

- CHAPTER 7 -

Knowledge of the Absolute

Chapter 7—Text 1

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayy āsakta-manāḥ pārtha
yogaṁ yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ
asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ mām
yathā jñāsyasi tac chṛṇu

SYNONYMS

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Lord said; *mayi*—to Me; *āsakta-manāḥ*—mind attached; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *yogaṁ*—self-realization; *yuñjan*—practicing; *mat-āśrayaḥ*—in consciousness of Me (Kṛṣṇa consciousness); *asaṁśayaṁ*—without doubt; *samagram*—completely; *mām*—Me; *yathā*—how; *jñāsyasi*—you can know; *tat*—that; *śṛṇu*—try to hear.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Now hear, O son of Pṛthā, how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.

PURPORT

In this Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the nature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is fully described. Kṛṣṇa is full in all opulences, and how He manifests such opulences is described herein. Also, four kinds of fortunate people who become attached to Kṛṣṇa and four kinds of unfortunate people who never take to Kṛṣṇa are described in this chapter.

In the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the living entity has been described as nonmaterial spirit soul capable of elevating himself to self-realization by different types of *yogas*. At the end of the Sixth Chapter, it has been clearly stated that the steady concentration of the mind upon Kṛṣṇa, or in other words Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the highest form of all *yoga*. By concentrating one's mind upon Kṛṣṇa, one is able to know the Absolute Truth completely, but not otherwise. Impersonal *brahmajyoti* or localized Paramātmā realization is not perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth, because it is partial. Full and scientific knowledge is Kṛṣṇa, and everything is revealed to the person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In complete Kṛṣṇa consciousness one knows that Kṛṣṇa is ultimate knowledge beyond any doubts. Different types of *yoga* are only steppingstones on the path

of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One who takes directly to Kṛṣṇa consciousness automatically knows about *brahmajyoti* and *Paramātmā* in full. By practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness *yoga*, one can know everything in full—namely the Absolute Truth, the living entities, the material nature, and their manifestations with paraphernalia.

One should therefore begin *yoga* practice as directed in the last verse of the Sixth Chapter. Concentration of the mind upon Kṛṣṇa the Supreme is made possible by prescribed devotional service in nine different forms, of which *śravaṇam* is the first and most important. The Lord therefore says to Arjuna, *tac chṛṇu*, or “Hear from Me.” No one can be a greater authority than Kṛṣṇa, and therefore by hearing from Him one receives the greatest opportunity to become a perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious person. One has therefore to learn from Kṛṣṇa directly or from a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa—and not from a nondevotee upstart, puffed up with academic education.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* this process of understanding Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, is described in the Second Chapter of the First Canto as follows:

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu
nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavaty uttama-śloke
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

*tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ
kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye
ceta etair anāviddham
sthitam sattve prasīdati*

*evam prasanna-manaso
bhagavad-bhakti-yogataḥ
bhagavat-tattva-vijñānam
mukta-saṅgasya jāyate*

*bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi
dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare*

“To hear about Kṛṣṇa from Vedic literatures, or to hear from Him directly through the *Bhagavad-gītā*, is itself righteous activity. And for one who hears about Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is dwelling in everyone’s heart, acts as a best-wishing friend and purifies the devotee who constantly engages in hearing of Him. In this way, a devotee naturally develops his

dormant transcendental knowledge. As he hears more about Kṛṣṇa from the *Bhāgavatam* and from the devotees, he becomes fixed in the devotional service of the Lord. By development of devotional service one becomes freed from the modes of passion and ignorance, and thus material lusts and avarice are diminished. When these impurities are wiped away, the candidate remains steady in his position of pure goodness, becomes enlivened by devotional service and understands the science of God perfectly. Thus *bhakti-yoga* severs the hard knot of material affection and enables one to come at once to the stage of *asamśayaṁ-samagram*, understanding of the Supreme Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead.” (*Bhāg.* 1.2.17–21)

Therefore only by hearing from Kṛṣṇa or from His devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can one understand the science of Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 7—Text 2

*jñānam te 'haṁ sa-vijñānam
idaṁ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ
yaj jñātvā neha bhūyo 'nyaj
jñātavyam avaśiṣyate*

SYNONYMS

jñānam—phenomenal knowledge; *te*—unto you; *ahaṁ*—I; *sa*—with; *vijñānam*—numinous knowledge; *idaṁ*—this; *vakṣyāmi*—shall explain; *aśeṣataḥ*—in full; *yaj*—which; *jñātvā*—knowing; *na*—not; *iha*—in this world; *bhūyaḥ*—further; *anyat*—anything more; *jñātavyam*—knowable; *avaśiṣyate*—remains.

TRANSLATION

I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know.

PURPORT

Complete knowledge includes knowledge of the phenomenal world, the spirit behind it, and the source of both of them. This is transcendental knowledge. The Lord wants to explain the above-mentioned system of knowledge because Arjuna is Kṛṣṇa's confidential devotee and friend. In the beginning of the Fourth Chapter this explanation was given by the Lord, and it is again confirmed here: complete knowledge can be achieved only by the devotee of the Lord in disciplic succession directly from the Lord. Therefore one should be intelligent enough to know the source of all knowledge, who is the cause of all causes and the only object for meditation in all types of *yoga* practice. When the cause of all causes becomes known, then everything knowable becomes known, and nothing remains unknown. The *Vedas* (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.3) say, *kaśmīn bhagavo vijñāte sarvaṁ idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati*.

Chapter 7—Text 3

*manuṣyāṇām sahasreṣu
kaścid yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*

SYNONYMS

manuṣyāṇām—of men; *sahasreṣu*—out of many thousands; *kaścit*—someone; *yatati*—endeavors; *siddhaye*—for perfection; *yatatām*—of those so endeavoring; *api*—indeed; *siddhānām*—of those who have achieved perfection; *kaścit*—someone; *mām*—Me; *vetti*—does know; *tattvataḥ*—in fact.

TRANSLATION

Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.

PURPORT

There are various grades of men, and out of many thousands, one may be sufficiently interested in transcendental realization to try to know what is the self, what is the body, and what is the Absolute Truth. Generally mankind is simply engaged in the animal propensities, namely eating, sleeping, defending and mating, and hardly anyone is interested in transcendental knowledge. The first six chapters of the *Gītā* are meant for those who are interested in transcendental knowledge, in understanding the self, the Superself and the process of realization by *jñāna-yoga*, *dhyāna-yoga* and discrimination of the self from matter. However, Kṛṣṇa can be known only by persons who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other transcendentalists may achieve impersonal Brahman realization, for this is easier than understanding Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person, but at the same time He is beyond the knowledge of Brahman and Paramātmā. The *yogīs* and *jñānīs* are confused in their attempts to understand Kṛṣṇa. Although the greatest of the impersonalists, Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, has admitted in his *Gītā* commentary that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his followers do not accept Kṛṣṇa as such, for it is very difficult to know Kṛṣṇa, even though one has transcendental realization of impersonal Brahman.

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, the primeval Lord Govinda. *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ/ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*. It is very difficult for the nondevotees to know Him. Although nondevotees declare that the path of *bhakti*, or devotional service, is very easy, they cannot practice it. If the path of *bhakti* is so easy, as the nondevotee class of men proclaim, then why do they take up the difficult path? Actually the path of *bhakti* is not easy. The so-called path of *bhakti* practiced by unauthorized persons without knowledge of *bhakti* may

be easy, but when it is practiced factually according to the rules and regulations, the speculative scholars and philosophers fall away from the path. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.101):

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate

“Devotional service of the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the *Upaniṣads*, *Purāṇas* and *Nārada-pañcarātra* is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society.”

It is not possible for the Brahman-realized impersonalist or the Paramātmā-realized yogī to understand Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the son of mother Yaśodā or the charioteer of Arjuna. Even the great demigods are sometimes confused about Kṛṣṇa (*muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*). *Mām tu veda na kaścana*: “No one knows Me as I am,” the Lord says. And if one does know Him, then *sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*. “Such a great soul is very rare.” Therefore unless one practices devotional service to the Lord, one cannot know Kṛṣṇa as He is (*tattvataḥ*), even though one is a great scholar or philosopher. Only the pure devotees can know something of the inconceivable transcendental qualities in Kṛṣṇa, in the cause of all causes, in His omnipotence and opulence, and in His wealth, fame, strength, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, because Kṛṣṇa is benevolently inclined to His devotees. He is the last word in Brahman realization, and the devotees alone can realize Him as He is. Therefore it is said:

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ

“No one can understand Kṛṣṇa as He is by the blunt material senses. But He reveals Himself to the devotees, being pleased with them for their transcendental loving service unto Him.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.234)

Chapter 7—Text 4

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

SYNONYMS

bhūmiḥ—earth; *āpaḥ*—water; *analaḥ*—fire; *vāyuḥ*—air; *kham*—ether; *manaḥ*—mind; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *ahaṅkāraḥ*—false ego; *iti*—thus; *iyam*—all these; *me*—My; *bhinnā*—separated; *prakṛtiḥ*—energies; *aṣṭadhā*—eightfold.

TRANSLATION

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies.

PURPORT

The science of God analyzes the constitutional position of God and His diverse energies. Material nature is called *prakṛti*, or the energy of the Lord in His different *puruṣa* incarnations (expansions) as described in the *Sātvata-tantra*:

*viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāṇi
puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ
ekaṁ tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ
dvitīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitaṁ
tṛtīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-sthaṁ
tāni jñātvā vimucyate*

“For material creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s plenary expansion assumes three Viṣṇus. The first one, Mahā-Viṣṇu, creates the total material energy, known as the *mahat-tattva*. The second, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is diffused as the all-pervading Supersoul in all the universes and is known as Paramātmā. He is present even within the atoms. Anyone who knows these three Viṣṇus can be liberated from material entanglement.”

