

- CHAPTER 12 -

Devotional Service

Chapter 12—Text 1

arjuna uvāca
evam satata-yuktā ye
bhaktās tvām paryupāsate
ye cāpy akṣaram avyaktam
teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ

SYNONYMS

arjunaḥ uvāca—Arjuna said; *evam*—thus; *satata*—always; *yuktāḥ*—engaged; *ye*—those who; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *tvām*—You; *paryupāsate*—properly worship; *ye*—those who; *ca*—also; *api*—again; *akṣaram*—beyond the senses; *avyaktam*—the unmanifested; *teṣām*—of them; *ke*—who; *yoga-vit-tamāḥ*—the most perfect in knowledge of yoga.

TRANSLATION

Arjuna inquired: Which are considered to be more perfect, those who are always properly engaged in Your devotional service or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested?

PURPORT

Kṛṣṇa has now explained about the personal, the impersonal and the universal and has described all kinds of devotees and yogīs. Generally, the transcendentalists can be divided into two classes. One is the impersonalist, and the other is the personalist. The personalist devotee engages himself with all energy in the service of the Supreme Lord. The impersonalist also engages himself, not directly in the service of Kṛṣṇa but in meditation on the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested.

We find in this chapter that of the different processes for realization of the Absolute Truth, *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service, is the highest. If one at all desires to have the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then he must take to devotional service.

Those who worship the Supreme Lord directly by devotional service are called personalists. Those who engage themselves in meditation on the impersonal Brahman are called impersonalists. Arjuna is here questioning which position is better. There are different ways to realize the Absolute Truth, but Kṛṣṇa indicates in this chapter that

bhakti-yoga, or devotional service to Him, is the highest of all. It is the most direct, and it is the easiest means for association with the Godhead.

In the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Supreme Lord explained that a living entity is not the material body; he is a spiritual spark. And the Absolute Truth is the spiritual whole. In the Seventh Chapter He spoke of the living entity as being part and parcel of the supreme whole and recommended that he transfer his attention fully to the whole. Then again in the Eighth Chapter it was said that anyone who thinks of Kṛṣṇa at the time of quitting his body is at once transferred to the spiritual sky, to the abode of Kṛṣṇa. And at the end of the Sixth Chapter the Lord clearly said that of all *yogīs*, one who always thinks of Kṛṣṇa within himself is considered the most perfect. So in practically every chapter the conclusion has been that one should be attached to the personal form of Kṛṣṇa, for that is the highest spiritual realization.

Nevertheless, there are those who are not attached to the personal form of Kṛṣṇa. They are so firmly detached that even in the preparation of commentaries to *Bhagavad-gītā* they want to distract other people from Kṛṣṇa and transfer all devotion to the impersonal *brahmajyoti*. They prefer to meditate on the impersonal form of the Absolute Truth, which is beyond the reach of the senses and is not manifest.

And so, factually, there are two classes of transcendentalists. Now Arjuna is trying to settle the question of which process is easier and which of the classes is most perfect. In other words, he is clarifying his own position because he is attached to the personal form of Kṛṣṇa. He is not attached to the impersonal Brahman. He wants to know whether his position is secure. The impersonal manifestation, either in this material world or in the spiritual world of the Supreme Lord, is a problem for meditation. Actually, one cannot perfectly conceive of the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth. Therefore Arjuna wants to say, “What is the use of such a waste of time?” Arjuna experienced in the Eleventh Chapter that to be attached to the personal form of Kṛṣṇa is best because he could thus understand all other forms at the same time and there was no disturbance to his love for Kṛṣṇa. This important question asked of Kṛṣṇa by Arjuna will clarify the distinction between the impersonal and personal conceptions of the Absolute Truth.

Chapter 12—Text 2

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayy āveśya mano ye mām
nitya-yuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetās
te me yuktatamā matāḥ

SYNONYMS

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *mayi*—upon Me; *āveśya*—fixing; *manaḥ*—the mind; *ye*—those who; *mām*—Me; *nitya*—always; *yuktāḥ*—engaged; *upāsate*—worship; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *parayā*—transcendental; *upetāḥ*—endowed; *te*—they; *me*—by Me; *yukta-tamāḥ*—most perfect in yoga; *matāḥ*—are considered.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect.

PURPORT

In answer to Arjuna's question, Kṛṣṇa clearly says that he who concentrates upon His personal form and who worships Him with faith and devotion is to be considered most perfect in yoga. For one in such Kṛṣṇa consciousness there are no material activities, because everything is done for Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee is constantly engaged. Sometimes he chants, sometimes he hears or reads books about Kṛṣṇa, or sometimes he cooks *prasādam* or goes to the marketplace to purchase something for Kṛṣṇa, or sometimes he washes the temple or the dishes—whatever he does, he does not let a single moment pass without devoting his activities to Kṛṣṇa. Such action is in full *samādhi*.

