāva-jam*—born of his own nature.

TRANSLATION

Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the natural qualities of work for the *kṣatriyas*.

Chapter 18—Text 44

*kṛṣi-go-rakṣya-vāṇijyam
vaiśya-karma svabhāva-jam
paricaryātmakam karma
śūdrasyāpi svabhāva-jam*

SYNONYMS

kṛṣi—plowing; *go*—of cows; *rakṣya*—protection; *vāṇijyam*—trade; *vaiśya*—of a *vaiśya*; *karma*—duty; *svabhāva-jam*—born of his own nature; *paricaryā*—service; *ātmakam*—consisting of; *karma*—duty; *śūdrasya*—of the *śūdra*; *api*—also; *svabhāva-jam*—born of his own nature.

TRANSLATION

Farming, cow protection and business are the natural work for the *vaiśyas*, and for the *śūdras* there is labor and service to others.

Chapter 18—Text 45

*sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ
saṁsiddhim labhate naraḥ
sva-karma-nirataḥ siddhim
yathā vindati tac chṛṇu*

SYNONYMS

sve sve—each his own; *karmaṇi*—work; *abhirataḥ*—following; *saṁsiddhim*—perfection; *labhate*—achieves; *naraḥ*—a man; *sva-karma*—in his own duty; *nirataḥ*—engaged; *siddhim*—perfection; *yathā*—as; *vindati*—attains; *tat*—that; *śṛṇu*—listen.

TRANSLATION

By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect. Now please hear from Me how this can be done.

Chapter 18—Text 46

*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya
siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yataḥ—from whom; *pravṛttiḥ*—the emanation; *bhūtānām*—of all living entities; *yena*—by whom; *sarvam*—all; *idaṁ*—this; *tatam*—is pervaded; *sva-karmaṇā*—by his own duties; *tam*—Him; *abhyarcya*—by worshiping; *siddhiṁ*—perfection; *vindati*—achieves; *mānavaḥ*—a man.

TRANSLATION

By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, a man can attain perfection through performing his own work.

PURPORT

As stated in the Fifteenth Chapter, all living beings are fragmental parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord. Thus the Supreme Lord is the beginning of all living entities. This is confirmed in the *Vedānta-sūtra*—*janmādy asya yataḥ* [SB 1.1.1]. The Supreme Lord is therefore the beginning of life of every living entity. And as stated in the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Lord, by His two energies, His external energy and internal energy, is all-pervading. Therefore one should worship the Supreme Lord with His energies. Generally the Vaiṣṇava devotees worship the Supreme Lord with His internal energy. His external energy is a perverted reflection of the internal energy. The external energy is a background, but the Supreme Lord by the expansion of His plenary portion as *Paramātmā* is situated everywhere. He is the Supersoul of all demigods, all human beings, all animals, everywhere. One should therefore know that as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord one has his duty to render service unto the Supreme. Everyone should be engaged in devotional service to the Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is recommended in this verse.

Everyone should think that he is engaged in a particular type of occupation by Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses. And by the result of the work in which one is engaged, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should be worshiped. If one thinks always in this way, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then, by the grace of the Lord, he becomes fully aware of everything. That is the perfection of life. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.7), *teṣāṁ ahaṁ samuddhartā*. The Supreme Lord Himself takes charge of delivering such a devotee. That is the highest perfection of life. In whatever occupation one may be engaged, if he serves the Supreme Lord he will achieve the highest perfection.

Chapter 18—Text 47

*śreyān sva-dharmaḥ viguṇaḥ
para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma
kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam*

SYNONYMS

śreyān—better; *sva-dharmaḥ*—one’s own occupation; *viguṇaḥ*—imperfectly performed; *para-dharmāt*—than another’s occupation; *sv-anuṣṭhitāt*—perfectly done; *svabhāva-niyataṁ*—prescribed according to one’s nature; *karma*—work; *kurvan*—performing; *na*—never; *āpnoti*—achieves; *kilbiṣam*—sinful reactions.

TRANSLATION

It is better to engage in one’s own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another’s occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one’s nature are never affected by sinful reactions.

PURPORT

One’s occupational duty is prescribed in *Bhagavad-gītā*. As already discussed in previous verses, the duties of a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra* are prescribed according to their particular modes of nature. One should not imitate another’s duty. A man who is by nature attracted to the kind of work done by *śūdras* should not artificially claim to be a *brāhmaṇa*, although he may have been born into a *brāhmaṇa* family. In this way one should work according to his own nature; no work is abominable, if performed in the service of the Supreme Lord. The occupational duty of a *brāhmaṇa* is certainly in the mode of goodness, but if a person is not by nature in the mode of goodness, he should not imitate the occupational duty of a *brāhmaṇa*. For a *kṣatriya*, or administrator, there are so many abominable things; a *kṣatriya* has to be violent to kill his enemies, and sometimes a *kṣatriya* has to tell lies for the sake of diplomacy. Such violence and duplicity accompany political affairs, but a *kṣatriya* is not supposed to give up his occupational duty and try to perform the duties of a *brāhmaṇa*.

One should act to satisfy the Supreme Lord. For example, Arjuna was a *kṣatriya*. He was hesitating to fight the other party. But if such fighting is performed for the sake of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there need be no fear of degradation. In the business field also, sometimes a merchant has to tell so many lies to make a profit. If he does not do so, there can be no profit. Sometimes a merchant says, “Oh, my dear customer, for you I am making no profit,” but one should know that without profit the merchant cannot exist. Therefore it should be taken as a simple lie if a merchant says that he is not making a profit. But the merchant should not think that because he is engaged in an occupation in which the telling of lies is compulsory, he should give up his profession and pursue the

profession of a *brāhmaṇa*. That is not recommended. Whether one is a *kṣatriya*, a *vaiśya*, or a *śūdra* doesn't matter, if he serves, by his work, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even *brāhmaṇas*, who perform different types of sacrifice, sometimes must kill animals because sometimes animals are sacrificed in such ceremonies. Similarly, if a *kṣatriya* engaged in his own occupation kills an enemy, there is no sin incurred. In the Third Chapter these matters have been clearly and elaborately explained; every man should work for the purpose of Yajña, or for Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Anything done for personal sense gratification is a cause of bondage. The conclusion is that everyone should be engaged according to the particular mode of nature he has acquired, and he should decide to work only to serve the supreme cause of the Supreme Lord.

Chapter 18—Text 48

*saha-jam karma kaunteya
sa-doṣam api na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa
dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ*

SYNONYMS

saha-jam—born simultaneously; *karma*—work; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *sa-doṣam*—with fault; *api*—although; *na*—never; *tyajet*—one should give up; *sarva-ārambhāḥ*—all ventures; *hi*—certainly; *doṣeṇa*—with fault; *dhūmena*—with smoke; *agniḥ*—fire; *iva*—as; *āvṛtāḥ*—covered.

TRANSLATION

Every endeavor is covered by some fault, just as fire is covered by smoke. Therefore one should not give up the work born of his nature, O son of Kuntī, even if such work is full of fault.

PURPORT

In conditioned life, all work is contaminated by the material modes of nature. Even if one is a *brāhmaṇa*, he has to perform sacrifices in which animal killing is necessary. Similarly, a *kṣatriya*, however pious he may be, has to fight enemies. He cannot avoid it. Similarly, a merchant, however pious he may be, must sometimes hide his profit to stay in business, or he may sometimes have to do business on the black market. These things are necessary; one cannot avoid them. Similarly, even though a man is a *śūdra* serving a bad master, he has to carry out the order of the master, even though it should not be done. Despite these flaws, one should continue to carry out his prescribed duties, for they are born out of his own nature.