This material world is a temporary manifestation of one of the energies of the Lord. All the activities of the material world are directed by these three Viṣṇu expansions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. These *puruṣas* are called incarnations. Generally one who does not know the science of God (Kṛṣṇa) assumes that this material world is for the enjoyment of the living entities and that the living entities are the *puruṣas*—the causes, controllers and enjoyers of the material energy. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* this atheistic conclusion is false. In the verse under discussion it is stated that Kṛṣṇa is the original cause of the material manifestation. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also confirms this. The ingredients of the material

manifestation are separated energies of the Lord. Even the *brahmajyoti*, which is the ultimate goal of the impersonalists, is a spiritual energy manifested in the spiritual sky. There are no spiritual diversities in the *brahmajyoti* as there are in the *Vaikuṇṭhalokas*, and the impersonalist accepts this *brahmajyoti* as the ultimate eternal goal. The *Paramātmā* manifestation is also a temporary all-pervasive aspect of the *Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu*. The *Paramātmā* manifestation is not eternal in the spiritual world. Therefore the factual Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead *Kṛṣṇa*. He is the complete energetic person, and He possesses different separated and internal energies.

In the material energy, the principal manifestations are eight, as above mentioned. Out of these, the first five manifestations, namely earth, water, fire, air and sky, are called the five gigantic creations or the gross creations, within which the five sense objects are included. They are the manifestations of physical sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Material science comprises these ten items and nothing more. But the other three items, namely mind, intelligence and false ego, are neglected by the materialists. Philosophers who deal with mental activities are also not perfect in knowledge because they do not know the ultimate source, *Kṛṣṇa*. The false ego—"I am," and "It is mine, which constitute the basic principle of material existence—includes ten sense organs for material activities. Intelligence refers to the total material creation, called the *mahat-tattva*. Therefore from the eight separated energies of the Lord are manifest the twenty-four elements of the material world, which are the subject matter of *Sāṅkhya* atheistic philosophy; they are originally offshoots from *Kṛṣṇa*'s energies and are separated from Him, but atheistic *Sāṅkhya* philosophers with a poor fund of knowledge do not know *Kṛṣṇa* as the cause of all causes. The subject matter for discussion in the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy is only the manifestation of the external energy of *Kṛṣṇa*, as it is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Chapter 7—Text 5

*apareyam itas tv anyām
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho
yayedam dhāryate jagat*

SYNONYMS

aparā—inferior; *iyam*—this; *itaḥ*—besides this; *tu*—but; *anyām*—another; *prakṛtiṁ*—energy; *viddhi*—just try to understand; *me*—My; *parām*—superior; *jīva-bhūtām*—comprising the living entities; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty-armed one; *yayā*—by whom; *idam*—this; *dhāryate*—is utilized or exploited; *jagat*—the material world.

TRANSLATION

Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of this material, inferior nature.

PURPORT

Here it is clearly mentioned that living entities belong to the superior nature (or energy) of the Supreme Lord. The inferior energy is matter manifested in different elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. Both forms of material nature, namely gross (earth, etc.) and subtle (mind, etc.), are products of the inferior energy. The living entities, who are exploiting these inferior energies for different purposes, are the superior energy of the Supreme Lord, and it is due to this energy that the entire material world functions. The cosmic manifestation has no power to act unless it is moved by the superior energy, the living entity. Energies are always controlled by the energetic, and therefore the living entities are always controlled by the Lord—they have no independent existence. They are never equally powerful, as unintelligent men think. The distinction between the living entities and the Lord is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.30) as follows:

*aparimitā dhruvās tanu-bhṛto yadi sarva-gatās
tarhi na śāsyateti niyamo dhruva netarathā
ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyanṭṛ bhavet
samam anujānatām yad amataṁ mata-duṣṭatayā*

“O Supreme Eternal! If the embodied living entities were eternal and all-pervading like You, then they would not be under Your control. But if the living entities are accepted as minute energies of Your Lordship, then they are at once subject to Your supreme control. Therefore real liberation entails surrender by the living entities to Your control, and that surrender will make them happy. In that constitutional position only can they be

controllers. Therefore, men with limited knowledge who advocate the monistic theory that God and the living entities are equal in all respects are actually guided by a faulty and polluted opinion.”

The Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, is the only controller, and all living entities are controlled by Him. These living entities are His superior energy because the quality of their existence is one and the same with the Supreme, but they are never equal to the Lord in quantity of power. While exploiting the gross and subtle inferior energy (matter), the superior energy (the living entity) forgets his real spiritual mind and intelligence. This forgetfulness is due to the influence of matter upon the living entity. But when the living entity becomes free from the influence of the illusory material energy, he attains the stage called *mukti*, or liberation. The false ego, under the influence of material illusion, thinks, “I am matter, and material acquisitions are mine.” His actual position is realized when he is liberated from all material ideas, including the conception of his becoming one in all respects with God. Therefore one may conclude that the *Gītā* confirms the living entity to be only one of the multi-energies of Kṛṣṇa; and when this energy is freed from material contamination, it becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, or liberated.

Chapter 7—Text 6

*etat-yonīni bhūtāni
sarvāṇīty upadhāraya
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ
prabhavaḥ pralayaś tathā*

SYNONYMS

etat—these two natures; *yonīni*—whose source of birth; *bhūtāni*—everything created; *sarvāṇi*—all; *iti*—thus; *upadhāraya*—know; *aham*—I; *kṛtsnasya*—all-inclusive; *jagataḥ*—of the world; *prabhavaḥ*—the source of manifestation; *pralayaḥ*—annihilation; *tathā*—as well as.

TRANSLATION

All created beings have their source in these two natures. Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both the origin and the dissolution.

PURPORT

Everything that exists is a product of matter and spirit. Spirit is the basic field of creation, and matter is created by spirit. Spirit is not created at a certain stage of material development. Rather, this material world is manifested only on the basis of spiritual energy. This material body is developed because spirit is present within matter; a child grows gradually to boyhood and then to manhood because that superior energy, spirit soul, is present. Similarly, the entire cosmic manifestation of the gigantic universe is developed because of the presence of the Supersoul, Viṣṇu. Therefore spirit and matter, which combine to manifest this gigantic universal form, are originally two energies of the Lord, and consequently the Lord is the original cause of everything. A fragmental part and parcel of the Lord, namely the living entity, may be the cause of a big skyscraper, a big factory, or even a big city, but he cannot be the cause of a big universe. The cause of the big universe is the big soul, or the Supersoul. And Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme, is the cause of both the big and small souls. Therefore He is the original cause of all causes. This is confirmed in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.13). *Nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām*.

Chapter 7—Text 7

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idam protam
sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

SYNONYMS

mattaḥ—beyond Me; *para-taram*—superior; *na*—not; *anyat kiñcit*—anything else; *asti*—there is; *dhanañjaya*—O conqueror of wealth; *mayi*—in Me; *sarvam*—all that be; *idam*—which we see; *protam*—is strung; *sūtre*—on a thread; *maṇi-gaṇāḥ*—pearls; *iva*—like.

TRANSLATION

O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.

PURPORT

There is a common controversy over whether the Supreme Absolute Truth is personal or impersonal. As far as *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned, the Absolute Truth is the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and this is confirmed in every step. In this verse, in particular, it is stressed that the Absolute Truth is a person. That the Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Absolute Truth is also the affirmation of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*: *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*; that is, the Supreme Absolute Truth Personality of Godhead is Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the primeval Lord, the reservoir of all pleasure, Govinda, and the eternal form of complete bliss and knowledge. These authorities leave no doubt that the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person, the cause of all causes. The impersonalist, however, argues on the strength of the Vedic version given in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.10): *tato yad uttarataram tad arūpam anāmayam/ ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti athetare duḥkham evāpiyanti*. “In the material world Brahmā, the primeval living entity within the universe, is understood to be the supreme amongst the demigods, human beings and lower animals. But beyond Brahmā there is the Transcendence, who has no material form and is free from all material contaminations. Anyone who can know Him also becomes transcendental, but those who do not know Him suffer the miseries of the material world.” The impersonalist puts more stress on the word *arūpam*. But this *arūpam* is not impersonal. It indicates the transcendental form of eternity, bliss and knowledge as described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* quoted above. Other verses in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8–9) substantiate this as follows:

*vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
āditya-varṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt
tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*

nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya

*yasmāt param nāparam asti kiñcid
yasmān nāñīyo no jyāyo 'sti kiñcit
vṛkṣa iva stabdho divi tiṣṭhaty ekas
tenedaṁ pūrṇaṁ puruṣeṇa sarvam*

“I know that Supreme Personality of Godhead who is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness. Only he who knows Him can transcend the bonds of birth and death. There is no way for liberation other than this knowledge of that Supreme Person.

“There is no truth superior to that Supreme Person, because He is the supermost. He is smaller than the smallest, and He is greater than the greatest. He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies.”

From these verses one concludes that the Supreme Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is all-pervading by His multi-energies, both material and spiritual.

Chapter 7—Text 8

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu
śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu*

SYNONYMS

rasaḥ—taste; *aham*—I; *apsu*—in water; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *prabhā*—the light; *asmi*—I am; *śaśi-sūryayoḥ*—of the moon and the sun; *praṇavaḥ*—the three letters *a-u-m*; *sarva*—in all; *vedeṣu*—the *Vedas*; *śabdaḥ*—sound vibration; *khe*—in the ether; *pauruṣam*—ability; *nṛṣu*—in men.