Chapter 12—Texts 3–4

*ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam
avyaktaṁ paryupāsate
sarvatra-gam acintyaṁ ca
kūṭa-stham acalaṁ dhruvam*

*sanniyamyendriya-grāmam
sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ
te prāpnuvanti mām eva
sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*

SYNONYMS

ye—those who; *tu*—but; *akṣaram*—that which is beyond the perception of the senses; *anirdeśyam*—indefinite; *avyaktaṁ*—unmanifested; *paryupāsate*—completely engage in worshiping; *sarvatra-gam*—all-pervading; *acintyaṁ*—inconceivable; *ca*—also; *kūṭa-stham*—unchanging; *acalaṁ*—immovable; *dhruvam*—fixed; *sanniyamya*—controlling; *indriya-grāmam*—all the senses; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *sama-buddhayaḥ*—equally disposed; *te*—they; *prāpnuvanti*—achieve; *mām*—Me; *eva*—certainly; *sarva-bhūta-hite*—for the welfare of all living entities; *ratāḥ*—engaged.

TRANSLATION

But those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond the perception of the senses, the all-pervading, inconceivable, unchanging, fixed and immovable—the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth—by controlling the various senses and being equally disposed to everyone, such persons, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieve Me.

PURPORT

Those who do not directly worship the Supreme Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, but who attempt to achieve the same goal by an indirect process, also ultimately achieve the same goal, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “After many births the man of wisdom seeks refuge in Me, knowing that Vāsudeva is all.” When a person comes to full knowledge after many births, he surrenders unto Lord Kṛṣṇa. If one approaches the Godhead by the method mentioned in this verse, he has to control the senses, render service to everyone and engage in the welfare of all beings. It is inferred that one has to approach Lord Kṛṣṇa, otherwise there is no perfect realization. Often there is much penance involved before one fully surrenders unto Him.

In order to perceive the Supersoul within the individual soul, one has to cease the sensual activities of seeing, hearing, tasting, working, etc. Then one comes to understand that the Supreme Soul is present everywhere. Realizing this, one envies no living entity—he sees no difference between man and animal because he sees soul only, not the outer covering. But for the common man, this method of impersonal realization is very difficult.

Chapter 12—Text 5

*kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām
avyaktāsakta-cetasām
avyaktā hi gatiḥ duḥkham
dehavadbhir avāpyate*

SYNONYMS

kleśaḥ—trouble; *adhika-taraḥ*—very much; *teṣām*—of them; *avyakta*—to the unmanifested; *āsakta*—attached; *cetasām*—of those whose minds; *avyaktā*—toward the unmanifested; *hi*—certainly; *gatiḥ*—progress; *duḥkham*—with trouble; *deha-vadbhiḥ*—by the embodied; *avāpyate*—is achieved.

TRANSLATION

For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.

PURPORT

The group of transcendentalists who follow the path of the inconceivable, unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme Lord are called *jñāna-yogīs*, and persons who are in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, engaged in devotional service to the Lord, are called *bhakti-yogīs*. Now, here the difference between *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* is definitely expressed. The process of *jñāna-yoga*, although ultimately bringing one to the same goal, is very troublesome, whereas the path of *bhakti-yoga*, the process of being in direct service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is easier and is natural for the embodied soul. The individual soul is embodied since time immemorial. It is very difficult for him to simply theoretically understand that he is not the body. Therefore, the *bhakti-yogī* accepts the Deity of Kṛṣṇa as worshipable because there is some bodily conception fixed in the mind, which can thus be applied. Of course, worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form within the temple is not idol worship. There is evidence in the Vedic literature that worship may be *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*—of the Supreme possessing or not possessing attributes. Worship of the Deity in the temple is *saguṇa* worship, for the Lord is represented by material qualities. But the form of the Lord, though represented by material qualities such as stone, wood or oil paint, is not actually material. That is the absolute nature of the Supreme Lord.

A crude example may be given here. We may find some mailboxes on the street, and if we post our letters in those boxes, they will naturally go to their destination without difficulty. But any old box, or an imitation which we may find somewhere but which is not authorized by the post office, will not do the work. Similarly, God has an authorized representation in the Deity form, which is called *arcā-vigraha*. This *arcā-vigraha* is an

incarnation of the Supreme Lord. God will accept service through that form. The Lord is omnipotent, all-powerful; therefore, by His incarnation as *arcā-vigraha* He can accept the services of the devotee, just to make it convenient for the man in conditioned life.

