



Bhagavad Gita

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you,
nor all these people here before us. We exist forever.
We will continue to exist for all eternity.

— Sri Krishna

In devotional service of Sri Gauranga's Divine Messenger,
The Living Embodiment of Sri Gaurachandra's Teachings,
Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami

This book has been produced as a offering to
Ananta Sri Vibhusita Nitya-Lila-Pravistha
Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya
Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Humbly begging for the divine guidance graciously given by
Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya
Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj

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Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati

Thakur Bhaktivinode:

The souls of the great thinkers of the by-gone ages, who now live spiritually, often approach our enquiring spirit and assist it in its development. Thus Vyasa was assisted by Narada and Brahma.

Our Shastras, or in other words, books of thought, do not contain all that we could get from the infinite Father. No book is without its errors. God's revelation is absolute truth, but it is scarcely received and preserved in its natural purity. We have been advised in the 14th Chapter of the 11th Skandha of the Bhagavat to believe that truth when revealed is absolute, but it gets the tincture of the nature of the receiver in course of time and is converted into error by continual exchange of hands from age to age. New revelations, therefore, are continually necessary, in order to keep truth in its original purity. We are thus warned to be careful in our studies of old authors, however wise they are reputed to be. Here we have full liberty to reject the wrong idea which is not sanctioned by the peace of conscience.

Vyasa was not satisfied with what he collected in the Vedas, arranged in the Puranas and composed in the Mahabharata. The peace of his conscience did not sanction his labours. It told him from inside "No, Vyasa! you can't rest contented with the erroneous picture of truth which was necessarily presented to you by the sages of bygone days! You must yourself knock at the door of the inexhaustible store of truth from which the former ages drew their wealth. Go, go up to the fountain-head of truth where no pilgrim meets with disappointment of any kind."

Vyasa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have been all advised to do so.

— from "The Bhagavat Lecture"
a speech in the English language
by Thakur Bhaktivinode
at Dinajpur, Bangladesh, 1869.



Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

There exists a class of persons who insist upon taking scriptural texts only in their literal worldly sense. Much ingenuity has been expended in extracting meanings satisfactory to empiric judgment by means of this literal method. Their argument is not entirely unintelligible. Since the revealed scriptures are to be regarded as conveying knowledge of the Absolute, they conclude that the language itself must be inseparable from the meaning of the text. But from this they leap to the mistaken inference that the conditioned soul can ascertain the true meaning of scripture merely by adhering to the dictionary meanings of the words. This latter conclusion is wholly inapplicable to transcendental subject matter.

The words of scripture possess a double significance. Their ordinary dictionary meanings refer to objects of this world and are therefore inadequate in transcendental matters. The esoteric meaning cannot be accessed by the gross senses and mind of the conditioned soul. This is the great and insurmountable difficulty.

Literal interpreters commit grave error by overlooking this all-important consideration. The transcendental meaning of scriptural words cannot be conveyed to the senses of the conditioned soul unless he agrees to hear submissively the transcendental sound appearing upon the lips of the pure devotee. There exists a definite disciplic succession of bona fide teachers of Truth. The genuine spiritual teacher eventually becomes available to the sincere seeker of Absolute Reality.

— from the English-language article “Putana” first published in 1932 in The Harmonist newspaper of Sri Gaudiya Math.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter One

Observing the Armies

Sainya Darshana

dhritarastra uvacha

dharma-ksetre kuru-ksetre samaveta yuyutsavah

mamakah pandavas chaiva kim akurvata sanjaya [1]

dhrtarastrah uvacha—Dhrtarastra said: (he) sanjaya—O Sanjaya; dharma-ksetre kuru-ksetre—at the holy land of Kuruksetra; mamakah—Duryodhan and party; pandavah cha—and Yudhisthir and party; samavetah—who assembled; yuyutsavah—desirous of battle; eva—thereafter; akurvata kim—did what?

1 Dhritarastra said: O Sanjaya, what did my sons and our people do after assembling at Kurukshetra and confronting their opponents, the sons of my brother Pandu?

sanjaya uvacha

drstva tu pandavanikam vyudham duryodhanas tada

acharyam upasangamya raja vachanam abravait [2]

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: tada tu—Then; raja duryodhanah—King Duryodhan; drstva—having seen; pandava-anikam—the soldiers of the Pandavas; vyudham—arrayed in military formation; abravait—spoke; vachanam—the following words; upasangamya—approaching; acharyam—Dronacharya.