TRANSLATION

O son of Kuntī, I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable om in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.

PURPORT

This verse explains how the Lord is all-pervasive by His diverse material and spiritual energies. The Supreme Lord can be preliminarily perceived by His different energies, and in this way He is realized impersonally. As the demigod in the sun is a person and is perceived by his all-pervading energy, the sunshine, so the Lord, although in His eternal abode, is perceived by His all-pervading diffusive energies. The taste of water is the active principle of water. No one likes to drink sea water, because the pure taste of water is mixed with salt. Attraction for water depends on the purity of the taste, and this pure taste is one of the energies of the Lord. The impersonalist perceives the presence of the Lord in water by its taste, and the personalist also glorifies the Lord for His kindly supplying tasty water to quench man's thirst. That is the way of perceiving the Supreme. Practically speaking, there is no conflict between personalism and impersonalism. One who knows God knows that the impersonal conception and personal conception are simultaneously present in everything and that there is no contradiction. Therefore Lord Caitanya established His sublime doctrine: *acintya bheda-and-abheda-tattva*—simultaneous oneness and difference. The light of the sun and the moon is also originally emanating from the *brahmajyoti*, which is the impersonal effulgence of the Lord. And *praṇava*, or the *omkāra* transcendental sound in the beginning of every Vedic hymn, addresses the Supreme Lord. Because the impersonalists are very much afraid of addressing the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa by His innumerable names, they prefer to vibrate the transcendental sound *omkāra*. But they do not realize that *omkāra* is the sound representation of Kṛṣṇa. The jurisdiction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness extends everywhere, and one who knows Kṛṣṇa consciousness is blessed.

Those who do not know Kṛṣṇa are in illusion, and so knowledge of Kṛṣṇa is liberation, and ignorance of Him is bondage.

Chapter 7—Text 9

*puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca
tejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau
jīvanam sarva-bhūteṣu
tapaś cāsmi tapasviṣu*

SYNONYMS

puṇyaḥ—original; *gandhaḥ*—fragrance; *pṛthivyām*—in the earth; *ca*—also; *tejaḥ*—heat; *ca*—also; *asmi*—I am; *vibhāvasau*—in the fire; *jīvanam*—life; *sarva*—in all; *bhūteṣu*—living entities; *tapaḥ*—penance; *ca*—also; *asmi*—I am; *tapasviṣu*—in those who practice penance.

TRANSLATION

I am the original fragrance of the earth, and I am the heat in fire. I am the life of all that lives, and I am the penances of all ascetics.

PURPORT

Puṇya means that which is not decomposed; *puṇya* is original. Everything in the material world has a certain flavor or fragrance, as the flavor and fragrance in a flower, or in the earth, in water, in fire, in air, etc. The uncontaminated flavor, the original flavor, which permeates everything, is Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, everything has a particular original taste, and this taste can be changed by the mixture of chemicals. So everything original has some smell, some fragrance, and some taste. *Vibhāvasu* means fire. Without fire we cannot run factories, we cannot cook, etc., and that fire is Kṛṣṇa. The heat in the fire is Kṛṣṇa. According to Vedic medicine, indigestion is due to a low temperature in the belly. So even for digestion fire is needed. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we become aware that earth, water, fire, air and every active principle, all chemicals and all material elements are due to Kṛṣṇa. The duration of man's life is also due to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, man can prolong his life or diminish it. So Kṛṣṇa consciousness is active in every sphere.

Chapter 7—Text 10

*bījam mām sarva-bhūtānām
viddhi pārtha sanātanam
buddhir buddhimatām asmi
tejas tejasvinām aham*

SYNONYMS

bījam—the seed; *mām*—Me; *sarva-bhūtānām*—of all living entities; *viddhi*—try to understand; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *sanātanam*—original, eternal; *buddhiḥ*—intelligence; *buddhi-matām*—of the intelligent; *asmi*—I am; *tejaḥ*—prowess; *tejasvinām*—of the powerful; *aham*—I am.

TRANSLATION

O son of Pṛthā, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men.

PURPORT

Bījam means seed; Kṛṣṇa is the seed of everything. There are various living entities, movable and inert. Birds, beasts, men and many other living creatures are moving living entities; trees and plants, however, are inert—they cannot move, but only stand. Every entity is contained within the scope of 8,400,000 species of life; some of them are moving and some of them are inert. In all cases, however, the seed of their life is Kṛṣṇa. As stated in Vedic literature, Brahman, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is that from which everything is emanating. Kṛṣṇa is Parabrahman, the Supreme Spirit. Brahman is impersonal and Parabrahman is personal. Impersonal Brahman is situated in the personal aspect—that is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore, originally, Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything. He is the root. As the root of a tree maintains the whole tree, Kṛṣṇa, being the original root of all things, maintains everything in this material manifestation. This is also confirmed in the Vedic literature (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13):

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

He is the prime eternal among all eternal. He is the supreme living entity of all living entities, and He alone is maintaining all life. One cannot do anything without intelligence, and Kṛṣṇa also says that He is the root of all intelligence. Unless a person is intelligent he cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 7—Text 11

*balam balavatām cāham
kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu
kāmo 'smi bharataṛṣabha*

SYNONYMS

balam—strength; *bala-vatām*—of the strong; *ca*—and; *aham*—I am; *kāma*—passion; *rāga*—and attachment; *vivarjitam*—devoid of; *dharmāviruddhaḥ*—not against religious principles; *bhūteṣu*—in all beings; *kāmaḥ*—sex life; *asmi*—I am; *bharata-ṛṣabha*—O lord of the Bhāratas.

TRANSLATION

I am the strength of the strong, devoid of passion and desire. I am sex life which is not contrary to religious principles, O lord of the Bhāratas [Arjuna].

PURPORT

The strong man's strength should be applied to protect the weak, not for personal aggression. Similarly, sex life, according to religious principles (*dharmā*), should be for the propagation of children, not otherwise. The responsibility of parents is then to make their offspring Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Chapter 7—Text 12

*ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā
rājasās tāmasās ca ye
matta eveti tān viddhi
na tv ahaṁ teṣu te mayi*

SYNONYMS

ye—all which; *ca*—and; *eva*—certainly; *sāttvikāḥ*—in goodness; *bhāvāḥ*—states of being; *rājasāḥ*—in the mode of passion; *tāmasāḥ*—in the mode of ignorance; *ca*—also; *ye*—all which; *mattaḥ*—from Me; *eva*—certainly; *iti*—thus; *tān*—those; *viddhi*—try to know; *na*—not; *tu*—but; *ahaṁ*—I; *teṣu*—in them; *te*—they; *mayi*—in Me.

TRANSLATION

Know that all states of being—be they of goodness, passion or ignorance—are manifested by My energy. I am, in one sense, everything, but I am independent. I am not under the modes of material nature, for they, on the contrary, are within Me.

PURPORT

All material activities in the world are being conducted under the three modes of material nature. Although these material modes of nature are emanations from the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, He is not subject to them. For instance, under the state laws one may be punished, but the king, the lawmaker, is not subject to that law. Similarly, all the modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—are emanations from the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa is not subject to material nature. Therefore He is *nirguṇa*, which means that these *guṇas*, or modes, although issuing from Him, do not affect Him. That is one of the special characteristics of Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 7—Text 13

*tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair
ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat
mohitaṁ nābhijānāti
mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam*

SYNONYMS

tribhiḥ—three; *guṇa-mayaiḥ*—consisting of the *guṇas*; *bhāvaiḥ*—by the states of being; *ebhiḥ*—all these; *sarvam*—whole; *idaṁ*—this; *jagat*—universe; *mohitaṁ*—deluded; *na abhijānāti*—does not know; *mām*—Me; *ebhyaḥ*—above these; *param*—the Supreme; *avyayam*—inexhaustible.

TRANSLATION

Deluded by the three modes [goodness, passion and ignorance], the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible.

PURPORT

The whole world is enchanted by three modes of material nature. Those who are bewildered by these three modes cannot understand that transcendental to this material nature is the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

Every living entity under the influence of material nature has a particular type of body and a particular type of psychological and biological activities accordingly. There are four classes of men functioning in the three material modes of nature. Those who are purely in the mode of goodness are called *brāhmaṇas*. Those who are purely in the mode of passion are called *kṣatriyas*. Those who are in the modes of both passion and ignorance are called *vaiśyas*. Those who are completely in ignorance are called *śūdras*. And those who are less than that are animals or animal life. However, these designations are not permanent. I may either be a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or whatever—in any case, this life is temporary. But although life is temporary and we do not know what we are going to be in the next life, by the spell of this illusory energy we consider ourselves in terms of this bodily conception of life, and we thus think that we are American, Indian, Russian, or *brāhmaṇa*. Hindu, Muslim, etc. And if we become entangled with the modes of material nature, then we forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is behind all these modes. So Lord Kṛṣṇa says that living entities deluded by these three modes of nature do not understand that behind the material background is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

There are many different kinds of living entities—human beings, demigods, animals, etc.—and each and every one of them is under the influence of material nature, and all of them have forgotten the transcendent Personality of Godhead. Those who are in the modes of passion and ignorance, and even those who are in the mode of goodness, cannot go beyond the impersonal Brahman conception of the Absolute Truth. They are

bewildered before the Supreme Lord in His personal feature, which possesses all beauty, opulence, knowledge, strength, fame and renunciation. When even those who are in goodness cannot understand, what hope is there for those in passion and ignorance? Kṛṣṇa consciousness is transcendental to all these three modes of material nature, and those who are truly established in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are actually liberated.