So for a devotee there is no difficulty in approaching the Supreme immediately and directly, but for those who are following the impersonal way to spiritual realization the path is difficult. They have to understand the unmanifested representation of the Supreme through such Vedic literatures as the *Upaniṣads*, and they have to learn the language, understand the nonperceptual feelings, and realize all these processes. This is not very easy for a common man. A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, engaged in devotional service, simply by the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, simply by offering regulative obeisances unto the Deity, simply by hearing the glories of the Lord, and simply by eating the remnants of foodstuffs offered to the Lord, realizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead very easily. There is no doubt that the impersonalists are unnecessarily taking a troublesome path with the risk of not realizing the Absolute Truth at the ultimate end. But the personalist, without any risk, trouble or difficulty, approaches the Supreme Personality directly. A similar passage appears in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It is stated there that if one ultimately has to surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead (this surrendering process is called *bhakti*), but instead takes the trouble to understand what is Brahman and what is not Brahman and spends his whole life in that way, the result is simply troublesome. Therefore it is advised here that one should not take up this troublesome path of self-realization, because there is uncertainty in the ultimate result.

A living entity is eternally an individual soul, and if he wants to merge into the spiritual whole, he may accomplish the realization of the eternal and knowledgeable aspects of his original nature, but the blissful portion is not realized. By the grace of some devotee, such a transcendentalist, highly learned in the process of *jñāna-yoga*, may come to the point of *bhakti-yoga*, or devotional service. At that time, long practice in impersonalism also becomes a source of trouble, because he cannot give up the idea. Therefore an embodied soul is always in difficulty with the unmanifest, both at the time of practice and at the time of realization. Every living soul is partially independent, and one should know for certain that this unmanifested realization is against the nature of his spiritual blissful self. One should not take up this process. For every individual living entity the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which entails full engagement in devotional service, is the best way. If one wants to ignore this devotional service, there is the danger of turning to atheism. Thus the process of centering attention on the unmanifested, the inconceivable, which is beyond the approach of the senses, as already expressed in this verse, should never be encouraged at any time, especially in this age. It is not advised by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 12—Texts 6–7

*ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi
mayi sannyasya mat-paraḥ
ananyenaiva yogena
mām dhyāyanta upāsate

teṣām ahaṁ samuddhartā
mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt
bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha
mayy āveśita-cetasām*

SYNONYMS

ye—those who; *tu*—but; *sarvāṇi*—all; *karmāṇi*—activities; *mayi*—unto Me; *sannyasya*—giving up; *mat-paraḥ*—being attached to Me; *ananyena*—without division; *eva*—certainly; *yogena*—by practice of such *bhakti-yoga*; *mām*—upon Me; *dhyāyantaḥ*—meditating; *upāsate*—worship; *teṣām*—of them; *ahaṁ*—I; *samuddhartā*—the deliverer; *mṛtyu*—of death; *saṁsāra*—in material existence; *sāgarāt*—from the ocean; *bhavāmi*—I become; *na*—not; *cirāt*—after a long time; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *mayi*—upon Me; *āveśita*—fixed; *cetasām*—of those whose minds.

TRANSLATION

But those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Pṛthā—for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.

PURPORT

It is explicitly stated here that the devotees are very fortunate to be delivered very soon from material existence by the Lord. In pure devotional service one comes to the realization that God is great and that the individual soul is subordinate to Him. His duty is to render service to the Lord—and if he does not, then he will render service to *māyā*.

As stated before, the Supreme Lord can be appreciated only by devotional service. Therefore, one should be fully devoted. One should fix his mind fully on Kṛṣṇa in order to achieve Him. One should work only for Kṛṣṇa. It does not matter in what kind of work one engages, but that work should be done only for Kṛṣṇa. That is the standard of devotional service. The devotee does not desire any achievement other than pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His life's mission is to please Kṛṣṇa, and he can sacrifice everything for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction, just as Arjuna did in the Battle of Kurukṣetra. The process is very simple: one can devote himself in his occupation and engage at the same time in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare

Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Such transcendental chanting attracts the devotee to the Personality of Godhead.

The Supreme Lord herein promises that without delay He will deliver a pure devotee thus engaged from the ocean of material existence. Those who are advanced in *yoga* practice can willfully transfer the soul to whatever planet they like by the *yoga* process, and others take the opportunity in various ways, but as far as the devotee is concerned, it is clearly stated here that the Lord Himself takes him. The devotee does not need to wait to become very experienced in order to transfer himself to the spiritual sky.