2 Sanjaya said: Seeing the opposing army of the Pandava princes marshalled in a formidable array, your son King Duryodhana went to Drona Acharya his Guru and said as follows.

pasyaitam pandu-putranam acharya mahatim chamum

vyudham drupada-putrena tava sisyena dhimata [3]

(he) acharya—O respected teacher; pasya—please observe; etam mahatim—this great; chamum—army of seven regiments; pandu-putranam—of the Pandavas; vyudham—arranged in military formation; tava dhimata sisyena—by your intelligent disciple; drupada-putrena—Dhrstadyumna, the son of Drupada.

3 My teacher, see how the divisions of the Pandava's army have been cleverly arranged on this ancient battlefield by your talented student Dhrystadyumna.

atra sura mahesvasa bhimarjuna-sama yudhi

yuyudhano viratas cha drupadas cha maha-rathah [4]

*dhirstaketus chekitanah kasirajas cha viryavan
purujiit kuntibhojas cha saibyas cha nara-pungavah [5]
yudhamanyus cha vikranta uttamauijas cha viryavan
saubhadro draupadeyas cha sarva eva maha-rathah [6]*

atra—In this phalanx; (*santi*)—are; *surah*—warriors; *mahesvasah*—great archers; *bhima-arjuna-samah*—comparable to Bhima and Arjuna; *yudhi*—in battle; (*yatha*)—such as; *yuyudhanah*—Satyaki; *cha*—and; *viratah*—King Virata; *maha-rathah* drupadah *cha*—and the great warrior Drupada; *dhirstaketuh*—Dhirstaketu; *chekitanah*—King Chekitana; *viryavan kasirajah cha*—and the powerful King of Kasi; *purujiit*—Purujiit; *kuntibhojah cha*—and Kuntibhoja; *nara-pungavah saibyah cha*— noble Saibya; *vikrantah yudhamanyuh cha*—valiant Yudhamanyu; *viryavan uttamauijah cha*—heroic Uttamauija; *saubhadrah*—Abhimanyu; *draupadeyah cha*—and the sons of Draupadi; *eva*—indeed; *sarva maha-rathah*—all great warriors.

4–6 Amongst the enemies opposing us are the fierce archers Bhima and Arjuna, as well as other determined fighters including Satyaki, King Virata, King Drupada, Dhirstaketu, Chekitana, Kasiraja, Purujit, Saibya, Kuntibhoja, valiant Yudhamanyu, Uttamauija, Abhimanyu and the sons of Draupadi. All these fearless chariot warriors are relentless.

*asmakam tu visista ye tan nibodha dvijottama
nayaka mama sainyasya samjnartham tan bravimi te [7]*

(he) dvija-uttama—O Dronacharya, best of the twice-born; *nibodha*—kindly consider; *tan*—those; *asmakam*—of us; *tu ye visistah*—who are the prominent; *nayakah*—commanders; *mama sainyasya*—of my armies. *bravimi*—I speak; *te*—to you; *tan*—of them; *samjna-artham*—by name.

7 O chief of the brahmins, also consider the heroes and leaders of our immeasurable army. Listen as I mention them.

*bhavan bhismas cha karnas cha krpas cha samitinjayah
asvatthama vikarnas cha saumadattir jayadrathah [8]
anye cha bahavah sura mad-arthe tyakta-jivitah
nana-sastra-praharanah sarve yuddha-visaradah [9]*

bhavan—Your respected self; *bhismah cha*—Bhisma; *karnah cha*—and Karna; *samitinjayah krpah cha*—Krupa, who is victorious in battle; *asvatthama*—Asvatthama; *vikarnah cha*—Vikarna; *saumadattir*—Bhursrava; *jayadrathah*—Jayadratha; *anye cha bahavah surah*—and many other warriors; (*santi*)—are present; *nana-sastra-praharanah*—armed with various weapons; *sarve*—all; *yuddha-visaradah*—skilled in battle; *tyakta-jivitah*—and prepared to sacrifice their lives; *mad-arthe*—for my sake.