A very nice example is given herein. Although fire is pure, still there is smoke. Yet smoke does not make the fire impure. Even though there is smoke in the fire, fire is still considered to be the purest of all elements. If one prefers to give up the work of a *kṣatriya* and take up the occupation of a *brāhmaṇa*, he is not assured that in the occupation of a *brāhmaṇa* there are no unpleasant duties. One may then conclude that in the material world no one can be completely free from the contamination of material nature. This example of fire and smoke is very appropriate in this connection. When in wintertime one takes a stone from the fire, sometimes smoke disturbs the eyes and other parts of the body, but still one must make use of the fire despite disturbing conditions. Similarly, one should not give up his natural occupation because there are some disturbing elements. Rather, one should be determined to serve the Supreme Lord by his occupational duty in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the perfectional point. When a particular type of occupation is performed for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, all the defects in that particular

occupation are purified. When the results of work are purified, when connected with devotional service, one becomes perfect in seeing the self within, and that is self-realization.

Chapter 18—Text 49

*asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra
jitātmā vigata-sprhaḥ
naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ paramāṁ
sannyāsenādhigacchati*

SYNONYMS

asakta-buddhiḥ—having unattached intelligence; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *jita-ātmā*—having control of the mind; *vigata-sprhaḥ*—without material desires; *naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ*—the perfection of nonreaction; *paramāṁ*—supreme; *sannyāsenā*—by the renounced order of life; *adhigacchati*—one attains.

TRANSLATION

One who is self-controlled and unattached and who disregards all material enjoyments can obtain, by practice of renunciation, the highest perfect stage of freedom from reaction.

PURPORT

Real renunciation means that one should always think himself part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and therefore think that he has no right to enjoy the results of his work. Since he is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, the results of his work must be enjoyed by the Supreme Lord. This is actually Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is really a *sannyāsī*, one in the renounced order of life. By such a mentality, one is satisfied because he is actually acting for the Supreme. Thus he is not attached to anything material; he becomes accustomed to not taking pleasure in anything beyond the transcendental happiness derived from the service of the Lord. A *sannyāsī* is supposed to be free from the reactions of his past activities, but a person who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness automatically attains this perfection without even accepting the so-called order of renunciation. This state of mind is called *yogārūḍha*, or the perfectional stage of *yoga*. As confirmed in the Third Chapter, *yas tv ātma-ratir eva syāt*: one who is satisfied in himself has no fear of any kind of reaction from his activity.

Chapter 18—Text 50

*siddhim prāpto yathā brahma
tathāpnoti nibodha me
samāsenaiiva kaunteya
niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā*

SYNONYMS

siddhim—perfection; *prāptaḥ*—achieving; *yathā*—as; *brahma*—the Supreme; *tathā*—so; *āpnoti*—one achieves; *nibodha*—try to understand; *me*—from Me; *samāsenā*—summarily; *eva*—certainly; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *niṣṭhā*—the stage; *jñānasya*—of knowledge; *yā*—which; *parā*—transcendental.

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, learn from Me how one who has achieved this perfection can attain to the supreme perfectional stage, Brahman, the stage of highest knowledge, by acting in the way I shall now summarize.

PURPORT

The Lord describes for Arjuna how one can achieve the highest perfectional stage simply by being engaged in his occupational duty, performing that duty for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One attains the supreme stage of Brahman simply by renouncing the result of his work for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. That is the process of self-realization. The actual perfection of knowledge is in attaining pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness; that is described in the following verses.

Chapter 18—Texts 51–53

*buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto
dhṛtyātmānam niyamya ca
śabdādīn viṣayāms tyaktvā
rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca*

*vivikta-sevī laghv-āśī
yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ
dhyāna-yoga-paro nityam
vairāgyam samupāśritaḥ*

*ahaṅkāram balaṁ darpaṁ
kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

SYNONYMS

buddhyā—with the intelligence; *viśuddhayā*—fully purified; *yuktaḥ*—engaged; *dhṛtyā*—by determination; *ātmānam*—the self; *niyamya*—regulating; *ca*—also; *śabda-ādīn*—such as sound; *viṣayān*—the sense objects; *tyaktvā*—giving up; *rāga*—attachment; *dveṣau*—and hatred; *vyudasya*—laying aside; *ca*—also; *vivikta-sevī*—living in a secluded place; *laghu-āśī*—eating a small quantity; *yata*—having controlled; *vāk*—speech; *kāya*—body; *mānasaḥ*—and mind; *dhyāna-yoga-paraḥ*—absorbed in trance; *nityam*—twenty-four hours a day; *vairāgyam*—detachment; *samupāśritaḥ*—having taken shelter of; *ahaṅkāram*—false ego; *balaṁ*—false strength; *darpaṁ*—false pride; *kāmaṁ*—lust; *krodhaṁ*—anger; *parigrahaṁ*—and acceptance of material things; *vimucya*—being delivered from; *nirmamaḥ*—without a sense of proprietorship; *śāntaḥ*—peaceful; *brahma-bhūyāya*—for self-realization; *kalpate*—is qualified.

TRANSLATION

Being purified by his intelligence and controlling the mind with determination, giving up the objects of sense gratification, being freed from attachment and hatred, one who lives in a secluded place, who eats little, who controls his body, mind and power of speech, who is always in trance and who is detached, free from false ego, false strength, false pride, lust, anger, and acceptance of material things, free from false proprietorship, and peaceful—such a person is certainly elevated to the position of self-realization.

PURPORT

When one is purified by intelligence, he keeps himself in the mode of goodness. Thus one becomes the controller of the mind and is always in trance. He is not attached to the objects of sense gratification, and he is free from attachment and hatred in his activities.

Such a detached person naturally prefers to live in a secluded place, he does not eat more than what he requires, and he controls the activities of his body and mind. He has no false ego because he does not accept the body as himself. Nor has he a desire to make the body fat and strong by accepting so many material things. Because he has no bodily concept of life, he is not falsely proud. He is satisfied with everything that is offered to him by the grace of the Lord, and he is never angry in the absence of sense gratification. Nor does he endeavor to acquire sense objects. Thus when he is completely free from false ego, he becomes nonattached to all material things, and that is the stage of self-realization of Brahman. That stage is called the *brahma-bhūta* stage. When one is free from the material conception of life, he becomes peaceful and cannot be agitated. This is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.70):

*āpūryamāṇam acala-ṭṭiṣṭham
samudram āpaḥ praviṣanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviṣanti sarve
sa śāntim āṇnoti na kāmā-kāmī*

“A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires.”

Chapter 18—Text 54

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

SYNONYMS

brahma-bhūtaḥ—being one with the Absolute; *prasanna-ātmā*—fully joyful; *na*—never; *śocati*—laments; *na*—never; *kāṅkṣati*—desires; *samaḥ*—equally disposed; *sarveṣu*—to all; *bhūteṣu*—living entities; *mat-bhaktiṁ*—My devotional service; *labhate*—gains; *parām*—transcendental.

TRANSLATION

One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.