In the *Varāha Purāṇa* this verse appears:

*nayāmi paramaṁ sthānam
arcir-ādi-gatiṁ vinā
garuḍa-skandham āropya
yatheccham anivāritaḥ*

The purport of this verse is that a devotee does not need to practice *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* in order to transfer his soul to the spiritual planets. The responsibility is taken by the Supreme Lord Himself. He clearly states here that He Himself becomes the deliverer. A child is completely cared for by his parents, and thus his position is secure. Similarly, a devotee does not need to endeavor to transfer himself by *yoga* practice to other planets. Rather, the Supreme Lord, by His great mercy, comes at once, riding on His bird carrier Garuḍa, and at once delivers the devotee from material existence. Although a man who has fallen in the ocean may struggle very hard and may be very expert in swimming, he cannot save himself. But if someone comes and picks him up from the water, then he is easily rescued. Similarly, the Lord picks up the devotee from this material existence. One simply has to practice the easy process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and fully engage himself in devotional service. Any intelligent man should always prefer the process of devotional service to all other paths. In the *Nārāyaṇīya* this is confirmed as follows:

*yā vai sādhana-sampattiḥ
puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaye
tayā vinā tad āpnoti
naro nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ*

The purport of this verse is that one should not engage in the different processes of fruitive activity or cultivate knowledge by the mental speculative process. One who is devoted to the Supreme Personality can attain all the benefits derived from other yogic processes, speculation, rituals, sacrifices, charities, etc. That is the specific benediction of devotional service.

Simply by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—a devotee of the Lord can approach the supreme destination easily and happily, but this destination cannot be approached by any other process of religion.

The conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā* is stated in the Eighteenth Chapter:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*
[Bg. 18.66]

One should give up all other processes of self-realization and simply execute devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That will enable one to reach the highest perfection of life. There is no need for one to consider the sinful actions of his past life, because the Supreme Lord fully takes charge of him. Therefore one should not futilely try to deliver himself in spiritual realization. Let everyone take shelter of the supreme omnipotent Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. That is the highest perfection of life.

Chapter 12—Text 8

*mayy eva mana ādhatsva
mayi buddhim niveśaya
nivaśiṣyasi mayy eva
ata ūrdhvam na saṁśayaḥ*

SYNONYMS

mayi—upon Me; *eva*—certainly; *manaḥ*—mind; *ādhatsva*—fix; *mayi*—upon Me; *buddhim*—intelligence; *niveśaya*—apply; *nivaśiṣyasi*—you will live; *mayi*—in Me; *eva*—certainly; *ataḥ ūrdhvam*—thereafter; *na*—never; *saṁśayaḥ*—doubt.

TRANSLATION

Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.

PURPORT

One who is engaged in Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service lives in a direct relationship with the Supreme Lord, so there is no doubt that his position is transcendental from the very beginning. A devotee does not live on the material plane—he lives in Kṛṣṇa. The holy name of the Lord and the Lord are nondifferent; therefore when a devotee chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa and His internal potency are dancing on the tongue of the devotee. When he offers Kṛṣṇa food, Kṛṣṇa directly accepts these eatables, and the devotee becomes Kṛṣṇa-ized by eating the remnants. One who does not engage in such service cannot understand how this is so, although this is a process recommended in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and in other Vedic literatures.

Chapter 12—Text 9

*atha cittam samādhātum
na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram
abhyāsa-yogena tato
mām icchāptum dhanañjaya*

SYNONYMS

atha—if, therefore; *cittam*—mind; *samādhātum*—to fix; *na*—not; *śaknoṣi*—you are able; *mayi*—upon Me; *sthiram*—steadily; *abhyāsa-yogena*—by the practice of devotional service; *tataḥ*—then; *mām*—Me; *icchā*—desire; *āptum*—to get; *dhana-jaya*—O winner of wealth, Arjuna.

TRANSLATION

My dear Arjuna, O winner of wealth, if you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of bhakti-yoga. In this way develop a desire to attain Me.

PURPORT

In this verse, two different processes of *bhakti-yoga* are indicated. The first applies to one who has actually developed an attachment for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by transcendental love. And the other is for one who has not developed an attachment for the Supreme Person by transcendental love. For this second class there are different prescribed rules and regulations one can follow to be ultimately elevated to the stage of attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

Bhakti-yoga is the purification of the senses. At the present moment in material existence the senses are always impure, being engaged in sense gratification. But by the practice of *bhakti-yoga* these senses can become purified, and in the purified state they come directly in contact with the Supreme Lord. In this material existence, I may be engaged in some service to some master, but I don't really lovingly serve my master. I simply serve to get some money. And the master also is not in love; he takes service from me and pays me. So there is no question of love. But for spiritual life, one must be elevated to the pure stage of love. That stage of love can be achieved by practice of devotional service, performed with the present senses.