8–9 Besides yourself and Bhishma, Karna and ever-victorious Kripa, we have Asvatthama, Vikarna, Bhursrava, Jayadratha and Somadatta's son. In our ranks there are many other masters of the arts of war too. Armed with various kinds of arrows and weapons for close combat they are all willing to lay down their lives for me.

aparyaptam tad asmakam balam bhismabhiraksitam
paryaptam to idam etesam balam bhimabhiraksitam [10]
asmakam tat balam—That strength of our army; *bhisma-abhiraksitam*—protected by Bhisma; (*bhati*)—appears; *aparyaptam*—unlimited (or insufficient); *tu-but*; *idam balam*—the strength of this army; *etesam*—of theirs; *bhima-abhiraksitam*—protected by Bhima; (*bhati*)—appears; *paryaptam*—limited (or sufficient) [both interpretations are possible].

10 Our army commanded by Bhishma seems insufficient. The smaller army of the Pandavas guarded by Bhima has sufficient strength to defeat us.

ayanesu cha sarvesu yatha-bhagam avasthitah
bhismam evabhiraksantu bhavantah sarva eva hi [11]
bhavantah—You; *sarve eva hi*—all indeed; *abhiraksantu*—may support; *bhismam eva*—Bhisma; *sarvesu ayanesu cha*—at the entrance into the formation; *avasthitah* (*santah*)—being situated; *yatha-bhagam*—at your posts.

11 Staying in your strategic points within the formation, be ready to attack the enemy flanks. Vigilantly protect grandfather Bhishma.

tasya sanjanayan harsam kuru-vrddhah pitamahah
simha-nadam vinadyochchaih sankham dadhmau pratapavan [12]
pratapavan—The hero; *kuru-vrddhah-pitamahah*—the venerable ‘grandfather’ Bhisma; *simha-nadam vinadya*—roaring like the lion; *sankham dadhmau*—then blew his conchshell; *uchchaih*—very loudly; *tasya harsam sanjanayan*—for the pleasure of Duryodhan.

12 Then with the war-cry of a roaring lion, Bhishma the aged grand-sire of the Kuru dynasty raised his conch shell and blew it forcefully, encouraging Duryodhana.

tatah sankhas cha bheryas cha panavanaka-gomukhah
sahasaivabhyahanyanta sa sabdah tumulo 'bhavat [13]
tatah—Thereafter; *sankhah cha bheryah cha panava-anaka gomukhah*—conchshells, kettledrums, hand-drums, bugles, and other instruments; *sahasa eva abhyahanyanta*—were immediately sounded. *sah sabdah*—That sound; *tumulah abhavat*—was tumultuous.

13 At once conch shells, trumpets, bugles, hand drums, kettle-drums and other instruments resounded within the Kuru army making an uproar.

tatah svetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau
madhavah pandavah chaiva divyau sankhau pradadhmau [14]
tatah—Thereafter; *madhavah pandavah cha eva*—both Sri Krishna and Arjuna; *sthitau*—situated; *mahati syandane*—in a magnificent chariot; *svetair hayair*

yukte—yoked with white horses; *pradadhmatuh*—sounded; *divyau sankhau*—divine conchshells.

14 On the other side, Lord Krishna and his cousin Arjuna, standing in a gold chariot drawn by glorious white horses, responded with the trumpeting sound of their own divine conches.

panchajanyam hrsikeso devadattam dhananjayah
paundram dadhmau maha-sankham bhima-karma vrkodarah [15]
hrsikesah—Sri Krishna; *dadhmau*—sounded; *panchajanyam*—the Panchajanya; *dhananjayah*—Arjuna (sounded); *devadattam*—the Devadatta; (*cha*)—and; *bhimakarma vrkodarah*—the performer of mighty tasks, Bhimasen (sounded); *maha-sankham*—the great conchshell; *paundram*—named Paundra.

15 Sri Krishna blew his conch shell Panchajanya. Arjuna blew his, the Devadatta. Bhima, the performer of near-impossible tasks, blew his terrific conch Paundra.

anantavijayam raja kunti-putro yudhisthirah
nakulah sahadevas cha sughosa-manipuspakau [16]
kunti-putrah raja yudhisthirah—King Yudhisthir, the son of Kunti; (*dadhmau*)—sounded; *anantavijayam*—the Anantavijay; *nakulah sahadevah cha*—and Nakula and Sahadeva (sounded); *sughosa-manipuspakau*—the conchshells named Sughosa and Manipuspaka.