Chapter 7—Text 14

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etām taranti te*

SYNONYMS

daivī—transcendental; *hi*—certainly; *eṣā*—this; *guṇa-mayī*—consisting of the three modes of material nature; *mama*—My; *māyā*—energy; *duratyayā*—very difficult to overcome; *mām*—unto Me; *eva*—certainly; *ye*—those who; *prapadyante*—surrender; *māyām etām*—this illusory energy; *taranti*—overcome; *te*—they.

TRANSLATION

This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.

PURPORT

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has innumerable energies, and all these energies are divine. Although the living entities are part of His energies and are therefore divine, due to contact with material energy their original superior power is covered. Being thus covered by material energy, one cannot possibly overcome its influence. As previously stated, both the material and spiritual natures, being emanations from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are eternal. The living entities belong to the eternal superior nature of the Lord, but due to contamination by the inferior nature, matter, their illusion is also eternal. The conditioned soul is therefore called *nitya-baddha*, or eternally conditioned. No one can trace out the history of his becoming conditioned at a certain date in material history. Consequently, his release from the clutches of material nature is very difficult, even though that material nature is an inferior energy, because material energy is ultimately conducted by the supreme will, which the living entity cannot overcome. Inferior, material nature is defined herein as divine nature due to its divine connection and movement by the divine will. Being conducted by divine will, material nature, although inferior, acts so wonderfully in the construction and destruction of the cosmic manifestation. The *Vedas* confirm this as follows: *māyām tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān māyinaṁ tu maheśvaram*. “Although *māyā* [illusion] is false or temporary, the background of *māyā* is the supreme magician, the Personality of Godhead, who is Maheśvara, the supreme controller.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.10)

Another meaning of *guṇa* is rope; it is to be understood that the conditioned soul is tightly tied by the ropes of illusion. A man bound by the hands and feet cannot free himself—he must be helped by a person who is unbound. Because the bound cannot help the bound, the rescuer must be liberated. Therefore, only Lord Kṛṣṇa, or His bona fide representative

the spiritual master, can release the conditioned soul. Without such superior help, one cannot be freed from the bondage of material nature. Devotional service, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, can help one gain such release. Kṛṣṇa, being the Lord of illusory energy, can order this insurmountable energy to release the conditioned soul. He orders this release out of His causeless mercy on the surrendered soul and out of His paternal affection for the living entity, who is originally a beloved son of the Lord. Therefore surrender unto the lotus feet of the Lord is the only means to get free from the clutches of the stringent material nature.

The words *mām eva* are also significant. *Mām* means unto Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu) only, and not Brahmā or Śiva. Although Brahmā and Śiva are greatly elevated and are almost on the level of Viṣṇu, it is not possible for such incarnations of *rajo-guṇa* (passion) and *tamo-guṇa* (ignorance) to release the conditioned soul from the clutches of *māyā*. In other words, both Brahmā and Śiva are also under the influence of *māyā*. Only Viṣṇu is the master of *māyā*; therefore He alone can give release to the conditioned soul. The *Vedas* (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8) confirm this in the phrase *tam eva viditvā*. or “Freedom is possible only by understanding Kṛṣṇa.” Even Lord Śiva affirms that liberation can be achieved only by the mercy of Viṣṇu. Lord Śiva says, *mukti-pradātā sarveṣāṃ viṣṇur eva na saṁśayaḥ*: “There is no doubt that Viṣṇu is the deliverer of liberation for everyone.”

Chapter 7—Text 15

*na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ*

SYNONYMS

na—not; *mām*—unto Me; *duṣkṛtinaḥ*—miscreants; *mūḍhāḥ*—foolish; *prapadyante*—surrender; *nara-adhamāḥ*—lowest among mankind; *māyayā*—by the illusory energy; *apahṛta*—stolen; *jñānāḥ*—whose knowledge; *āsuram*—demonic; *bhāvam*—nature; *āśritāḥ*—accepting.

TRANSLATION

Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons do not surrender unto Me.

PURPORT

It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* that simply by surrendering oneself unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality Kṛṣṇa one can surmount the stringent laws of material nature. At this point a question arises: How is it that educated philosophers, scientists, businessmen, administrators and all the leaders of ordinary men do not surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-powerful Personality of Godhead? *Mukti*, or liberation from the laws of material nature, is sought by the leaders of mankind in different ways and with great plans and perseverance for a great many years and births. But if that liberation is possible by simply surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then why don't these intelligent and hard-working leaders adopt this simple method?

The *Gītā* answers this question very frankly. Those really learned leaders of society like Brahmā, Śiva, Kapila, the Kumāras, Manu, Vyāsa, Devala, Asita, Janaka, Prahlāda, Bali, and later on Madhvācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Caitanya and many others—who are faithful philosophers, politicians, educators, scientists, etc.—surrender to the lotus feet of the Supreme Person, the all-powerful authority. Those who are not actually philosophers, scientists, educators, administrators, etc., but who pose themselves as such for material gain, do not accept the plan or path of the Supreme Lord. They have no idea of God; they simply manufacture their own worldly plans and consequently complicate the problems of material existence in their vain attempts to solve them. Because material energy (nature) is so powerful, it can resist the unauthorized plans of the atheists and baffle the knowledge of “planning commissions.”

The atheistic planmakers are described herein by the word *duṣkṛtinaḥ*, or “miscreants.” *Kṛtī* means one who has performed meritorious work. The atheist planmaker is sometimes

very intelligent and meritorious also, because any gigantic plan, good or bad, must take intelligence to execute. But because the atheist's brain is improperly utilized in opposing the plan of the Supreme Lord, the atheistic planmaker is called *duṣkṛtī*. which indicates that his intelligence and efforts are misdirected.

In the *Gītā* it is clearly mentioned that material energy works fully under the direction of the Supreme Lord. It has no independent authority. It works as the shadow moves, in accordance with the movements of the object. But still material energy is very powerful, and the atheist, due to his godless temperament, cannot know how it works; nor can he know the plan of the Supreme Lord. Under illusion and the modes of passion and ignorance, all his plans are baffled, as in the case of Hiraṇyakaśipu and Rāvaṇa, whose plans were smashed to dust although they were both materially learned as scientists, philosophers, administrators and educators. These *duṣkṛtinas*, or miscreants, are of four different patterns, as outlined below.

(1) The *mūḍhas* are those who are grossly foolish, like hardworking beasts of burden. They want to enjoy the fruits of their labor by themselves, and so do not want to part with them for the Supreme. The typical example of the beast of burden is the ass. This humble beast is made to work very hard by his master. The ass does not really know for whom he works so hard day and night. He remains satisfied by filling his stomach with a bundle of grass, sleeping for a while under fear of being beaten by his master, and satisfying his sex appetite at the risk of being repeatedly kicked by the opposite party. The ass sings poetry and philosophy sometimes, but this braying sound only disturbs others. This is the position of the foolish fruitive worker who does not know for whom he should work. He does not know that *karma* (action) is meant for *yajña* (sacrifice).

Most often, those who work very hard day and night to clear the burden of self-created duties say that they have no time to hear of the immortality of the living being. To such *mūḍhas*, material gains, which are destructible, are life's all in all—despite the fact that the *mūḍhas* enjoy only a very small fraction of the fruit of labor. Sometimes they spend sleepless days and nights for fruitive gain, and although they may have ulcers or indigestion, they are satisfied with practically no food; they are simply absorbed in working hard day and night for the benefit of illusory masters. Ignorant of their real master, the foolish workers waste their valuable time serving mammon. Unfortunately, they never surrender to the supreme master of all masters, nor do they take time to hear of Him from the proper sources. The swine who eat the night soil do not care to accept sweetmeats made of sugar and ghee. Similarly, the foolish worker will untiringly continue to hear of the sense-enjoyable tidings of the flickering mundane world, but will have very little time to hear about the eternal living force that moves the material world.

(2) Another class of *duṣkṛtī*, or miscreant, is called the *narādhama*, or the lowest of mankind. *Nara* means human being, and *adhama* means the lowest. Out of the 8,400,000 different species of living beings, there are 400,000 human species. Out of these there are numerous lower forms of human life that are mostly uncivilized. The civilized human beings are those who have regulative principles of social, political and religious life. Those who are socially and politically developed but who have no religious principles must be

considered *narādhama*s. Nor is religion without God religion, because the purpose of following religious principles is to know the Supreme Truth and man's relation with Him. In the *Gītā* the Personality of Godhead clearly states that there is no authority above Him and that He is the Supreme Truth. The civilized form of human life is meant for man's *reviving the lost consciousness* of his eternal relation with the Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is all-powerful. Whoever loses this chance is classified as a *narādhama*. We get information from revealed scriptures that when the baby is in the mother's womb (an extremely uncomfortable situation) he prays to God for deliverance and promises to worship Him alone as soon as he gets out. To pray to God when he is in difficulty is a natural instinct in every living being because he is eternally related with God. But after his deliverance, the child forgets the difficulties of birth and forgets his deliverer also, being influenced by *māyā*, the illusory energy.

It is the duty of the guardians of children to revive the divine consciousness dormant in them. The ten processes of reformatory ceremonies, as enjoined in the *Manu-smṛiti*, which is the guide to religious principles, are meant for reviving God consciousness in the system of *varṇāśrama*. However, no process is strictly followed now in any part of the world, and therefore 99.9 percent of the population is *narādhama*.