This love of God is now in a dormant state in everyone's heart. And, there, love of God is manifested in different ways, but it is contaminated by material association. Now the heart has to be purified of the material association, and that dormant, natural love for Kṛṣṇa has to be revived. That is the whole process.

To practice the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga* one should, under the guidance of an expert spiritual master, follow certain principles: one should rise early in the morning, take bath, enter the temple and offer prayers and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, then collect flowers to

offer to the Deity, cook foodstuffs to offer to the Deity, take *prasādam*, and so on. There are various rules and regulations which one should follow. And one should constantly hear *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from pure devotees. This practice can help anyone rise to the level of love of God, and then he is sure of his progress into the spiritual kingdom of God. This practice of *bhakti-yoga*, under the rules and regulations, with the direction of a spiritual master, will surely bring one to the stage of love of God.

Chapter 12—Text 10

*abhyāse 'py asamarthaḥ 'si
mat-karma-paramo bhava
mad-artham api karmāṇi
kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi*

SYNONYMS

abhyāse—in practice; *api*—even if; *asamarthaḥ*—unable; *asi*—you are; *mat-karma*—My work; *paramaḥ*—dedicated to; *bhava*—become; *mat-artham*—for My sake; *api*—even; *karmāṇi*—work; *kurvan*—performing; *siddhim*—perfection; *avāpsyasi*—you will achieve.

TRANSLATION

If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.

PURPORT

One who is not able even to practice the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*, under the guidance of a spiritual master, can still be drawn to this perfectional stage by working for the Supreme Lord. How to do this work has already been explained in the fifty-fifth verse of the Eleventh Chapter. One should be sympathetic to the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There are many devotees who are engaged in the propagation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and they require help. So, even if one cannot directly practice the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*, he can try to help such work. Every endeavor requires land, capital, organization and labor. Just as in business one requires a place to stay, some capital to use, some labor and some organization to expand, so the same is required in the service of Kṛṣṇa. The only difference is that in materialism one works for sense gratification. The same work, however, can be performed for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and that is spiritual activity. If one has sufficient money, he can help in building an office or temple for propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Or he can help with publications. There are various fields of activity, and one should be interested in such activities. If one cannot sacrifice the results of his activities, the same person can still sacrifice some percentage to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This voluntary service to the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will help one to rise to a higher state of love for God, whereupon one becomes perfect.

Chapter 12—Text 11

*athaitad apy aśakto 'si
kartum mad-yogam āśritaḥ
sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam
tataḥ kuru yatātmavān*

SYNONYMS

atha—even though; *etat*—this; *api*—also; *aśaktaḥ*—unable; *asi*—you are; *kartum*—to perform; *mat*—unto Me; *yogam*—in devotional service; *āśritaḥ*—taking refuge; *sarva-karma*—of all activities; *phala*—of the results; *tyāgam*—renunciation; *tataḥ*—then; *kuru*—do; *yata-ātma-vān*—self-situated.

TRANSLATION

If, however, you are unable to work in this consciousness of Me, then try to act giving up all results of your work and try to be self-situated.

PURPORT

It may be that one is unable even to sympathize with the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness because of social, familial or religious considerations or because of some other impediments. If one attaches himself directly to the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there may be objections from family members, or so many other difficulties. For one who has such a problem, it is advised that he sacrifice the accumulated result of his activities to some good cause. Such procedures are described in the Vedic rules. There are many descriptions of sacrifices and special functions of *punya*, or special work in which the result of one's previous action may be applied. Thus one may gradually become elevated to the state of knowledge. It is also found that when one who is not even interested in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness gives charity to some hospital or some other social institution, he gives up the hard-earned results of his activities. That is also recommended here because by the practice of giving up the fruits of one's activities one is sure to purify his mind gradually, and in that purified stage of mind one becomes able to understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Of course Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not dependent on any other experience, because Kṛṣṇa consciousness itself can purify one's mind, but if there are impediments to accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may try to give up the results of his actions. In that respect, social service, community service, national service, sacrifice for one's country, etc., may be accepted so that some day one may come to the stage of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.46) we find it is stated, *yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām*: if one decides to sacrifice for the supreme cause, even if he does not know that the supreme cause is Kṛṣṇa, he will come gradually to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme cause by the sacrificial method.