16 King Yudisthira blew Anantavijaya. His brothers Nakula and Sahadeva sounded their conch shells Sughosa and Manipuspaka.

kasyas cha paramesv-asah sikhandi cha maha-rathah
dhrstadyumno viratas cha satyakis chaparajitah [17]
drupado draupadeyas cha sarvasah prthivi-pate
saubhadras cha maha-bahuh sankhan dadhmuh prthak prthak [18]
(he) *prthivi-pate*—O lord of the earth, Dhrtarastra; *kasyah cha*—the King of Kasi; *parama-isu-asah*—skilled in bowmanship; *maha-rathah sikhandi cha*—and the great warrior, Sikhandi; *dhrstadyumnah viratah cha*—Dhrstadyumna and King Virata; *cha*—and; *aparajitah*—the unconquerable; *satyaki*—Satyaki; *drupadah*—King Drupada; *draupadeyah cha*—the sons of Draupadi; *maha-bahuh saubhadrah cha*—and the mighty Abhimanyu; *sarvasah*—all; *dadhmuh*—sounded; *prthak prthak sankhan*—their respective conchshells.

17–18 The famous archer Kasiraja, the great warrior Sikhandi, Dhrstadyumna, King Virata, King Drupada, Satyaki, the sons of Draupadi and Arjuna’s son Abhimanyu (the son of Subhadra, the sister of Lord Krishna), all these blew their own conch shells.

sa ghoso dhartarastranam hrdayani vyadarayat
nanhas cha prthivin chaiva tumulo bhyanunadayan [19]

sah tumulah ghosah—That tumultuous sound; abhyanunadayan—echoing; prthivim cha nabhah cha eva—throughout the land and heavens; vyadarayat—rent, pierced; hrdayani—the hearts; dhartarastranam—of the sons of Dhrtarastra.

19 The thundering roar of vibrating conches shook the ground and sky. That roar tore open the hearts of Duryodhana and his brothers.

*atha vyavasthitan drstva dhartarastran kapi-dhvajah
pravrtte sastra-sampate dhanur udyamya pandavah
hrsikesam tada vakyam idam aha mahi-pate [20]*

(he) mahi-pate—O King; atha—thereafter; pravrtte (sati)—at the time for commencing; sastra-sampate—the casting of weapons; kapi-dhvajah pandavah—Arjuna of the Hanuman flag; dhartarastran vyavasthitan drstva—having seen the sons of Dhrtarastra arrayed before him ready for battle; tada—at that time; dhanuh udyamya—taking up his bow; aha—spoke; idam vakyam—these words; hrsikesam—to Sri Krishna.

20 Arjuna was standing on his chariot decorated with the emblem of Hanuman, ready to shoot arrows at his foes. Seeing your son Duryodhana and his brothers poised for battle, Arjuna picked up Gandiva his bow and spoke to Sri Krishna.

*arjuna uvacha
senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthapaya me 'chyuta [21]
yavad etan nirikse 'ham yoddhu-kaman avasthitan
kair maya saha yoddhavyam asmin rana-samudyame [22]
yotsyamanan avekse 'ham ya ete 'tra samagatah
dhartarastrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya-chikirsavah [23]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) achyuta—O Achyuta; sthapaya—please place; me ratham—my chariot; madhye—between; ubhayoh senayoh—both armies; yavat—so that; aham—I; nirikse—can observe; yoddhu-kaman avasthitan etan—these warriors desirous of battle; kaih saha—with whom; maya yoddhavyam—I have to fight; asmin rana-samudyame—on this battlefield; aham—and I; avekse—may see; (tan) yotsyamanan—the warriors; atra yuddhe—in this battle; ete ye samagatah—who have come; priya-chikirsavah—as well-wishers; durbuddheh dhartarastrasya—of wicked Duryodhan.

21–23 Arjuna said: Krishna, bring my chariot between the two armies so I can see the men I must fight. These noble warriors who have come to die for the satisfaction of wicked Duryodhana.