When the whole population becomes *narādhama*, naturally all their so-called education is made null and void by the all-powerful energy of physical nature. According to the standard of the *Gītā*, a learned man is he who sees on equal terms the learned *brāhmaṇa*, the dog, the cow, the elephant and the dog-eater. That is the vision of a true devotee. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is the incarnation of Godhead as divine master, delivered the typical *narādhama*s, the brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi, and showed how the mercy of a real devotee is bestowed upon the lowest of mankind. So the *narādhama* who is condemned by the Personality of Godhead can again revive his spiritual consciousness only by the mercy of a devotee.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in propagating the *bhāgavata-dharma*, or activities of the devotees, has recommended that people submissively hear the message of the Personality of Godhead. The essence of this message is *Bhagavad-gītā*. The lowest amongst human beings can be delivered by this submissive hearing process only, but unfortunately they even refuse to give an aural reception to these messages, and what to speak of surrendering to the will of the Supreme Lord? *Narādhama*s, or the lowest of mankind, will fully neglect the prime duty of the human being.

(3) The next class of *duṣkṛtī* is called *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ*, or those persons whose erudite knowledge has been nullified by the influence of illusory material energy. They are mostly very learned fellows—great philosophers, poets, literati, scientists, etc.—but the illusory energy misguides them, and therefore they disobey the Supreme Lord.

There are a great number of *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ* at the present moment, even amongst the scholars of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the *Gītā*, in plain and simple language, it is stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is none equal to or greater than Him. He is mentioned as the father of Brahmā, the original father of all human beings. In fact, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is said to be not only the father of Brahmā but also the father of all species

of life. He is the root of the impersonal Brahman and Paramātmā; the Supersoul in every entity is His plenary portion. He is the fountainhead of everything, and everyone is advised to surrender unto His lotus feet. Despite all these clear statements, the *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ* deride the personality of the Supreme Lord and consider Him merely another human being. They do not know that the blessed form of human life is designed after the eternal and transcendental feature of the Supreme Lord.

All the unauthorized interpretations of the *Gītā* by the class of *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ*, outside the purview of the *paramparā* system, are so many stumbling blocks on the path of spiritual understanding. The deluded interpreters do not surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, nor do they teach others to follow this principle.

(4) The last class of *duṣkṛtī* is called *āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ*, or those of demonic principles. This class is openly atheistic. Some of them argue that the Supreme Lord can never descend upon this material world, but they are unable to give any tangible reasons as to why not. There are others who make Him subordinate to the impersonal feature, although the opposite is declared in the *Gītā*. Envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the atheist will present a number of illicit incarnations manufactured in the factory of his brain. Such persons, whose very principle of life is to decry the Personality of Godhead, cannot surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Yāmunācārya Albandarū of South India said, “O my Lord! You are unknowable to persons involved with atheistic principles, despite Your uncommon qualities, features and activities, despite Your personality’s being confirmed by all the revealed scriptures in the quality of goodness, and despite Your being acknowledged by the famous authorities renowned for their depth of knowledge in the transcendental science and situated in the godly qualities.”

Therefore, (1) grossly foolish persons, (2) the lowest of mankind, (3) the deluded speculators, and (4) the professed atheists, as above mentioned, never surrender unto the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead in spite of all scriptural and authoritative advice.

Chapter 7—Text 16

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukr̥tino 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha*

SYNONYMS

catur-vidhāḥ—four kinds of; *bhajante*—render services; *mām*—unto Me; *janāḥ*—persons; *su-kr̥tinaḥ*—those who are pious; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *ārtaḥ*—the distressed; *jijñāsuḥ*—the inquisitive; *artha-arthī*—one who desires material gain; *jñānī*—one who knows things as they are; *ca*—also; *bharata-rṣabha*—O great one amongst the descendants of Bharata.

TRANSLATION

O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

PURPORT

Unlike the miscreants, these are adherents of the regulative principles of the scriptures, and they are called *su-kr̥tinaḥ*, or those who obey the rules and regulations of scriptures, the moral and social laws, and are, more or less, devoted to the Supreme Lord. Out of these there are four classes of men—those who are sometimes distressed, those who are in need of money, those who are sometimes inquisitive, and those who are sometimes searching after knowledge of the Absolute Truth. These persons come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions. These are not pure devotees, because they have some aspiration to fulfill in exchange for devotional service. Pure devotional service is without aspiration and without desire for material profit. The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) defines pure devotion thus:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*
[Madhya 19.167]

“One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service.”

When these four kinds of persons come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service and are completely purified by the association of a pure devotee, they also become pure devotees. As far as the miscreants are concerned, for them devotional service is very

difficult because their lives are selfish, irregular and without spiritual goals. But even some of them, by chance, when they come in contact with a pure devotee, also become pure devotees.

Those who are always busy with fruitive activities come to the Lord in material distress and at that time associate with pure devotees and become, in their distress, devotees of the Lord. Those who are simply frustrated also come sometimes to associate with the pure devotees and become inquisitive to know about God. Similarly, when the dry philosophers are frustrated in every field of knowledge, they sometimes want to learn of God, and they come to the Supreme Lord to render devotional service and thus transcend knowledge of the impersonal Brahman and the localized Paramātmā and come to the personal conception of Godhead by the grace of the Supreme Lord or His pure devotee. On the whole, when the distressed, the inquisitive, the seekers of knowledge, and those who are in need of money are free from all material desires, and when they fully understand that material remuneration has nothing to do with spiritual improvement, they become pure devotees. As long as such a purified stage is not attained, devotees in transcendental service to the Lord are tainted with fruitive activities, the search for mundane knowledge, etc. So one has to transcend all this before one can come to the stage of pure devotional service.

Chapter 7—Text 17

*teṣām jñānī nitya-yukta
eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham
aham sa ca mama priyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

teṣām—out of them; *jñānī*—one in full knowledge; *nitya-yuktaḥ*—always engaged; *eka*—only; *bhaktiḥ*—in devotional service; *viśiṣyate*—is special; *priyaḥ*—very dear; *hi*—certainly; *jñāninaḥ*—to the person in knowledge; *atyartham*—highly; *aham*—I am; *saḥ*—he; *ca*—also; *mama*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—dear.

TRANSLATION

Of these, the one who is in full knowledge and who is always engaged in pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

PURPORT

Free from all contaminations of material desires, the distressed, the inquisitive, the penniless and the seeker after supreme knowledge can all become pure devotees. But out of them, he who is in knowledge of the Absolute Truth and free from all material desires becomes a really pure devotee of the Lord. And of the four orders, the devotee who is in full knowledge and is at the same time engaged in devotional service is, the Lord says, the best. By searching after knowledge one realizes that his self is different from his material body, and when further advanced he comes to the knowledge of impersonal Brahman and Paramātmā. When one is fully purified, he realizes that his constitutional position is to be the eternal servant of God. So by association with pure devotees the inquisitive, the distressed, the seeker after material amelioration and the man in knowledge all become themselves pure. But in the preparatory stage, the man who is in full knowledge of the Supreme Lord and is at the same time executing devotional service is very dear to the Lord. He who is situated in pure knowledge of the transcendence of the Supreme Personality of God is so protected in devotional service that material contamination cannot touch him.

Chapter 7—Text 18

*udārāḥ sarva evaite
jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā
mām evānuttamām gatim*

SYNONYMS

udārāḥ—magnanimous; *sarve*—all; *eva*—certainly; *ete*—these; *jñānī*—one who is in knowledge; *tu*—but; *ātmā eva*—just like Myself; *me*—My; *matam*—opinion; *āsthitaḥ*—situated; *saḥ*—he; *hi*—certainly; *yukta-ātmā*—engaged in devotional service; *mām*—in Me; *eva*—certainly; *anuttamām*—the highest; *gatim*—destination.

TRANSLATION

All these devotees are undoubtedly magnanimous souls, but he who is situated in knowledge of Me I consider to be just like My own self. Being engaged in My transcendental service, he is sure to attain Me, the highest and most perfect goal.

PURPORT

It is not that devotees who are less complete in knowledge are not dear to the Lord. The Lord says that all are magnanimous because anyone who comes to the Lord for any purpose is called a *mahātmā*, or great soul. The devotees who want some benefit out of devotional service are accepted by the Lord because there is an exchange of affection. Out of affection they ask the Lord for some material benefit, and when they get it they become so satisfied that they also advance in devotional service. But the devotee in full knowledge is considered to be very dear to the Lord because his only purpose is to serve the Supreme Lord with love and devotion. Such a devotee cannot live a second without contacting or serving the Supreme Lord. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is very fond of His devotee and cannot be separated from him.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.68), the Lord says:

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ
sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jñanti
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api*

“The devotees are always in My heart, and I am always in the hearts of the devotees. The devotee does not know anything beyond Me, and I also cannot forget the devotee. There is a very intimate relationship between Me and the pure devotees. Pure devotees in full knowledge are never out of spiritual touch, and therefore they are very much dear to Me.”

Chapter 7—Text 19

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti
sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ*

SYNONYMS

bahūnām—many; *janmanām*—repeated births and deaths; *ante*—after; *jñāna-vān*—one who is in full knowledge; *mām*—unto Me; *prapadyate*—surrenders; *vāsudevaḥ*—the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa; *sarvam*—everything; *iti*—thus; *saḥ*—that; *mahā-ātmā*—great soul; *su-durlabhaḥ*—very rare to see.

TRANSLATION

After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.