PURPORT

To the impersonalist, achieving the *brahma-bhūta* stage, becoming one with the Absolute, is the last word. But for the personalist, or pure devotee, one has to go still further, to become engaged in pure devotional service. This means that one who is engaged in pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord is already in a state of liberation, called *brahma-bhūta*, oneness with the Absolute. Without being one with the Supreme, the Absolute, one cannot render service unto Him. In the absolute conception, there is no difference between the served and the servitor; yet the distinction is there, in a higher spiritual sense. In the material concept of life, when one works for sense gratification, there is misery, but in the absolute world, when one is engaged in pure devotional service, there is no misery. The devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has nothing for which to lament or desire. Since God is full, a living entity who is engaged in God's service, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, becomes also full in himself. He is just like a river cleansed of all dirty water. Because a pure devotee has no thought other than Kṛṣṇa, he is naturally always joyful. He does not lament for any material loss or aspire for gain, because he is full in the service of the Lord. He has no desire for material enjoyment, because he knows that every living entity is a fragmental part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and therefore eternally a servant. He does not see, in the material world, someone as higher and someone as lower; higher and lower positions are ephemeral, and a devotee has nothing to do with ephemeral appearances or disappearances. For him stone and gold are of equal value. This is the *brahma-bhūta* stage, and this stage is attained very easily by the pure devotee. In that stage of existence, the idea of becoming one with the Supreme Brahman and annihilating one's individuality becomes hellish, the idea of attaining the heavenly kingdom becomes phantasmagoria, and

the senses are like serpents' teeth that are broken. As there is no fear of a serpent with broken teeth, there is no fear from the senses when they are automatically controlled. The world is miserable for the materially infected person, but for a devotee the entire world is as good as Vaikuṇṭha, or the spiritual sky. The highest personality in this material universe is no more significant than an ant for a devotee. Such a stage can be achieved by the mercy of Lord Caitanya, who preached pure devotional service in this age.

Chapter 18—Text 55

*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantaram*

SYNONYMS

bhaktyā—by pure devotional service; *mām*—Me; *abhijānāti*—one can know; *yāvān*—as much as; *yaś ca asmi*—as I am; *tattvataḥ*—in truth; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *mām*—Me; *tattvataḥ*—in truth; *jñātvā*—knowing; *viśate*—he enters; *tat-anantaram*—thereafter.

TRANSLATION

One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.

PURPORT

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His plenary portions cannot be understood by mental speculation nor by the nondevotees. If anyone wants to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he has to take to pure devotional service under the guidance of a pure devotee. Otherwise, the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead will always be hidden. As already stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.25), *nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya*: He is not revealed to everyone. No one can understand God simply by erudite scholarship or mental speculation. Only one who is actually engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service can understand what Kṛṣṇa is. University degrees are not helpful. One who is fully conversant with the Kṛṣṇa science becomes eligible to enter into the spiritual kingdom, the abode of Kṛṣṇa. Becoming Brahman does not mean that one loses his identity. Devotional service is there, and as long as devotional service exists, there must be God, the devotee, and the process of devotional service. Such knowledge is never vanquished, even after liberation. Liberation involves getting free from the concept of material life; in spiritual life the same distinction is there, the same individuality is there, but in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should not mistakenly think that the word *viśate*, “enters into Me,” supports the monist theory that one becomes homogeneous with the impersonal Brahman. No. *Viśate* means that one can enter into the abode of the Supreme Lord in one’s individuality to engage in His association and render service unto Him. For instance, a green bird enters a green tree not to become one with the tree but to enjoy the fruits of the tree. Impersonalists generally give the example of a river flowing into the ocean and merging. This may be a source of happiness for the impersonalist, but the personalist keeps his personal individuality like an aquatic in the ocean. We find so many living entities within the ocean, if we go deep. Surface acquaintance with the ocean is not

sufficient; one must have complete knowledge of the aquatics living in the ocean depths. Because of his pure devotional service, a devotee can understand the transcendental qualities and the opulences of the Supreme Lord in truth. As it is stated in the Eleventh Chapter, only by devotional service can one understand. The same is confirmed here; one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by devotional service and enter into His kingdom.

After attainment of the *brahma-bhūta* stage of freedom from material conceptions, devotional service begins by one's hearing about the Lord. When one hears about the Supreme Lord, automatically the *brahma-bhūta* stage develops, and material contamination—greediness and lust for sense enjoyment—disappears. As lust and desires disappear from the heart of a devotee, he becomes more attached to the service of the Lord, and by such attachment he becomes free from material contamination. In that state of life he can understand the Supreme Lord. This is the statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also. After liberation the process of *bhakti*, or transcendental service, continues. The *Vedānta-sūtra* (4.1.12) confirms this: *ā-prāyaṇāt tatrāpi hi dṛṣṭam*. This means that after liberation the process of devotional service continues. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, real devotional liberation is defined as the reinstatement of the living entity in his own identity, his own constitutional position. The constitutional position is already explained: every living entity is a part-and-parcel fragmental portion of the Supreme Lord. Therefore his constitutional position is to serve. After liberation, this service is never stopped. Actual liberation is getting free from misconceptions of life.

Chapter 18—Text 56

*sarva-karmāṇy api sadā
kurvāṇo mad-vyapāśrayaḥ
mat-prasādād avāpnoti
śāśvatam padam avyayam*

SYNONYMS

sarva—all; *karmāṇi*—activities; *api*—although; *sadā*—always; *kurvāṇaḥ*—performing; *mat-vyapāśrayaḥ*—under My protection; *mat-prasādāt*—by My mercy; *avāpnoti*—one achieves; *śāśvatam*—the eternal; *padam*—abode; *avyayam*—imperishable.

TRANSLATION

Though engaged in all kinds of activities, My pure devotee, under My protection, reaches the eternal and imperishable abode by My grace.

PURPORT

The word *mad-vyapāśrayaḥ* means under the protection of the Supreme Lord. To be free from material contamination, a pure devotee acts under the direction of the Supreme Lord or His representative, the spiritual master. There is no time limitation for a pure devotee. He is always, twenty-four hours a day, one hundred percent engaged in activities under the direction of the Supreme Lord. To a devotee who is thus engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness the Lord is very, very kind. In spite of all difficulties, he is eventually placed in the transcendental abode, or Kṛṣṇaloka. He is guaranteed entrance there; there is no doubt about it. In that supreme abode, there is no change; everything is eternal, imperishable and full of knowledge.

Chapter 18—Text 57

*cetasā sarva-karmāṇi
mayi sannyasya mat-paraḥ
buddhi-yogam upāśritya
mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhava*

SYNONYMS

cetasā—by intelligence; *sarva-karmāṇi*—all kinds of activities; *mayi*—unto Me; *sannyasya*—giving up; *mat-paraḥ*—under My protection; *buddhi-yogam*—devotional activities; *upāśritya*—taking shelter of; *mac-cittaḥ*—in consciousness of Me; *satatam*—twenty-four hours a day; *bhava*—just become.

TRANSLATION

In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me.

PURPORT

When one acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he does not act as the master of the world. Just like a servant, one should act fully under the direction of the Supreme Lord. A servant has no individual independence. He acts only on the order of the master. A servant acting on behalf of the supreme master is unaffected by profit and loss. He simply discharges his duty faithfully in terms of the order of the Lord. Now, one may argue that Arjuna was acting under the personal direction of Kṛṣṇa but when Kṛṣṇa is not present how should one act? If one acts according to the direction of Kṛṣṇa in this book, as well as under the guidance of the representative of Kṛṣṇa, then the result will be the same. The Sanskrit word *mat-paraḥ* is very important in this verse. It indicates that one has no goal in life save and except acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness just to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. And while working in that way, one should think of Kṛṣṇa only: “I have been appointed to discharge this particular duty by Kṛṣṇa.” While acting in such a way, one naturally has to think of Kṛṣṇa. This is perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should, however, note that after doing something whimsically he should not offer the result to the Supreme Lord. That sort of duty is not in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should act according to the order of Kṛṣṇa. This is a very important point. That order of Kṛṣṇa comes through disciplic succession from the bona fide spiritual master. Therefore the spiritual master’s order should be taken as the prime duty of life. If one gets a bona fide spiritual master and acts according to his direction, then one’s perfection of life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is guaranteed.