Chapter 12—Text 12

*śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj
jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate
dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas
tyāgāc chāntir anantaram*

SYNONYMS

śreyaḥ—better; *hi*—certainly; *jñānam*—knowledge; *abhyāsāt*—than practice; *jñānāt*—than knowledge; *dhyānam*—meditation; *viśiṣyate*—is considered better; *dhyānāt*—than meditation; *karma-phala-tyāgaḥ*—renunciation of the results of fruitive action; *tyāgāt*—by such renunciation; *śāntiḥ*—peace; *anantaram*—thereafter.

TRANSLATION

If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge. Better than knowledge, however, is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action, for by such renunciation one can attain peace of mind.

PURPORT

As mentioned in the previous verses, there are two kinds of devotional service: the way of regulative principles and the way of full attachment in love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For those who are actually not able to follow the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness it is better to cultivate knowledge, because by knowledge one can be able to understand his real position. Gradually knowledge will develop to the point of meditation. By meditation one can be able to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by a gradual process. There are processes which make one understand that one himself is the Supreme, and that sort of meditation is preferred if one is unable to engage in devotional service. If one is not able to meditate in such a way, then there are prescribed duties, as enjoined in the Vedic literature, for the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*, which we shall find in the last chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. But in all cases, one should give up the result or fruits of labor; this means to employ the result of *karma* for some good cause.

In summary, to reach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal, there are two processes: one process is by gradual development, and the other process is direct.

Devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the direct method, and the other method involves renouncing the fruits of one's activities. Then one can come to the stage of knowledge, then to the stage of meditation, then to the stage of understanding the Supersoul, and then to the stage of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One may take either the step-by-step process or the direct path. The direct process is not possible for everyone; therefore the indirect process is also good. It is, however, to be understood that the indirect process is not recommended for Arjuna, because he is already at the stage of loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord. It is for others, who are not at this stage; for them the gradual process of renunciation, knowledge, meditation and realization of the

Supersoul and Brahman should be followed. But as far as *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned, it is the direct method that is stressed. Everyone is advised to take to the direct method and surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

*adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām
maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ
sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī*

*santuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī
yatātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir
yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

adveṣṭā—nonenvious; *sarva-bhūtānām*—toward all living entities; *maitraḥ*—friendly; *karuṇaḥ*—kindly; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *nirmamaḥ*—with no sense of proprietorship; *nirahaṅkāraḥ*—without false ego; *sama*—equal; *duḥkha*—in distress; *sukhaḥ*—and happiness; *kṣamī*—forgiving; *santuṣṭaḥ*—satisfied; *satataṁ*—always; *yogī*—one engaged in devotion; *yata-ātmā*—self-controlled; *dṛḍha-niścayaḥ*—with determination; *mayi*—upon Me; *arpita*—engaged; *manaḥ*—mind; *buddhiḥ*—and intelligence; *yaḥ*—one who; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotee; *saḥ*—he; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—dear.

TRANSLATION

One who is not envious but is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor and is free from false ego, who is equal in both happiness and distress, who is tolerant, always satisfied, self-controlled, and engaged in devotional service with determination, his mind and intelligence fixed on Me—such a devotee of Mine is very dear to Me.

PURPORT

Coming again to the point of pure devotional service, the Lord is describing the transcendental qualifications of a pure devotee in these two verses. A pure devotee is never disturbed in any circumstances. Nor is he envious of anyone. Nor does a devotee become his enemy's enemy; he thinks, "This person is acting as my enemy due to my own past misdeeds. So it is better to suffer than to protest." In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.8) it is stated: *tat te 'nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam*. Whenever a devotee is in distress or has fallen into difficulty, he thinks that it is the Lord's mercy upon him. He thinks, "Thanks to my past misdeeds I should suffer far, far greater than I am suffering now. So it is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that I am not getting all the punishment I am due. I am just getting a little, by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Therefore he is always calm, quiet and patient, despite many distressful

conditions. A devotee is also always kind to everyone, even to his enemy. *Nirmama* means that a devotee does not attach much importance to the pains and trouble pertaining to the body because he knows perfectly well that he is not the material body. He does not identify with the body; therefore he is freed from the conception of false ego and is equipoised in happiness and distress. He is tolerant, and he is satisfied with whatever comes by the grace of the Supreme Lord. He does not endeavor much to achieve something with great difficulty; therefore he is always joyful. He is a completely perfect mystic because he is fixed in the instructions received from the spiritual master, and because his senses are controlled he is determined. He is not swayed by false arguments, because no one can lead him from the fixed determination of devotional service. He is fully conscious that Kṛṣṇa is the eternal Lord, so no one can disturb him. All these qualifications enable him to fix his mind and intelligence entirely on the Supreme Lord. Such a standard of devotional service is undoubtedly very rare, but a devotee becomes situated in that stage by following the regulative principles of devotional service. Furthermore, the Lord says that such a devotee is very dear to Him, for the Lord is always pleased with all his activities in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Chapter 12—Text 15