PURPORT

The living entity, while executing devotional service or transcendental rituals after many, many births, may actually become situated in transcendental pure knowledge that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate goal of spiritual realization. In the beginning of spiritual realization, while one is trying to give up one's attachment to materialism, there is some leaning towards impersonalism, but when one is further advanced he can understand that there are activities in the spiritual life and that these activities constitute devotional service. Realizing this, he becomes attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and surrenders to Him. At such a time one can understand that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy is everything, that He is the cause of all causes and that this material manifestation is not independent from Him. He realizes the material world to be a perverted reflection of spiritual variegatedness and realizes that in everything there is a relationship with the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus he thinks of everything in relation to Vāsudeva, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such a universal vision of Vāsudeva precipitates one's full surrender to the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the highest goal. Such surrendered great souls are very rare.

This verse is very nicely explained in the Third Chapter (verses 14 and 15) of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*:

*sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḥ
sahasrākṣaḥ sahasra-pāt
sa bhūmim viśvato vṛtvā-
tyātiṣṭhad daśāṅgulam
puruṣa evedam sarvaṁ*

yad bhūtaṁ yac ca bhavyam
utāmṛtatvasyeśāno
yad annenā tirohati

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (5.1.15) it is said, *na vai vāco na cakṣūṁṣi na śrotrāṇi na manāṁsīty ācakṣate prāṇa iti evācakṣate prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavanti*: “In the body of a living being neither the power to speak, nor the power to see, nor the power to hear, nor the power to think is the prime factor; it is life which is the center of all activities.” Similarly Lord Vāsudeva, or the Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the prime entity in everything. In this body there are powers of speaking, of seeing, of hearing, of mental activities, etc. But these are not important if not related to the Supreme Lord. And because Vāsudeva is all-pervading and everything is Vāsudeva, the devotee surrenders in full knowledge (cf. *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.17 and 11.40).

Chapter 7—Text 20

*kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ
prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
tam tam niyamam āsthāya
prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā*

SYNONYMS

kāmaiḥ—by desires; *taiḥ taiḥ*—various; *hṛta*—deprived of; *jñānāḥ*—knowledge; *prapadyante*—surrender; *anya*—to other; *devatāḥ*—demigods; *tam tam*—corresponding; *niyamam*—regulations; *āsthāya*—following; *prakṛtyā*—by nature; *niyatāḥ*—controlled; *svayā*—by their own.

TRANSLATION

Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures.

PURPORT

Those who are freed from all material contaminations surrender unto the Supreme Lord and engage in His devotional service. As long as the material contamination is not completely washed off, they are by nature nondevotees. But even those who have material desires and who resort to the Supreme Lord are not so much attracted by external nature; because of approaching the right goal, they soon become free from all material lust. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is recommended that whether one is a pure devotee and is free from all material desires, or is full of material desires, or desires liberation from material contamination, he should in all cases surrender to Vāsudeva and worship Him. As stated in the *Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10):

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

Less intelligent people who have lost their spiritual sense take shelter of demigods for immediate fulfillment of material desires. Generally, such people do not go to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because they are in the lower modes of nature (ignorance and passion) and therefore worship various demigods. Following the rules and regulations of worship, they are satisfied. The worshipers of demigods are motivated by small desires and do not know how to reach the supreme goal, but a devotee of the Supreme Lord is not misguided. Because in Vedic literature there are recommendations for worshiping different gods for different purposes (e.g., a diseased man is recommended to worship the sun), those who are not devotees of the Lord think that for certain purposes demigods are better than

the Supreme Lord. But a pure devotee knows that the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of all. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi* 5.142) it is said, *ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya*: only the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is master, and all others are servants. Therefore a pure devotee never goes to demigods for satisfaction of his material needs. He depends on the Supreme Lord. And the pure devotee is satisfied with whatever He gives.

Chapter 7—Text 21

*yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktaḥ
śraddhayārcitum icchati
tasya tasyācalām śraddhām
tām eva vidadhāmy aham*

SYNONYMS

yaḥ yaḥ—whoever; *yām yām*—whichever; *tanum*—form of a demigod; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *arcitum*—to worship; *icchati*—desires; *tasya tasya*—to him; *acalām*—steady; *śraddhām*—faith; *tām*—that; *eva*—surely; *vidadhāmi*—give; *aham*—I.

TRANSLATION

I am in everyone’s heart as the Supersoul. As soon as one desires to worship some demigod, I make his faith steady so that he can devote himself to that particular deity.

PURPORT

God has given independence to everyone; therefore, if a person desires to have material enjoyment and wants very sincerely to have such facilities from the material demigods, the Supreme Lord, as Supersoul in everyone’s heart, understands and gives facilities to such persons. As the supreme father of all living entities, He does not interfere with their independence, but gives all facilities so that they can fulfill their material desires. Some may ask why the all-powerful God gives facilities to the living entities for enjoying this material world and so lets them fall into the trap of the illusory energy. The answer is that if the Supreme Lord as Supersoul does not give such facilities, then there is no meaning to independence. Therefore He gives everyone full independence—whatever one likes—but His ultimate instruction we find in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: one should give up all other engagements and fully surrender unto Him. That will make man happy.

Both the living entity and the demigods are subordinate to the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore the living entity cannot worship the demigod by his own desire, nor can the demigod bestow any benediction without the supreme will. As it is said, not a blade of grass moves without the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Generally, persons who are distressed in the material world go to the demigods, as they are advised in the Vedic literature. A person wanting some particular thing may worship such and such a demigod. For example, a diseased person is recommended to worship the sun-god; a person wanting education may worship the goddess of learning, Sarasvatī; and a person wanting a beautiful wife may worship the goddess Umā, the wife of Lord Śiva. In this way there are recommendations in the *śāstras* (Vedic scriptures) for different modes of worship of different demigods. And because a particular living entity wants to enjoy a particular material facility, the Lord inspires him with a strong desire to achieve that benediction from that particular demigod, and so he successfully receives the benediction.

The particular mode of the devotional attitude of the living entity toward a particular type of demigod is also arranged by the Supreme Lord. The demigods cannot infuse the living entities with such an affinity, but because He is the Supreme Lord, or the Supersoul who is present in the hearts of all living entities, Kṛṣṇa gives impetus to man to worship certain demigods. The demigods are actually different parts of the universal body of the Supreme Lord; therefore they have no independence. In the Vedic literature it is stated: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead as Supersoul is also present within the heart of the demigod; therefore He arranges through the demigod to fulfill the desire of the living entity. But both the demigod and the living entity are dependent on the supreme will. They are not independent.”

Chapter 7—Text 22

*sa tayā śraddhayā yuktaḥ
tasyārāadhanam īhate
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān
mayaiva vihitān hi tān*

SYNONYMS

saḥ—he; *tayā*—with that; *śraddhayā*—inspiration; *yuktaḥ*—endowed; *tasya*—of that demigod; *ārāadhanam*—for the worship; *īhate*—he aspires; *labhate*—obtains; *ca*—and; *tataḥ*—from that; *kāmān*—his desires; *mayā*—by Me; *eva*—alone; *vihitān*—arranged; *hi*—certainly; *tān*—those.

TRANSLATION

Endowed with such a faith, he endeavors to worship a particular demigod and obtains his desires. But in actuality these benefits are bestowed by Me alone.

PURPORT

The demigods cannot award benedictions to their devotees without the permission of the Supreme Lord. The living entity may forget that everything is the property of the Supreme Lord, but the demigods do not forget. So the worship of demigods and achievement of desired results are due not to the demigods but to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by arrangement. The less intelligent living entity does not know this, and therefore he foolishly goes to the demigods for some benefit. But the pure devotee, when in need of something, prays only to the Supreme Lord. Asking for material benefit, however, is not a sign of a pure devotee. A living entity goes to the demigods usually because he is mad to fulfill his lust. This happens when something undue is desired by the living entity and the Lord Himself does not fulfill the desire. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that one who worships the Supreme Lord and at the same time desires material enjoyment is contradictory in his desires. Devotional service to the Supreme Lord and the worship of a demigod cannot be on the same platform, because worship of a demigod is material and devotional service to the Supreme Lord is completely spiritual.

For the living entity who desires to return to Godhead, material desires are impediments. A pure devotee of the Lord is therefore not awarded the material benefits desired by less intelligent living entities, who therefore prefer to worship demigods of the material world rather than engage in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord.

Chapter 7—Text 23

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām
devān deva-yajo yānti
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*

SYNONYMS

anta-vat—perishable; *tu*—but; *phalam*—fruit; *teṣām*—their; *tat*—that; *bhavati*—becomes; *alpa-medhasām*—of those of small intelligence; *devān*—to the demigods; *deva-yajaḥ*—the worshipers of the demigods; *yānti*—go; *mat*—My; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *yānti*—go; *mām*—to Me; *api*—also.

TRANSLATION

Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, but My devotees ultimately reach My supreme planet.

PURPORT

Some commentators on the *Bhagavad-gītā* say that one who worships a demigod can reach the Supreme Lord, but here it is clearly stated that the worshipers of demigods go to the different planetary systems where various demigods are situated, just as a worshiper of the sun achieves the sun or a worshiper of the demigod of the moon achieves the moon. Similarly, if anyone wants to worship a demigod like Indra, he can attain that particular god's planet. It is not that everyone, regardless of whatever demigod is worshiped, will reach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is denied here, for it is clearly stated that the worshipers of demigods go to different planets in the material world but the devotee of the Supreme Lord goes directly to the supreme planet of the Personality of Godhead. Here the point may be raised that if the demigods are different parts of the body of the Supreme Lord, then the same end should be achieved by worshiping them. However, worshipers of the demigods are less intelligent because they don't know to what part of the body food must be supplied. Some of them are so foolish that they claim that there are many parts and many ways to supply food. This isn't very sanguine. Can anyone supply food to the body through the ears or eyes? They do not know that these demigods are different parts of the universal body of the Supreme Lord, and in their ignorance they believe that each and every demigod is a separate God and a competitor of the Supreme Lord.