Chapter 18—Text 58

*mac-cittaḥ sarva-durgāṇi
mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi
atha cet tvam ahaṅkārān
na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi*

SYNONYMS

mat—of Me; *cittaḥ*—being in consciousness; *sarva*—all; *durgāṇi*—impediments; *mat-prasādāt*—by My mercy; *tariṣyasi*—you will overcome; *atha*—but; *cet*—if; *tvam*—you; *ahaṅkārāt*—by false ego; *na śroṣyasi*—do not hear; *vinaṅkṣyasi*—you will be lost.

TRANSLATION

If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost.

PURPORT

A person in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not unduly anxious about executing the duties of his existence. The foolish cannot understand this great freedom from all anxiety. For one who acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes the most intimate friend. He always looks after His friend's comfort, and He gives Himself to His friend, who is so devotedly engaged working twenty-four hours a day to please the Lord. Therefore, no one should be carried away by the false ego of the bodily concept of life. One should not falsely think himself independent of the laws of material nature or free to act. He is already under strict material laws. But as soon as he acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he is liberated, free from the material perplexities. One should note very carefully that one who is not active in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is losing himself in the material whirlpool, in the ocean of birth and death. No conditioned soul actually knows what is to be done and what is not to be done, but a person who acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is free to act because everything is prompted by Kṛṣṇa from within and confirmed by the spiritual master.

Chapter 18—Text 59

*yad ahaṅkāram āśritya
na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiṣa vyavasāyas te
prakṛtis tvām niyokṣyati*

SYNONYMS

yat—if; *ahaṅkāram*—of false ego; *āśritya*—taking shelter; *na yotsye*—I shall not fight; *iti*—thus; *manyase*—you think; *mithyā eṣaḥ*—this is all false; *vyavasāyaḥ*—determination; *te*—your; *prakṛtiḥ*—material nature; *tvām*—you; *niyokṣyati*—will engage.

TRANSLATION

If you do not act according to My direction and do not fight, then you will be falsely directed. By your nature, you will have to be engaged in warfare.

PURPORT

Arjuna was a military man, and born of the nature of the *kṣatriya*. Therefore his natural duty was to fight. But due to false ego he was fearing that by killing his teacher, grandfather and friends he would incur sinful reactions. Actually he was considering himself master of his actions, as if he were directing the good and bad results of such work. He forgot that the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present there, instructing him to fight. That is the forgetfulness of the conditioned soul. The Supreme Personality gives directions as to what is good and what is bad, and one simply has to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to attain the perfection of life. No one can ascertain his destiny as the Supreme Lord can; therefore the best course is to take direction from the Supreme Lord and act. No one should neglect the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or the order of the spiritual master, who is the representative of God. One should act unhesitatingly to execute the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—that will keep one safe under all circumstances.

Chapter 18—Text 60

*svabhāva-jena kaunteya
nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yaṁ mohāt
kariṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat*

SYNONYMS

svabhāva-jena—born of your own nature; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *nibaddhaḥ*—conditioned; *svena*—by your own; *karmaṇā*—activities; *kartuṁ*—to do; *na*—not; *icchasi*—you like; *yaṁ*—that which; *mohāt*—by illusion; *kariṣyasi*—you will do; *avaśaḥ*—involuntarily; *api*—even; *tat*—that.

TRANSLATION

Under illusion you are now declining to act according to My direction. But, compelled by the work born of your own nature, you will act all the same, O son of Kuntī.

PURPORT

If one refuses to act under the direction of the Supreme Lord, then he is compelled to act by the modes in which he is situated. Everyone is under the spell of a particular combination of the modes of nature and is acting in that way. But anyone who voluntarily engages himself under the direction of the Supreme Lord becomes glorious.

Chapter 18—Text 61

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

SYNONYMS

īśvaraḥ—the Supreme Lord; *sarva-bhūtānām*—of all living entities; *hṛt-deśe*—in the location of the heart; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *tiṣṭhati*—resides; *bhrāmayan*—causing to travel; *sarva-bhūtāni*—all living entities; *yantra*—on a machine; *ārūḍhani*—being placed; *māyayā*—under the spell of material energy.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.

PURPORT

Arjuna was not the supreme knower, and his decision to fight or not to fight was confined to his limited discretion. Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed that the individual is not all in all. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, or He Himself, Kṛṣṇa, as the localized Supersoul, sits in the heart directing the living being. After changing bodies, the living entity forgets his past deeds, but the Supersoul, as the knower of the past, present and future, remains the witness of all his activities. Therefore all the activities of living entities are directed by this Supersoul. The living entity gets what he deserves and is carried by the material body, which is created in the material energy under the direction of the Supersoul. As soon as a living entity is placed in a particular type of body, he has to work under the spell of that bodily situation. A person seated in a high-speed motorcar goes faster than one seated in a slower car, though the living entities, the drivers, may be the same. Similarly, by the order of the Supreme Soul, material nature fashions a particular type of body to a particular type of living entity so that he may work according to his past desires. The living entity is not independent. One should not think himself independent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The individual is always under the Lord's control. Therefore one's duty is to surrender, and that is the injunction of the next verse.

Chapter 18—Text 62

*tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha
sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ
sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam*

SYNONYMS

tam—unto Him; *eva*—certainly; *śaraṇaṁ gaccha*—surrender; *sarva-bhāvena*—in all respects; *bhārata*—O son of Bharata; *tat-prasādāt*—by His grace; *parāṁ*—transcendental; *śāntiṁ*—peace; *sthānaṁ*—the abode; *prāpsyasi*—you will get; *śāśvatam*—eternal.

TRANSLATION

O scion of Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme and eternal abode.

PURPORT

A living entity should therefore surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in everyone's heart, and that will relieve him from all kinds of miseries of this material existence. By such surrender, not only will one be released from all miseries in this life, but at the end he will reach the Supreme God. The transcendental world is described in the Vedic literature (*Ṛg Veda* 1.22.20) as *tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*. Since all of creation is the kingdom of God, everything material is actually spiritual, but *paramaṁ padam* specifically refers to the eternal abode, which is called the spiritual sky or Vaikuṇṭha.

In the Fifteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* it is stated, *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ*: the Lord is seated in everyone's heart. So this recommendation that one should surrender unto the Supersoul sitting within means that one should surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has already been accepted by Arjuna as the Supreme. He was accepted in the Tenth Chapter as *param brahma param dhāma*. Arjuna has accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the supreme abode of all living entities, not only because of his personal experience but also because of the evidence of great authorities like Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa.

Chapter 18—Text 63

*iti te jñānam ākhyātam
guhyād guhyataram mayā
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa
yathecchasi tathā kuru*

SYNONYMS

iti—thus; *te*—unto you; *jñānam*—knowledge; *ākhyātam*—described; *guhyāt*—than confidential; *guhya-taram*—still more confidential; *mayā*—by Me; *vimṛśya*—deliberating; *etat*—on this; *aśeṣeṇa*—fully; *yathā*—as; *icchasi*—you like; *tathā*—that; *kuru*—perform.