*yasmān nodvijate loko
lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ
harṣāmarṣa-bhayodvegair
mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yasmāt—from whom; *na*—never; *udvijate*—are agitated; *lokaḥ*—people; *lokāt*—from people; *na*—never; *udvijate*—is disturbed; *ca*—also; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *harṣa*—from happiness; *amarṣa*—distress; *bhaya*—fear; *udvegaiḥ*—and anxiety; *muktaḥ*—freed; *yaḥ*—who; *saḥ*—anyone; *ca*—also; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—very dear.

TRANSLATION

He for whom no one is put into difficulty and who is not disturbed by anyone, who is equipoised in happiness and distress, fear and anxiety, is very dear to Me.

PURPORT

A few of a devotee's qualifications are further being described. No one is put into difficulty, anxiety, fearfulness or dissatisfaction by such a devotee. Since a devotee is kind to everyone, he does not act in such a way as to put others into anxiety. At the same time, if others try to put a devotee into anxiety, he is not disturbed. It is by the grace of the Lord that he is so practiced that he is not disturbed by any outward disturbance. Actually because a devotee is always engrossed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engaged in devotional service, such material circumstances cannot move him. Generally a materialistic person becomes very happy when there is something for his sense gratification and his body, but when he sees that others have something for their sense gratification and he hasn't, he is sorry and envious. When he is expecting some retaliation from an enemy, he is in a state of fear, and when he cannot successfully execute something he becomes dejected. A devotee who is always transcendental to all these disturbances is very dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 12—Text 16

*anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa
udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ
sarvārambha-ṇarityāgī
yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

anapekṣaḥ—neutral; *śuciḥ*—pure; *dakṣaḥ*—expert; *udāsīnaḥ*—free from care; *gata-vyathaḥ*—freed from all distress; *sarva-ārambha*—of all endeavors; *ṇarityāgī*—renouncer; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotee; *saḥ*—he; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—very dear.

TRANSLATION

My devotee who is not dependent on the ordinary course of activities, who is pure, expert, without cares, free from all pains, and not striving for some result, is very dear to Me.

PURPORT

Money may be offered to a devotee, but he should not struggle to acquire it. If automatically, by the grace of the Supreme, money comes to him, he is not agitated. Naturally a devotee takes a bath at least twice in a day and rises early in the morning for devotional service. Thus he is naturally clean both inwardly and outwardly. A devotee is always expert because he fully knows the essence of all activities of life and he is convinced of the authoritative scriptures. A devotee never takes the part of a particular party; therefore he is carefree. He is never pained, because he is free from all designations; he knows that his body is a designation, so if there are some bodily pains, he is free. The pure devotee does not endeavor for anything which is against the principles of devotional service. For example, constructing a big building requires great energy, and a devotee does not take to such business if it does not benefit him by advancing his devotional service. He may construct a temple for the Lord, and for that he may take all kinds of anxiety, but he does not construct a big house for his personal relations.

Chapter 12—Text 17

*yo na hṛṣyati na dveṣṭi
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
śubhāśubha-parityāgī
bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

yaḥ—one who; *na*—never; *hṛṣyati*—takes pleasure; *na*—never; *dveṣṭi*—grieves; *na*—never; *śocati*—laments; *na*—never; *kāṅkṣati*—desires; *śubha*—of the auspicious; *aśubha*—and the inauspicious; *parityāgī*—renouncer; *bhakti-mān*—devotee; *yaḥ*—one who; *saḥ*—he is; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—dear.

TRANSLATION

One who neither rejoices nor grieves, who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things—such a devotee is very dear to Me.