*sanjaya uvacha
evam ukto hrsikeso gudakesena bharata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthapayitva rathottamam [24]
bhishma-drona-pramukhatah sarvesan cha mahiksitam
uvacha partha pasyaitan samavetan kurun iti [25]*

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: (he) bharata—O Dhrtarastra; *evam uktah (san)*—this being spoken; *gudakesena*—by Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep; *hrsikesah*—Sri Krishna; *sthapayitva*—placing; *ratha-uttamam*—the grand chariot; *ubhayoh senayoh madhye*—between both armies; (*puratah*)—before; *bhisma-drona-pramukhatah*—Bhisma, Drona, and company; *sarvesam cha mahi-ksitam*—and all the chieftains; *uvacha iti*—spoke thus: (he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *pasya*—behold; *samavetan etan kurun*—these assembled Kurus.

24–25 Sanjaya said: After Arjuna spoke these words, Sri Krishna (Rishikesh the Supreme Lord, the controller of the universe), brought their chariot out in the field between both armies. They drove in front of Bhishma, Drona, the emperors and kings. Then the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna sang out: Arjuna behold! The entire Kuru clan with all its supporters is here, ready for war.

*tatrapasyat sthitan parthah pitrn atha pitamahan
acharyan matulan bhratr putran pautran sakhims tatha
svasuran suhrdas chaiva senayor ubhayor api* [26]

atha—Thereafter; *eva*—certainly; *parthah*—Arjuna; *api apasyat*—could also see; *sthitan*—situated; *tatra*—there; (*madhye*)—within; *ubhayoh senayoh*—both armies; *pitrn*—paternal elders; *pitamahan*—grandfathers; *acharyan*—teachers; *matulan*—maternal elders; *bhratr*—brothers; *putran*—sons; *pautran*—grandsons; *sakhin*—friends; *tatha svasuran*—fathers-in-law; *suhrdah cha*—and well-wishers.

26 There, within the armies of both factions, Arjuna could see teachers and cousins, his paternal uncle, his father-in-law, brothers, sons, friends and well-wishers.

*tan samiksya sa kaunteyah sarvan bandhun avasthitan
krpaya parayavisto visidann idam abravat* [27]

samiksya—Seeing; *tan sarvan bandhun*—all these kinsmen; *avasthitan*—present; (*tatra*)—on the battlefield; *sah kaunteyah*—that son of Kunti; *paraya krpaya avistah*—overwhelmed with great compassion; *visidan (san)*—and being grief-stricken; *idam abravat*—spoke thus.

27 Seeing his kinsmen gathered on the field of death, Arjuna the son of Queen Kunti shuddered suddenly with grief. Overwhelmed with compassion he spoke as follows.

*arjuna uvacha
drstveman svajanan krsna yuyutsun samavasthitan
sidanti mama gatrani mukhan cha parisusyati* [28]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *krsna*—O Krishna; *drstva*—seeing; *iman svajanan*—all these friends and relatives; *samavasthitan*—assembled; *yuyutsun*—and desirous of battle; *mama gatrani*—my body; *sidanti*—feels exhausted; *mukham cha parisusyati*—and my mouth is becoming dry.

28 Arjuna said: O Krishna! Seeing my relatives here, eager for war, my limbs feel sapped of their strength and my mouth feels parched.

*vepathus cha sarire me roma-harsas cha jayate
gandivam sramsate hastat tvak chaiva paridahyate [29]*
me sarire—In my body; *vepathuh*—are tremors; *cha*—and; *romaharsah*—bodily hairs standing on end; *cha jayate*—is also occurring. *gandivam*—The bow Gandiva; *sramsate*—is slipping; *hastat*—from my hand; *tvak cha*—and my skin; *paridahyate eva*—burns too.

29 My whole body trembles. My hairs are standing on end. I am losing the grip on my bow and my skin is scorching.

*na cha saknomy avasthatum bhramatva cha me manah
nimittani cha pasyami viparitani kesava [30]*
(he) kesava—O Sri Krishna; *cha*—and; *(aham)*—I; *na saknomy*—am unable to; *avasthatum cha*—compose myself any longer; *iva*—as; *me manah*—my mind; *bhramati*—is flickering; *pasyami cha*—and I see; *viparitani nimittani*—bad omens.

30 O Keshava! O Krishna! My strength is failing! My mind feels bewildered! I can foresee nothing else here besides inauspicious omens indicating doom.