TRANSLATION

Thus I have explained to you knowledge still more confidential. Deliberate on this fully, and then do what you wish to do.

PURPORT

The Lord has already explained to Arjuna the knowledge of *brahma-bhūta*. One who is in the *brahma-bhūta* condition is joyful; he never laments, nor does he desire anything. That is due to confidential knowledge. Kṛṣṇa also discloses knowledge of the Supersoul. This is also Brahman knowledge, knowledge of Brahman, but it is superior.

Here the words *yathecchasi tathā kuru*—“As you like, you may act”—indicate that God does not interfere with the little independence of the living entity. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord has explained in all respects how one can elevate his living condition. The best advice imparted to Arjuna is to surrender unto the Supersoul seated within his heart. By right discrimination, one should agree to act according to the order of the Supersoul. That will help one become situated constantly in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the highest perfectional stage of human life. Arjuna is being directly ordered by the Personality of Godhead to fight. Surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is in the best interest of the living entities. It is not for the interest of the Supreme. Before surrendering, one is free to deliberate on this subject as far as the intelligence goes; that is the best way to accept the instruction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such instruction comes also through the spiritual master, the bona fide representative of Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 18—Text 64

*sarva-guhyatamam bhūyaḥ
śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ
iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti
tato vakṣyāmi te hitam*

SYNONYMS

sarva-guhyatamam—the most confidential of all; *bhūyaḥ*—again; *śṛṇu*—just hear; *me*—from Me; *paramam*—the supreme; *vacaḥ*—instruction; *iṣṭaḥ asi*—you are dear; *me*—to Me; *dṛḍham*—very; *iti*—thus; *tataḥ*—therefore; *vakṣyāmi*—I am speaking; *te*—for your; *hitam*—benefit.

TRANSLATION

Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you My supreme instruction, the most confidential knowledge of all. Hear this from Me, for it is for your benefit.

PURPORT

The Lord has given Arjuna knowledge that is confidential (knowledge of Brahman) and still more confidential (knowledge of the Supersoul within everyone's heart), and now He is giving the most confidential part of knowledge: just surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At the end of the Ninth Chapter He has said, *man-manāḥ*: "Just always think of Me." The same instruction is repeated here to stress the essence of the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*. This essence is not understood by a common man, but by one who is actually very dear to Kṛṣṇa, a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This is the most important instruction in all Vedic literature. What Kṛṣṇa is saying in this connection is the most essential part of knowledge, and it should be carried out not only by Arjuna but by all living entities.

Chapter 18—Text 65

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me*

SYNONYMS

mat-manāḥ—thinking of Me; *bhava*—just become; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotee; *mat-yājī*—My worshiper; *mām*—unto Me; *namaskuru*—offer your obeisances; *mām*—unto Me; *eva*—certainly; *eṣyasi*—you will come; *satyaṁ*—truly; *te*—to you; *pratijāne*—I promise; *priyaḥ*—dear; *asi*—you are; *me*—to Me.

TRANSLATION

Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.

PURPORT

The most confidential part of knowledge is that one should become a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and always think of Him and act for Him. One should not become an official meditator. Life should be so molded that one will always have the chance to think of Kṛṣṇa. One should always act in such a way that all his daily activities are in connection with Kṛṣṇa. He should arrange his life in such a way that throughout the twenty-four hours he cannot but think of Kṛṣṇa. And the Lord's promise is that anyone who is in such pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness will certainly return to the abode of Kṛṣṇa, where he will be engaged in the association of Kṛṣṇa face to face. This most confidential part of knowledge is spoken to Arjuna because he is the dear friend of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone who follows the path of Arjuna can become a dear friend to Kṛṣṇa and obtain the same perfection as Arjuna.

These words stress that one should concentrate his mind upon Kṛṣṇa—the very form with two hands carrying a flute, the bluish boy with a beautiful face and peacock feathers in His hair. There are descriptions of Kṛṣṇa found in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* and other literatures. One should fix his mind on this original form of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. One should not even divert his attention to other forms of the Lord. The Lord has multiforms as Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Rāma, Varāha, etc., but a devotee should concentrate his mind on the form that was present before Arjuna. Concentration of the mind on the form of Kṛṣṇa constitutes the most confidential part of knowledge, and this is disclosed to Arjuna because Arjuna is the most dear friend of Kṛṣṇa's.

Chapter 18—Text 66

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

SYNONYMS

sarva-dharmān—all varieties of religion; *parityajya*—abandoning; *mām*—unto Me; *ekaṁ*—only; *śaraṇaṁ*—for surrender; *vraja*—go; *ahaṁ*—I; *tvām*—you; *sarva*—all; *pāpēbhyah*—from sinful reactions; *mokṣayiṣyāmi*—will deliver; *mā*—do not; *śucaḥ*—worry.

TRANSLATION

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.

PURPORT

The Lord has described various kinds of knowledge and processes of religion—knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, knowledge of the Supersoul, knowledge of the different types of orders and statuses of social life, knowledge of the renounced order of life, knowledge of nonattachment, sense and mind control, meditation, etc. He has described in so many ways different types of religion. Now, in summarizing *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that Arjuna should give up all the processes that have been explained to him; he should simply surrender to Kṛṣṇa. That surrender will save him from all kinds of sinful reactions, for the Lord personally promises to protect him.

In the Seventh Chapter it was said that only one who has become free from all sinful reactions can take to the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus one may think that unless he is free from all sinful reactions he cannot take to the surrendering process. To such doubts it is here said that even if one is not free from all sinful reactions, simply by the process of surrendering to Śrī Kṛṣṇa he is automatically freed. There is no need of strenuous effort to free oneself from sinful reactions. One should unhesitatingly accept Kṛṣṇa as the supreme savior of all living entities. With faith and love, one should surrender unto Him.

The process of surrender to Kṛṣṇa is described in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.676):

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ
prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso
goptṛtve varanaṁ tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye
ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ*

According to the devotional process, one should simply accept such religious principles

that will lead ultimately to the devotional service of the Lord. One may perform a particular occupational duty according to his position in the social order, but if by executing his duty one does not come to the point of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all his activities are in vain. Anything that does not lead to the perfectional stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be avoided. One should be confident that in all circumstances Kṛṣṇa will protect him from all difficulties. There is no need of thinking how one should keep the body and soul together. Kṛṣṇa will see to that. One should always think himself helpless and should consider Kṛṣṇa the only basis for his progress in life. As soon as one seriously engages himself in devotional service to the Lord in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, at once he becomes freed from all contamination of material nature. There are different processes of religion and purificatory processes by cultivation of knowledge, meditation in the mystic yoga system, etc., but one who surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa does not have to execute so many methods. That simple surrender unto Kṛṣṇa will save him from unnecessarily wasting time. One can thus make all progress at once and be freed from all sinful reactions.

One should be attracted by the beautiful vision of Kṛṣṇa. His name is Kṛṣṇa because He is all-attractive. One who becomes attracted by the beautiful, all-powerful, omnipotent vision of Kṛṣṇa is fortunate. There are different kinds of transcendentalists—some of them are attached to the impersonal Brahman vision, some of them are attracted by the Supersoul feature, etc., but one who is attracted to the personal feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and, above all, one who is attracted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Kṛṣṇa Himself, is the most perfect transcendentalist. In other words, devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, in full consciousness, is the most confidential part of knowledge, and this is the essence of the whole *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Karma-yogīs*, empiric philosophers, mystics and devotees are all called transcendentalists, but one who is a pure devotee is the best of all. The particular words used here, *mā śucaḥ*, “Don’t fear, don’t hesitate, don’t worry,” are very significant. One may be perplexed as to how one can give up all kinds of religious forms and simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa, but such worry is useless.