PURPORT

A pure devotee is neither happy nor distressed over material gain and loss, nor is he very much anxious to get a son or disciple, nor is he distressed by not getting them. If he loses anything which is very dear to him, he does not lament. Similarly, if he does not get what he desires, he is not distressed. He is transcendental in the face of all kinds of auspicious, inauspicious and sinful activities. He is prepared to accept all kinds of risks for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. Nothing is an impediment in the discharge of his devotional service. Such a devotee is very dear to Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 12—Texts 18–19

*samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu
samaḥ saṅga-vivarjitaḥ*

*tulya-nindā-stutir maunī
santuṣṭo yena kenacit
aniketaḥ sthira-matir
bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ*

SYNONYMS

samaḥ—equal; *śatrau*—to an enemy; *ca*—also; *mitre*—to a friend; *ca*—also; *tathā*—so; *māna*—in honor; *apamānayoḥ*—and dishonor; *śīta*—in cold; *uṣṇa*—heat; *sukha*—happiness; *duḥkheṣu*—and distress; *samaḥ*—equipoised; *saṅga-vivarjitaḥ*—free from all association; *tulya*—equal; *nindā*—in defamation; *stutiḥ*—and repute; *maunī*—silent; *santuṣṭaḥ*—satisfied; *yena kenacit*—with anything; *aniketaḥ*—having no residence; *sthira*—fixed; *matir*—determination; *bhakti-mān*—engaged in devotion; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—dear; *naraḥ*—a man.

TRANSLATION

One who is equal to friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, fame and infamy, who is always free from contaminating association, always silent and satisfied with anything, who doesn't care for any residence, who is fixed in knowledge and who is engaged in devotional service—such a person is very dear to Me.

PURPORT

A devotee is always free from all bad association. Sometimes one is praised and sometimes one is defamed; that is the nature of human society. But a devotee is always transcendental to artificial fame and infamy, distress or happiness. He is very patient. He does not speak of anything but the topics about Kṛṣṇa; therefore he is called silent. Silent does not mean that one should not speak; silent means that one should not speak nonsense. One should speak only of essentials, and the most essential speech for the devotee is to speak for the sake of the Supreme Lord. A devotee is happy in all conditions; sometimes he may get very palatable foodstuffs, sometimes not, but he is satisfied. Nor does he care for any residential facility. He may sometimes live underneath a tree, and he may sometimes live in a very palatial building; he is attracted to neither. He is called fixed because he is fixed in his determination and knowledge. We may find some repetition in the descriptions of the qualifications of a devotee, but this is just to emphasize the fact that a devotee must

acquire all these qualifications. Without good qualifications, one cannot be a pure devotee. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ*: one who is not a devotee has no good qualification. One who wants to be recognized as a devotee should develop the good qualifications. Of course he does not extraneously endeavor to acquire these qualifications, but engagement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service automatically helps him develop them.

Chapter 12—Text 20

*ye tu dharmāmṛtam idam
yathoktam paryupāsate
śraddadhānā mat-paramā
bhaktās te 'tīva me priyāḥ*

SYNONYMS

ye—those who; *tu*—but; *dharmā*—of religion; *amṛtam*—nectar; *idam*—this; *yathā*—as; *uktam*—said; *paryupāsate*—completely engage; *śraddadhānāḥ*—with faith; *mat-paramāḥ*—taking Me, the Supreme Lord, as everything; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *te*—they; *atīva*—very, very; *me*—to Me; *priyāḥ*—dear.

TRANSLATION

Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me.

PURPORT

In this chapter, from verse 2 through the end—from *mayy āveśya mano ye mām* (“fixing the mind on Me”) through *ye tu dharmāmṛtam idam* (“this religion of eternal engagement”)—the Supreme Lord has explained the processes of transcendental service for approaching Him. Such processes are very dear to the Lord, and He accepts a person engaged in them. The question of who is better—one who is engaged in the path of impersonal Brahman or one who is engaged in the personal service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—was raised by Arjuna, and the Lord replied to him so explicitly that there is no doubt that devotional service to the Personality of Godhead is the best of all processes of spiritual realization. In other words, in this chapter it is decided that through good association one develops attachment for pure devotional service and thereby accepts a bona fide spiritual master and from him begins to hear and chant and observe the regulative principles of devotional service with faith, attachment and devotion and thus becomes engaged in the transcendental service of the Lord. This path is recommended in this chapter; therefore there is no doubt that devotional service is the only absolute path for self-realization, for the attainment of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The impersonal conception of the Supreme Absolute Truth, as described in this chapter, is recommended only up to the time one surrenders himself for self-realization. In other words, as long as one does not have the chance to associate with a pure devotee, the impersonal conception may be beneficial. In the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth one works without fruitive result, meditates and cultivates knowledge to understand spirit and matter. This is necessary as long as one is not in the association of a pure devotee. Fortunately, if one develops directly a desire to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in pure devotional service, he does not need to undergo step-by-step improvements in

spiritual realization. Devotional service, as described in the middle six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, is more congenial. One need not bother about materials to keep body and soul together, because by the grace of the Lord everything is carried out automatically.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta Purports to the Twelfth Chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā in the matter of Devotional Service.