*na cha sreya 'nupasyami hatva svajanam ahave
na kankse vijayam krsna na cha rajyam sukhani cha [31]*
(he) krsna—O Krishna; *na anupasyami cha*—nor do I see; *sreyah*—any good; *svajanam hatva*—in killing my kinsmen; *ahave*—in battle. *(aham)*—I; *vijayam na kankse*—desire neither victory; *na cha rajyam cha sukhani*—nor the enjoyment of a kingdom.

31 I cannot see any good result that might come to us, after we kill our relatives and friends gathered on this battlefield. O Krishna! I no longer want victory. Nor do I have any ambition to rule and enjoy an earthly kingdom.

*kim no rajyena govinda kim bhogair jivitena va
yesam arthe kanksitam no rajyam bhogah sukhani cha [32]*
*ta ime 'vasthita yuddhe pranams tyaktva dhanani cha
acharyah pitarah putras tathaiva cha pitamahah [33]*
*matulah svasurah pautrah syalah sambandhinah tatha
etan na hantum ichchhami ghnato 'pi madhusudana [34]*
(he) govinda—O Sri Krishna; *kim nah rajyena*—of what value is our kingdom; *kim va bhogaih jivitena*—and what is the need of its royal pleasures, or life itself; *yesam arthe*—if those for whom; *nah*—our; *rajyam bhogah sukhani cha*—kingdom with its pleasures and enjoyable objects; *kanksitam*—is desirable; *te ime*—all these; *acharyah*—teachers; *pitarah*—fatherly elders; *putrah*—sons; *tatha eva cha*—and also even; *pitamahah*—grandfathers; *matulah*—maternal uncles; *svasurah*—fathers-in-law; *pautrah*—grandsons; *syalah*—brothers-in-law; *tatha*

sambandhinah—and other relatives; yuddhe avasthitah—are present on the battlefield; tyaktva—risking; dhanani pranan cha—their wealth and lives? (he) madhusudana—(Therefore,) O Madhusudan; ghnatah api—though I may be killed by them; na ichchhami—I do not wish; etan hantum—to kill them.

32–34 O Krishna! O Govinda! What need do we have for a kingdom? What is the value of it? The people we want to live with here in our kingdom are standing here as our opponents, ready to die, ready to sacrifice their lives and all their possessions in a ghastly war they plan to wage against us. Therefore, O Madhusudan, even if they aim to take my life I do not wish to kill these men.

*api trailokya-rajyasya hetoh kim nu mahi-krte
nihatya dhartarastran nah ka pritih syaj janardana [35]
papam evasrayed asman hatvaitan atatayinah
tasman narha vayam hantum dhartarastran svabandhavan
svajanam hi katham hatva sukhinah syama madhava [36]*

(he) janardana—O Sri Krishna; ka pritih syat—what happiness can be possible; nah—for us; nihatya—by killing; dhartarastran—the sons of Dhrtarastra; trailokya rajyasya hetoh api—for the sovereignty of even the three worlds; mahi-krte kim nu—not to speak of ruling the earth? (he) madhava—O Madhava; papam eva—only sin; asrayet—will enter; asman—us; hatva—by killing; etan atatayinah—these adversaries. tasmāt—Therefore; vayam—we; na arhah—are wrong; hantum—to kill; svabandhavan—our own family members; dhartarastran—the sons of Dhrtarastra. svajanam hatva hi—By killing our kinsmen; katham—how; (vayam) syama—can we be; sukhinah—happy?

35–36 O Krishna! O Janardana! What to speak of becoming the great lords in this land, even if we will become rulers as powerful as gods in heaven what happiness would we enjoy after killing Duryodhana and his people? O Madhava, if we kill these sons of Dhritarashtra what joy will be ours? Won't blame alone come to us, after we kill these treacherous murderers?

Sri Baladev Vidyabhusan:

If it is suggested that killing aggressors is sinful that argument can be nullified because in the Vasistha Samhita in the verse beginning agnido garadas caiva sastra-panir it is stated that the following six types of aggressors can be slain: 1) someone who administers poison 2) someone who commits arson 3) someone who attacks with deadly weapons 4) someone who steals another's wealth 5) someone who usurps another's property 6) and someone who kidnaps another's wife.

These kinds of aggressors may all be slain immediately without any sinful reaction being incurred. This is further confirmed in the Manu Samhita in the verse beginning atatayinam ayantam hanyad, meaning: Without hesitation an aggressor may be slain, since there is no sin in killing them.