Chapter 18—Text 67

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya
nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam
na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati*

SYNONYMS

idaṁ—this; *te*—by you; *na*—never; *atapaskāya*—to one who is not austere; *na*—never; *abhaktāya*—to one who is not a devotee; *kadācana*—at any time; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *āśuśrūṣave*—to one who is not engaged in devotional service; *vācyam*—to be spoken; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *mām*—toward Me; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *abhyasūyati*—is envious.

TRANSLATION

This confidential knowledge may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me.

PURPORT

Persons who have not undergone the austerities of the religious process, who have never attempted devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, who have not tended a pure devotee, and especially those who are conscious of Kṛṣṇa only as a historical personality or who are envious of the greatness of Kṛṣṇa should not be told this most confidential part of knowledge. It is, however, sometimes found that even demoniac persons who are envious of Kṛṣṇa, worshiping Kṛṣṇa in a different way, take to the profession of explaining *Bhagavad-gītā* in a different way to make business, but anyone who desires actually to understand Kṛṣṇa must avoid such commentaries on *Bhagavad-gītā*. Actually the purpose of *Bhagavad-gītā* is not understandable to those who are sensuous. Even if one is not sensuous but is strictly following the disciplines enjoined in the Vedic scripture, if he is not a devotee he also cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. And even when one poses himself as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa but is not engaged in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, he also cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. There are many persons who envy Kṛṣṇa because He has explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* that He is the Supreme and that nothing is above Him or equal to Him. There are many persons who are envious of Kṛṣṇa. Such persons should not be told of *Bhagavad-gītā*, for they cannot understand. There is no possibility of faithless persons' understanding *Bhagavad-gītā* and Kṛṣṇa. Without understanding Kṛṣṇa from the authority of a pure devotee, one should not try to comment upon *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Chapter 18—Text 68

*ya idam paramam guhyam
mad-bhaktesu abhidhāsyati
bhaktim mayi parām kṛtvā
mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yaḥ—anyone who; *idam*—this; *paramam*—most; *guhyam*—confidential secret; *mat*—of Mine; *bhaktesu*—amongst devotees; *abhidhāsyati*—explains; *bhaktim*—devotional service; *mayi*—unto Me; *parām*—transcendental; *kṛtvā*—doing; *mām*—unto Me; *eva*—certainly; *eṣyati*—comes; *asaṁśayaḥ*—without doubt.

TRANSLATION

For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me.

PURPORT

Generally it is advised that *Bhagavad-gītā* be discussed amongst the devotees only, for those who are not devotees will understand neither Kṛṣṇa nor *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who do not accept Kṛṣṇa as He is and *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is should not try to explain *Bhagavad-gītā* whimsically and become offenders. *Bhagavad-gītā* should be explained to persons who are ready to accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is a subject matter for the devotees only and not for philosophical speculators. Anyone, however, who tries sincerely to present *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is will advance in devotional activities and reach the pure devotional state of life. As a result of such pure devotion, he is sure to go back home, back to Godhead.

Chapter 18—Text 69

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu
kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmād
anyaḥ priyataro bhuvi*

SYNONYMS

na—never; *ca*—and; *tasmāt*—than him; *manuṣyeṣu*—among men; *kaścit*—anyone; *me*—to Me; *priya-kṛt-tamaḥ*—more dear; *bhavitā*—will become; *na*—nor; *ca*—and; *me*—to Me; *tasmāt*—than him; *anyaḥ*—another; *priya-taraḥ*—dearer; *bhuvi*—in this world.

TRANSLATION

There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.

Chapter 18—Text 70

*adhyeṣyate ca ya imam
dharmyaṁ saṁvādam āvayoḥ
jñāna-yajñena tenāham
iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ*

SYNONYMS

adhyeṣyate—will study; *ca*—also; *yaḥ*—he who; *imam*—this; *dharmyam*—sacred; *saṁvādam*—conversation; *āvayoḥ*—of ours; *jñāna*—of knowledge; *yajñena*—by the sacrifice; *tena*—by him; *aham*—I; *iṣṭaḥ*—worshiped; *syām*—shall be; *iti*—thus; *me*—My; *matiḥ*—opinion.

TRANSLATION

And I declare that he who studies this sacred conversation of ours worships Me by his intelligence.

Chapter 18—Text 71

*śraddhāvān anasūyaś ca
śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ
so 'pi muktaḥ śubhāl lokān
prāpnuyāt puṇya-karmaṇām*

SYNONYMS

śraddhā-vān—faithful; *anasūyaḥ*—not envious; *ca*—and; *śṛṇuyāt*—does hear; *api*—certainly; *yaḥ*—who; *naraḥ*—a man; *saḥ*—he; *api*—also; *muktaḥ*—being liberated; *śubhān*—the auspicious; *lokān*—planets; *prāpnuyāt*—he attains; *puṇya-karmaṇām*—of the pious.

TRANSLATION

And one who listens with faith and without envy becomes free from sinful reactions and attains to the auspicious planets where the pious dwell.

PURPORT

In the sixty-seventh verse of this chapter, the Lord explicitly forbade the *Gītā*'s being spoken to those who are envious of the Lord. In other words, *Bhagavad-gītā* is for the devotees only. But it so happens that sometimes a devotee of the Lord will hold open class, and in that class not all the students are expected to be devotees. Why do such persons hold open class? It is explained here that although not everyone is a devotee, still there are many men who are not envious of Kṛṣṇa. They have faith in Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If such persons hear from a bona fide devotee about the Lord, the result is that they become at once free from all sinful reactions and after that attain to the planetary system where all righteous persons are situated. Therefore simply by hearing *Bhagavad-gītā*, even a person who does not try to be a pure devotee attains the result of righteous activities. Thus a pure devotee of the Lord gives everyone a chance to become free from all sinful reactions and to become a devotee of the Lord.

Generally those who are free from sinful reactions, those who are righteous, very easily take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The word *puṇya-karmaṇām* is very significant here. This refers to the performance of great sacrifices, like the *aśvamedha-yajña*, mentioned in the Vedic literature. Those who are righteous in performing devotional service but who are not pure can attain the planetary system of the polestar, or Dhruvaloka, where Dhruva Mahārāja is presiding. He is a great devotee of the Lord, and he has a special planet, which is called the polestar.

Chapter 18—Text 72

*kaccid etac chrutaṁ pārtha
tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccid ajñāna-sammohaḥ
praṇaṣṭas te dhanañjaya*

SYNONYMS

kaccit—whether; *etat*—this; *śrutam*—heard; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *tvayā*—by you; *eka-agreṇa*—with full attention; *cetasā*—by the mind; *kaccit*—whether; *ajñāna*—of ignorance; *sammohaḥ*—the illusion; *praṇaṣṭaḥ*—dispelled; *te*—of you; *dhanañjaya*—O conqueror of wealth (Arjuna).

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, O conqueror of wealth, have you heard this with an attentive mind? And are your ignorance and illusions now dispelled?