Not only are demigods parts of the Supreme Lord, but ordinary living entities are also. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that the *brāhmaṇas* are the head of the Supreme Lord, the *kṣatriyas* are His arms, the *vaiśyas* are His waist, the *śūdras* are His legs, and all serve different functions. Regardless of the situation, if one knows that both the demigods and

himself are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, his knowledge is perfect. But if he does not understand this, he achieves different planets where the demigods reside. This is not the same destination the devotee reaches.

The results achieved by the demigods' benedictions are perishable because within this material world the planets, the demigods and their worshipers are all perishable. Therefore it is clearly stated in this verse that all results achieved by worshiping demigods are perishable, and therefore such worship is performed by the less intelligent living entity. Because the pure devotee engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service of the Supreme Lord achieves eternal blissful existence that is full of knowledge, his achievements and those of the common worshiper of the demigods are different. The Supreme Lord is unlimited; His favor is unlimited; His mercy is unlimited. Therefore the mercy of the Supreme Lord upon His pure devotees is unlimited.

Chapter 7—Text 24

*avyaktaṁ vyaktim āpannam
manyante mām abuddhayaḥ
param bhāvam ajānanto
mamāvyayam anuttamam*

SYNONYMS

avyaktam—nonmanifested; *vyaktim*—personality; *āpannam*—achieved; *manyante*—think; *mām*—Me; *abuddhayaḥ*—less intelligent persons; *param*—supreme; *bhāvam*—existence; *ajānantaḥ*—without knowing; *mama*—My; *avyayam*—imperishable; *anuttamam*—the finest.

TRANSLATION

Unintelligent men, who do not know Me perfectly, think that I, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, was impersonal before and have now assumed this personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is imperishable and supreme.

PURPORT

Those who are worshipers of demigods have been described as less intelligent persons, and here the impersonalists are similarly described. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His personal form is here speaking before Arjuna, and still, due to ignorance, impersonalists argue that the Supreme Lord ultimately has no form. Yāmunācārya, a great devotee of the Lord in the disciplic succession of Rāmānujācārya, has written two very appropriate verses in this connection. He says,

*tvām śīla-rūpa-caritaiḥ parama-prakṛṣṭaiḥ
sattvena sāttvikatayā prabalaś ca śāstraiḥ
prakhyāta-daiva-paramārtha-vidām mataiś ca
naivāsura-prakṛtayaḥ prabhavanti boddhum*

“My dear Lord, devotees like Vyāsadeva and Nārada know You to be the Personality of Godhead. By understanding different Vedic literatures, one can come to know Your characteristics, Your form and Your activities, and one can thus understand that You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But those who are in the modes of passion and ignorance, the demons, the nondevotees, cannot understand You. They are unable to understand You. However expert such nondevotees may be in discussing *Vedānta* and the *Upaniṣads* and other Vedic literatures, it is not possible for them to understand the Personality of Godhead.” (*Stotra-ratna* 12)

In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is stated that the Personality of Godhead cannot be understood simply by study of the *Vedānta* literature. Only by the mercy of the Supreme Lord can the

Personality of the Supreme be known. Therefore in this verse it is clearly stated that not only are the worshipers of the demigods less intelligent, but those nondevotees who are engaged in *Vedānta* and speculation on Vedic literature without any tinge of true Kṛṣṇa consciousness are also less intelligent, and for them it is not possible to understand God's personal nature. Persons who are under the impression that the Absolute Truth is impersonal are described as *abuddhayaḥ*, which means those who do not know the ultimate feature of the Absolute Truth. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated that supreme realization begins from the impersonal Brahman and then rises to the localized Supersoul—but the ultimate word in the Absolute Truth is the Personality of Godhead. Modern impersonalists are still less intelligent, for they do not even follow their great predecessor Śaṅkarācārya, who has specifically stated that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Impersonalists, therefore, not knowing the Supreme Truth, think Kṛṣṇa to be only the son of Devakī and Vasudeva, or a prince, or a powerful living entity. This is also condemned in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11). *Avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*: “Only the fools regard Me as an ordinary person.”

The fact is that no one can understand Kṛṣṇa without rendering devotional service and without developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The *Bhāgavatam* (10.14.29) confirms this:

*athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvan*

“My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the *Vedas* for many years.” One cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, or His form, quality or name simply by mental speculation or by discussing Vedic literature. One must understand Him by devotional service. When one is fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beginning by chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—then only can one understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nondevotee impersonalists think that Kṛṣṇa has a body made of this material nature and that all His activities, His form and everything are *māyā*. These impersonalists are known as *Māyāvādīs*. They do not know the ultimate truth.

The twentieth verse clearly states, *kāmais tais tair hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ*. “Those who are blinded by lusty desires surrender unto the different demigods.” It is accepted that besides the Supreme Personality of Godhead, there are demigods who have their different planets, and the Lord also has a planet. As stated in the twenty-third verse, *devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api*: the worshipers of the demigods go to the different planets of the demigods, and those who are devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa go to the Kṛṣṇaloka planet. Although this is clearly stated, the foolish impersonalists still maintain that the Lord is formless and that these forms are impositions. From the study of the *Gītā*

does it appear that the demigods and their abodes are impersonal? Clearly, neither the demigods nor Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are impersonal. They are all persons; Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He has His own planet, and the demigods have theirs.

Therefore the monistic contention that ultimate truth is formless and that form is imposed does not hold true. It is clearly stated here that it is not imposed. From the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can clearly understand that the forms of the demigods and the form of the Supreme Lord are simultaneously existing and that Lord Kṛṣṇa is *sac-cid-ānanda*, eternal blissful knowledge. The *Vedas* also confirm that the Supreme Absolute Truth is *ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt*, or by nature full of blissful pleasure, and that He is the reservoir of unlimited auspicious qualities. And in the *Gītā* the Lord says that although He is *aja* (unborn), He still appears. These are the facts that we should understand from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. We cannot understand how the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be impersonal; the imposition theory of the impersonalist monist is false as far as the statements of the *Gītā* are concerned. It is clear herein that the Supreme Absolute Truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has both form and personality.

Chapter 7—Text 25

*nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya
yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti
loko mām ajam avyayam*

SYNONYMS

na—nor; *aham*—I; *prakāśaḥ*—manifest; *sarvasya*—to everyone; *yoga-māyā*—by internal potency; *samāvṛtaḥ*—covered; *mūḍhaḥ*—foolish; *ayaṁ*—these; *na*—not; *abhijānāti*—can understand; *lokaḥ*—persons; *mām*—Me; *ajam*—unborn; *avyayam*—inexhaustible.

TRANSLATION

I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My internal potency, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible.

PURPORT

It may be argued that since Kṛṣṇa was present on this earth and was visible to everyone, then why isn't He manifest to everyone now? But actually He was not manifest to everyone. When Kṛṣṇa was present there were only a few people who could understand Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the assembly of Kurus, when Śiśupāla spoke against Kṛṣṇa's being elected president of the assembly, Bhīṣma supported Him and proclaimed Him to be the Supreme God. Similarly, the Pāṇḍavas and a few others knew that He was the Supreme, but not everyone. He was not revealed to the nondevotees and the common man. Therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that but for His pure devotees, all men consider Him to be like themselves. He was manifest only to His devotees as the reservoir of all pleasure. But to others, to unintelligent nondevotees, He was covered by His internal potency.

In the prayers of Kuntī in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.8.19) it is said that the Lord is covered by the curtain of *yoga-māyā* and thus ordinary people cannot understand Him. This *yoga-māyā* curtain is also confirmed in the *Īśopaniṣad* (*mantra* 15), in which the devotee prays:

*hiraṇmayena pātreṇa
satyasyāpihitaṁ mukham
tat tvaṁ pūṣann apāvṛṇu
satya-dharmāya dṛṣṭaye*

“O my Lord, You are the maintainer of the entire universe, and devotional service to You is the highest religious principle. Therefore, I pray that You will also maintain me. Your transcendental form is covered by the *yoga-māyā*. The *brahmajyoti* is the covering of the internal potency. May You kindly remove this glowing effulgence that impedes my seeing

Your *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* [Bs. 5.1], Your eternal form of bliss and knowledge.” The Supreme Personality of Godhead in His transcendental form of bliss and knowledge is covered by the internal potency of the *brahmajyoti*, and the less intelligent impersonalists cannot see the Supreme on this account.

Also in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.7) there is this prayer by Brahmā: “O Supreme Personality of Godhead, O Supersoul, O master of all mystery, who can calculate Your potency and pastimes in this world? You are always expanding Your internal potency, and therefore no one can understand You. Learned scientists and learned scholars can examine the atomic constitution of the material world or even the planets, but still they are unable to calculate Your energy and potency, although You are present before them.” The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is not only unborn but also *avyaya*, inexhaustible. His eternal form is bliss and knowledge, and His energies are all inexhaustible.

Chapter 7—Text 26

*vedāhaṁ samatītāni
vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni
mām tu veda na kaścana*

SYNONYMS

veda—know; *aham*—I; *samatītāni*—completely past; *vartamānāni*—present; *ca*—and; *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *bhaviṣyāṇi*—future; *ca*—also; *bhūtāni*—all living entities; *mām*—Me; *tu*—but; *veda*—knows; *na*—not; *kaścana*—anyone.