PURPORT

The Lord was acting as the spiritual master of Arjuna. Therefore it was His duty to inquire from Arjuna whether he understood the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* in its proper perspective. If not, the Lord was ready to re-explain any point, or the whole *Bhagavad-gītā* if so required. Actually, anyone who hears *Bhagavad-gītā* from a bona fide spiritual master like Kṛṣṇa or His representative will find that all his ignorance is dispelled. *Bhagavad-gītā* is not an ordinary book written by a poet or fiction writer; it is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Any person fortunate enough to hear these teachings from Kṛṣṇa or from His bona fide spiritual representative is sure to become a liberated person and get out of the darkness of ignorance.

Chapter 18—Text 73

arjuna uvāca
naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā
tvat-prasādān mayācyuta
sthito 'smi gata-sandehaḥ
kariṣye vacanam tava

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *naṣṭaḥ*—dispelled; *mohaḥ*—illusion; *smṛtiḥ*—memory; *labdhā*—regained; *tvat-prasādāt*—by Your mercy; *mayā*—by me; *acyuta*—O infallible Kṛṣṇa; *sthitaḥ*—situated; *asmi*—I am; *gata*—removed; *sandehaḥ*—all doubts; *kariṣye*—I shall execute; *vacanam*—order; *tava*—Your.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna said: My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy. I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions.

PURPORT

The constitutional position of a living entity, represented by Arjuna, is that he has to act according to the order of the Supreme Lord. He is meant for self-discipline. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that the actual position of the living entity is that of eternal servant of the Supreme Lord. Forgetting this principle, the living entity becomes conditioned by material nature, but in serving the Supreme Lord he becomes the liberated servant of God. The living entity's constitutional position is to be a servitor; he has to serve either the illusory *māyā* or the Supreme Lord. If he serves the Supreme Lord he is in his normal condition, but if he prefers to serve the illusory, external energy, then certainly he will be in bondage. In illusion the living entity is serving in this material world. He is bound by his lust and desires, yet he thinks of himself as the master of the world. This is called illusion. When a person is liberated, his illusion is over, and he voluntarily surrenders unto the Supreme to act according to His desires. The last illusion, the last snare of *māyā* to trap the living entity, is the proposition that he is God. The living entity thinks that he is no longer a conditioned soul, but God. He is so unintelligent that he does not think that if he were God, then how could he be in doubt? That he does not consider. So that is the last snare of illusion. Actually to become free from the illusory energy is to understand Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and agree to act according to His order.

The word *moha* is very important in this verse. *Moha* refers to that which is opposed to knowledge. Actually real knowledge is the understanding that every living being is eternally a servitor of the Lord, but instead of thinking oneself in that position, the living entity thinks that he is not a servant, that he is the master of this material world, for he

wants to lord it over the material nature. That is his illusion. This illusion can be overcome by the mercy of the Lord or by the mercy of a pure devotee. When that illusion is over, one agrees to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is acting according to Kṛṣṇa's order. A conditioned soul, illusioned by the external energy of matter, does not know that the Supreme Lord is the master who is full of knowledge and who is the proprietor of everything. Whatever He desires He can bestow upon His devotees; He is the friend of everyone, and He is especially inclined to His devotee. He is the controller of this material nature and of all living entities. He is also the controller of inexhaustible time, and He is full of all opulences and all potencies. The Supreme Personality of Godhead can even give Himself to the devotee. One who does not know Him is under the spell of illusion; he does not become a devotee, but a servitor of *māyā*. Arjuna, however, after hearing *Bhagavad-gītā* from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, became free from all illusion. He could understand that Kṛṣṇa was not only his friend but the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And he understood Kṛṣṇa factually. So to study *Bhagavad-gītā* is to understand Kṛṣṇa factually. When a person is in full knowledge, he naturally surrenders to Kṛṣṇa. When Arjuna understood that it was Kṛṣṇa's plan to reduce the unnecessary increase of population, he agreed to fight according to Kṛṣṇa's desire. He again took up his weapons—his arrows and bow—to fight under the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 18—Text 74

*sañjaya uvāca
ity ahaṁ vāsudevasya
pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ
saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam
adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam*

SYNONYMS

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; *iti*—thus; *aham*—I; *vāsudevasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *pārthasya*—and Arjuna; *ca*—also; *mahā-ātmanaḥ*—of the great soul; *saṁvādam*—discussion; *imam*—this; *aśrauṣam*—have heard; *adbhutam*—wonderful; *roma-harṣaṇam*—making the hair stand on end.

TRANSLATION

Sañjaya said: Thus have I heard the conversation of two great souls, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. And so wonderful is that message that my hair is standing on end.

PURPORT

In the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Dhṛtarāṣṭra inquired from his secretary Sañjaya, “What happened on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra?” The entire study was related to the heart of Sañjaya by the grace of his spiritual master, Vyāsa. He thus explained the theme of the battlefield. The conversation was wonderful because such an important conversation between two great souls had never taken place before and would not take place again. It was wonderful because the Supreme Personality of Godhead was speaking about Himself and His energies to the living entity, Arjuna, a great devotee of the Lord. If we follow in the footsteps of Arjuna to understand Kṛṣṇa, then our life will be happy and successful. Sañjaya realized this, and as he began to understand it, he related the conversation to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Now it is concluded that wherever there is Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, there is victory.

Chapter 18—Text 75

*vyāsa-prasādāc chrutavān
etat guhyam ahaṁ param
yogaṁ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt
sākṣāt kathayataḥ svayam*

SYNONYMS

vyāsa-prasādāt—by the mercy of Vyāsadeva; *śrutavān*—have heard; *etat*—this; *guhyam*—confidential; *ahaṁ*—I; *param*—the supreme; *yogaṁ*—mysticism; *yoga-īśvarāt*—from the master of all mysticism; *kṛṣṇāt*—from Kṛṣṇa; *sākṣāt*—directly; *kathayataḥ*—speaking; *svayam*—personally.

TRANSLATION

By the mercy of Vyāsa, I have heard these most confidential talks directly from the master of all mysticism, Kṛṣṇa, who was speaking personally to Arjuna.

PURPORT

Vyāsa was the spiritual master of Sañjaya, and Sañjaya admits that it was by Vyāsa’s mercy that he could understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This means that one has to understand Kṛṣṇa not directly but through the medium of the spiritual master. The spiritual master is the transparent medium, although it is true that the experience is still direct. This is the mystery of the disciplic succession. When the spiritual master is bona fide, then one can hear *Bhagavad-gītā* directly, as Arjuna heard it. There are many mystics and yogīs all over the world, but Kṛṣṇa is the master of all yoga systems. Kṛṣṇa’s instruction is explicitly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*—surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. One who does so is the topmost yogī. This is confirmed in the last verse of the Sixth Chapter. *Yoginām api sarveṣāṁ*.

Nārada is the direct disciple of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master of Vyāsa. Therefore Vyāsa is as bona fide as Arjuna because he comes in the disciplic succession, and Sañjaya is the direct disciple of Vyāsa. Therefore by the grace of Vyāsa, Sañjaya’s senses were purified, and he could see and hear Kṛṣṇa directly. One who directly hears Kṛṣṇa can understand this confidential knowledge. If one does not come to the disciplic succession, he cannot hear Kṛṣṇa; therefore his knowledge is always imperfect, at least as far as understanding *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned.

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, all the yoga systems—*karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*—are explained. Kṛṣṇa is the master of all such mysticism. It is to be understood, however, that as Arjuna was fortunate enough to understand Kṛṣṇa directly, so, by the grace of Vyāsa, Sañjaya was also able to hear Kṛṣṇa directly. Actually there is no difference between hearing directly from Kṛṣṇa and hearing directly from Kṛṣṇa via a bona fide spiritual master like Vyāsa. The spiritual master is the representative of Vyāsadeva also. Therefore,

according to the Vedic system, on the birthday of the spiritual master the disciples conduct the ceremony called Vyāsa-pūjā.

Chapter 18—Text 76

*rājan saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya
saṁvādam imam adbhutam
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyam
hṛṣyāmi ca muhur muhuḥ*

SYNONYMS

rājan—O King; *saṁsmṛtya*—remembering; *saṁsmṛtya*—remembering; *saṁvādam*—message; *imam*—this; *adbhutam*—wonderful; *keśava*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *arjunayoḥ*—and Arjuna; *puṇyam*—pious; *hṛṣyāmi*—I am taking pleasure; *ca*—also; *muhur muhuḥ*—repeatedly.

TRANSLATION

O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled at every moment.

PURPORT

The understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā* is so transcendental that anyone who becomes conversant with the topics of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa becomes righteous and he cannot forget such talks. This is the transcendental position of spiritual life. In other words, one who hears the *Gītā* from the right source, directly from Kṛṣṇa, attains full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The result of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that one becomes increasingly enlightened, and he enjoys life with a thrill, not only for some time, but at every moment.

Chapter 18—Text 77

*tac ca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya
rūpam aty-adbhutam hareḥ
vismayo me mahān rājan
hṛṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ*

SYNONYMS

tat—that; *ca*—also; *saṁsmṛtya*—remembering; *saṁsmṛtya*—remembering; *rūpam*—form; *ati*—greatly; *adbhutam*—wonderful; *hareḥ*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *vismayaḥ*—wonder; *me*—my; *mahān*—great; *rājan*—O King; *hṛṣyāmi*—I am enjoying; *ca*—also; *punaḥ punaḥ*—repeatedly.

TRANSLATION

O King, as I remember the wonderful form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I am struck with wonder more and more, and I rejoice again and again.

PURPORT

It appears that Sañjaya also, by the grace of Vyāsa, could see the universal form Kṛṣṇa exhibited to Arjuna. It is, of course, said that Lord Kṛṣṇa had never exhibited such a form before. It was exhibited to Arjuna only, yet some great devotees could also see the universal form of Kṛṣṇa when it was shown to Arjuna, and Vyāsa was one of them. He is one of the great devotees of the Lord, and he is considered to be a powerful incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. Vyāsa disclosed this to his disciple Sañjaya, who remembered that wonderful form of Kṛṣṇa exhibited to Arjuna and enjoyed it repeatedly.

Chapter 18—Text 78

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo
yatra pāṛtho dhanur-dharaḥ
tatra śrīḥ vijayo bhūtir
dhruvā nītir matir mama

SYNONYMS

yatra—where; yoga-īśvaraḥ—the master of mysticism; kṛṣṇaḥ—Lord Kṛṣṇa; yatra—where; pāṛthaḥ—the son of Pṛthā; dhanuḥ-dharaḥ—the carrier of the bow and arrow; tatra—there; śrīḥ—opulence; vijayaḥ—victory; bhūtiḥ—exceptional power; dhruvā—certain; nītiḥ—morality; matiḥ mama—my opinion.

TRANSLATION

Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.

PURPORT

The *Bhagavad-gītā* began with an inquiry of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's. He was hopeful of the victory of his sons, assisted by great warriors like Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa. He was hopeful that the victory would be on his side. But after describing the scene on the battlefield, Sañjaya told the King, “You are thinking of victory, but my opinion is that where Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are present, there will be all good fortune.” He directly confirmed that Dhṛtarāṣṭra could not expect victory for his side. Victory was certain for the side of Arjuna because Kṛṣṇa was there. Kṛṣṇa's acceptance of the post of charioteer for Arjuna was an exhibition of another opulence. Kṛṣṇa is full of all opulences, and renunciation is one of them. There are many instances of such renunciation, for Kṛṣṇa is also the master of renunciation.

The fight was actually between Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira. Arjuna was fighting on behalf of his elder brother, Yudhiṣṭhira. Because Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were on the side of Yudhiṣṭhira, Yudhiṣṭhira's victory was certain. The battle was to decide who would rule the world, and Sañjaya predicted that the power would be transferred to Yudhiṣṭhira. It is also predicted here that Yudhiṣṭhira, after gaining victory in this battle, would flourish more and more because not only was he righteous and pious but he was also a strict moralist. He never spoke a lie during his life.

There are many less intelligent persons who take *Bhagavad-gītā* to be a discussion of topics between two friends on a battlefield. But such a book cannot be scripture. Some may protest that Kṛṣṇa incited Arjuna to fight, which is immoral, but the reality of the situation is clearly stated: *Bhagavad-gītā* is the supreme instruction in morality. The supreme instruction of morality is stated in the Ninth Chapter, in the thirty-fourth verse:

man-manā bhava mad-bhaktaḥ. One must become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and the essence of all religion is to surrender unto Kṛṣṇa (*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*). The instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* constitute the supreme process of religion and of morality. All other processes may be purifying and may lead to this process, but the last instruction of the *Gītā* is the last word in all morality and religion: surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. This is the verdict of the Eighteenth Chapter.

From *Bhagavad-gītā* we can understand that to realize oneself by philosophical speculation and by meditation is one process, but to fully surrender unto Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfection. This is the essence of the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The path of regulative principles according to the orders of social life and according to the different courses of religion may be a confidential path of knowledge. But although the rituals of religion are confidential, meditation and cultivation of knowledge are still more confidential. And surrender unto Kṛṣṇa in devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the most confidential instruction. That is the essence of the Eighteenth Chapter.

Another feature of *Bhagavad-gītā* is that the actual truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. The Absolute Truth is realized in three features—impersonal Brahman, localized Paramātmā, and ultimately the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth means perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. If one understands Kṛṣṇa, then all the departments of knowledge are part and parcel of that understanding. Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, for He is always situated in His eternal internal potency. The living entities are manifested of His energy and are divided into two classes, eternally conditioned and eternally liberated. Such living entities are innumerable, and they are considered fundamental parts of Kṛṣṇa. Material energy is manifested into twenty-four divisions. The creation is effected by eternal time, and it is created and dissolved by external energy. This manifestation of the cosmic world repeatedly becomes visible and invisible.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* five principal subject matters have been discussed: the Supreme Personality of Godhead, material nature, the living entities, eternal time and all kinds of activities. All is dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. All conceptions of the Absolute Truth—impersonal Brahman, localized Paramātmā and any other transcendental conception—exist within the category of understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although superficially the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the living entity, material nature and time appear to be different, nothing is different from the Supreme. But the Supreme is always different from everything. Lord Caitanya's philosophy is that of "inconceivable oneness and difference." This system of philosophy constitutes perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

The living entity in his original position is pure spirit. He is just like an atomic particle of the Supreme Spirit. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa may be compared to the sun, and the living entities to sunshine. Because the living entities are the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa, they have a tendency to be in contact either with the material energy or with the spiritual energy. In other words, the living entity is situated between the two energies of the Lord, and because he belongs to the superior energy of the Lord, he has a particle of independence. By proper

use of that independence he comes under the direct order of Kṛṣṇa. Thus he attains his normal condition in the pleasure-giving potency.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta Purports to the Eighteenth Chapter of the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* in the matter of its Conclusion—the Perfection of Renunciation.