TRANSLATION

O Arjuna, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I know everything that has happened in the past, all that is happening in the present, and all things that are yet to come. I also know all living entities; but Me no one knows.

PURPORT

Here the question of personality and impersonality is clearly stated. If Kṛṣṇa, the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, were *māyā*, material, as the impersonalists consider Him to be, then like the living entity He would change His body and forget everything about His past life. Anyone with a material body cannot remember his past life, nor can he foretell his future life, nor can he predict the outcome of his present life; therefore he cannot know what is happening in past, present and future. Unless one is liberated from material contamination, he cannot know past, present and future.

Unlike the ordinary human being, Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly says that He completely knows what happened in the past, what is happening in the present, and what will happen in the future. In the Fourth Chapter we have seen that Lord Kṛṣṇa remembers instructing Vivasvān, the sun-god, millions of years ago. Kṛṣṇa knows every living entity because He is situated in every living being's heart as the Supersoul. But despite His presence in every living entity as Supersoul and His presence as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the less intelligent, even if able to realize the impersonal Brahman, cannot realize Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person. Certainly the transcendental body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not perishable. He is just like the sun, and *māyā* is like a cloud. In the material world we can see that there is the sun and that there are clouds and different stars and planets. The clouds may cover all these in the sky temporarily, but this covering is only apparent to our limited vision. The sun, moon and stars are not actually covered. Similarly, *māyā* cannot cover the Supreme Lord. By His internal potency He is not manifest to the less intelligent class of men. As it is stated in the third verse of this chapter, out of millions and millions of men, some try to become perfect in this human form of life, and out of thousands and thousands of such perfected men, hardly one can understand what Lord Kṛṣṇa is. Even if one is perfected by

realization of impersonal Brahman or localized Paramātmā, he cannot possibly understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, without being in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Chapter 7—Text 27

*icchā-dveṣa-samutthena
dvandva-mohena bhārata
sarva-bhūtāni sammohaṁ
sarge yānti parantapa*

SYNONYMS

icchā—desire; *dveṣa*—and hate; *samutthena*—arisen from; *dvandva*—of duality; *mohena*—by the illusion; *bhārata*—O scion of Bharata; *sarva*—all; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *sammohaṁ*—into delusion; *sarge*—while taking birth; *yānti*—go; *parantapa*—O conqueror of enemies.

TRANSLATION

O scion of Bharata, O conqueror of the foe, all living entities are born into delusion, bewildered by dualities arisen from desire and hate.

PURPORT

The real constitutional position of the living entity is that of subordination to the Supreme Lord, who is pure knowledge. When one is deluded into separation from this pure knowledge, he becomes controlled by illusory energy and cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The illusory energy is manifested in the duality of desire and hate. Due to desire and hate, the ignorant person wants to become one with the Supreme Lord and envies Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Pure devotees, who are not deluded or contaminated by desire and hate, can understand that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears by His internal potencies, but those who are deluded by duality and nescience think that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is created by material energies. This is their misfortune. Such deluded persons, symptomatically, dwell in dualities of dishonor and honor, misery and happiness, woman and man, good and bad, pleasure and pain, etc., thinking, “This is my wife; this is my house; I am the master of this house; I am the husband of this wife.” These are the dualities of delusion. Those who are so deluded by dualities are completely foolish and therefore cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 7—Text 28

*yeṣām tv anta-gatam pāpam
janānām puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā
bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ*

SYNONYMS

yeṣām—whose; *tu*—but; *anta-gatam*—completely eradicated; *pāpam*—sin; *janānām*—of the persons; *puṇya*—pious; *karmaṇām*—whose previous activities; *te*—they; *dvandva*—of duality; *moha*—delusion; *nirmuktāḥ*—free from; *bhajante*—engage in devotional service; *mām*—to Me; *dṛḍha-vratāḥ*—with determination.

TRANSLATION

Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life and whose sinful actions are completely eradicated are freed from the dualities of delusion, and they engage themselves in My service with determination.

PURPORT

Those eligible for elevation to the transcendental position are mentioned in this verse. For those who are sinful, atheistic, foolish and deceitful, it is very difficult to transcend the duality of desire and hate. Only those who have passed their lives in practicing the regulative principles of religion, who have acted piously and who have conquered sinful reactions can accept devotional service and gradually rise to the pure knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then, gradually, they can meditate in trance on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is the process of being situated on the spiritual platform. This elevation is possible in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the association of pure devotees, for in the association of great devotees one can be delivered from delusion.

It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.2) that if one actually wants to be liberated he must render service to the devotees (*mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimukteḥ*); but one who associates with materialistic people is on the path leading to the darkest region of existence (*tamo-dvāram yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam*). All the devotees of the Lord traverse this earth just to recover the conditioned souls from their delusion. The impersonalists do not know that forgetting their constitutional position as subordinate to the Supreme Lord is the greatest violation of God's law. Unless one is reinstated in his own constitutional position, it is not possible to understand the Supreme Personality or to be fully engaged in His transcendental loving service with determination.

Chapter 7—Text 29

*jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya
mām āśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam
adhyātmam karma cākhilam*

SYNONYMS

jarā—from old age; *marāṇa*—and death; *mokṣāya*—for the purpose of liberation; *mām*—Me; *āśritya*—taking shelter of; *yatanti*—endeavor; *ye*—all those who; *te*—such persons; *brahma*—Brahman; *tat*—actually that; *viduḥ*—they know; *kṛtsnam*—everything; *adhyātmam*—transcendental; *karma*—activities; *ca*—also; *akhilam*—entirely.

TRANSLATION

Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from old age and death take refuge in Me in devotional service. They are actually Brahman because they entirely know everything about transcendental activities.

PURPORT

Birth, death, old age and diseases affect this material body, but not the spiritual body. There is no birth, death, old age and disease for the spiritual body, so one who attains a spiritual body, becomes one of the associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and engages in eternal devotional service is really liberated. *Aham brahmāsmi*: I am spirit. It is said that one should understand that he is Brahman, spirit soul. This Brahman conception of life is also in devotional service, as described in this verse. The pure devotees are transcendently situated on the Brahman platform, and they know everything about transcendental activities.

Four kinds of impure devotees who engage themselves in the transcendental service of the Lord achieve their respective goals, and by the grace of the Supreme Lord, when they are fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, they actually enjoy spiritual association with the Supreme Lord. But those who are worshipers of demigods never reach the Supreme Lord in His supreme planet. Even the less intelligent Brahman-realized persons cannot reach the supreme planet of Kṛṣṇa known as Goloka Vṛndāvana. Only persons who perform activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*mām āśritya*) are actually entitled to be called Brahman, because they are actually endeavoring to reach the Kṛṣṇa planet. Such persons have no misgivings about Kṛṣṇa, and thus they are factually Brahman.

Those who are engaged in worshiping the form or *arcā* of the Lord, or who are engaged in meditation on the Lord simply for liberation from material bondage, also know, by the grace of the Lord, the purports of Brahman, *adhibhūta*, etc., as explained by the Lord in the next chapter.

Chapter 7—Text 30

*sādhībhūtādhidaivam mām
sādhiyajñam ca ye viduḥ
prayāṇa-kāle 'pi ca mām
te vidur yukta-cetasah*

SYNONYMS

sa-adhibhūta—and the governing principle of the material manifestation; *adhidaivam*—governing all the demigods; *mām*—Me; *sa-adhiyajñam*—and governing all sacrifices; *ca*—also; *ye*—those who; *viduḥ*—know; *prayāṇa*—of death; *kāle*—at the time; *api*—even; *ca*—and; *mām*—Me; *te*—they; *viduḥ*—know; *yukta-cetasah*—their minds engaged in Me.

TRANSLATION

Those in full consciousness of Me, who know Me, the Supreme Lord, to be the governing principle of the material manifestation, of the demigods, and of all methods of sacrifice, can understand and know Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even at the time of death.

PURPORT

Persons acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are never deviated from the path of entirely understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the transcendental association of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one can understand how the Supreme Lord is the governing principle of the material manifestation and even of the demigods. Gradually, by such transcendental association, one becomes convinced of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and at the time of death such a Kṛṣṇa conscious person can never forget Kṛṣṇa. Naturally he is thus promoted to the planet of the Supreme Lord, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

This Seventh Chapter particularly explains how one can become a fully Kṛṣṇa conscious person. The beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is association of persons who are Kṛṣṇa conscious. Such association is spiritual and puts one directly in touch with the Supreme Lord, and, by His grace, one can understand Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At the same time one can really understand the constitutional position of the living entity and how the living entity forgets Kṛṣṇa and becomes entangled in material activities. By gradual development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in good association, the living entity can understand that due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa he has become conditioned by the laws of material nature. He can also understand that this human form of life is an opportunity to regain Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that it should be fully utilized to attain the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord.

Many subjects have been discussed in this chapter: the man in distress, the inquisitive man, the man in want of material necessities, knowledge of Brahman, knowledge of Paramātmā, liberation from birth, death and diseases, and worship of the Supreme Lord. However, he who is actually elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does not care for the

different processes. He simply directly engages himself in activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thereby factually attains his constitutional position as an eternal servitor of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In such a situation he takes pleasure in hearing and glorifying the Supreme Lord in pure devotional service. He is convinced that by his doing so, all his objectives will be fulfilled. This determined faith is called *dr̥ḍha-vrata*, and it is the beginning of *bhakti-yoga*, or transcendental loving service. That is the verdict of all scriptures. This Seventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is the substance of that conviction.

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