It is a fact that every one of these six types of aggression had been perpetrated previously by Duryodhana and his brothers, so all of them ought to be slain. However, to answer this, kind hearted Arjuna says that it would be sinful to kill friends, relatives and superiors. His reasoning is that while killing aggressors is approved in the moral codes of the Niti shastra an opposite view is presented in the scriptures known as the Dharma shastra, wherein it is stated that one should not cause harm to any living creature. Since Dharma shastra is superior to Niti shastra, the killing of revered elders such as Drona, Bhishma and others could be considered a sin. Without elders and relatives, the enjoyment of a sovereign's rule on Earth will not be pleasant, instead it will lead to remorse.

*yadyapy ete na pasyanti lobhopahata-chetasah
kula-ksaya-krtam dosam mitra-drohe cha patakam [37]
katham na jneyam asmabhih papad asman nivartitum
kula-ksaya-krtam dosam prapasyadbhir janardana [38]*

(he) janardana—O Janardan, Krishna; yadyapi ete—although these persons; lobha-upahata-chetasah (santah)—their hearts being afflicted with greed; patakam na pasyanti—do not see the sin; mitra-drohe—of betraying one's friends; cha—and; kula-ksaya-krtam dosam—the sin of destroying the dynasty; (tathapi)—nonetheless; katham—how; na jneyam—should it not be known; asmabhih—by us; nivartitum—to refrain; asmat papat—from this sinful act; prapasyadbhih—clearly seeing; kula-ksaya-krtam dosam—the evil of destroying the dynasty?

37–38 Arjuna said: Although these men whose hearts are full of greed cannot see it is a sin to fight and kill family members and friends, still, O Janardana, O Protector of the Earth (Vishnu), shouldn't we refrain from this since we know very well the grave consequences of war?

*kula-ksaye pranasyanti kula-dharmah sanatanah
dharme naste kulam krtsnam adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta [39]*

kula-ksaye—With the decline of the dynasty; sanatanah—the traditional; kula-dharmah—religious practices of the dynasty; pranasyanti—are destroyed. dharme naste (sati)—When religious practices are lost; adharmah—irreligion; abhibhavaty—overcomes; krtsnam uta kulam—the entire dynasty.

39 After the death of the men in a royal family the sacred traditions (sanatana dharma) of their ancient house are destroyed. Remaining family members stop observing rituals and become irreligious.

*adharmabhibhavat krsna pradusyanti kula-striyah
strisu dustasu varsneya jayate varna-sankarah [40]*

(he) krsna—O Krishna; adharmabhibhavat—when the family is overcome by irreligion; kula-striyah—the women of the family; pradusyanti—are polluted. (he) varsneya—O descendant of the Vrsni dynasty; strisu dustasu (satsu)—when the women of the family become corrupt; jayate—the result is; varna-sankarah—adulterated progeny.

40 O Krishna, O descendant of the Vrishni family, when a family gets overwhelmed by irreligion and the noble maidens of the family are taken by the victors the women are made to live immoral lives. From their immoral liaisons unwanted children are born, children lacking virtue and good qualities.

*sankaro narakayaiva kula-ghnanam kulasya cha
patanti pitaro hy esam lupta-pindodaka-kriyah [41]*

sankarah—Illegitimate children; narakaya eva (bhavati)—causes a hellish condition; kulasya kula-ghnanam cha—for both the dynasty and its destroyers. esam—Their; pitarah—forefathers; patanti hi—surely fall; lupta-pinda-udaka-kriyah—due to the cessation of obsequial offerings of food and water.

41 The birth of these unwanted children drags the whole dynasty down into hell, together with the family's destroyers. The spirits of their ancestors are deprived of funeral offerings and libations, and those forefathers will begin falling like stars from the abode of Yama the god of the netherworld where they live in peace in an endless night sky.

*dosair etaih kula-ghnanam varna-sankara-karakaih
utsadyante jati-dharmah kula-dharmas cha sasvatah [42]*

etaih dosaih—By such heinous acts; kula-ghnanam—of the destroyers of the dynasty; varna-sankara-karakaih—causing varna-sankara, adulterated progeny; sasvatah—traditional; kula-dharmah jati-dharmah cha—familial and socio-religious functions; utsadyante—are ruined.

42 The ancient rites, customs and practices, *dharma* and duties of caste of the family, in vogue since time immemorial, all of that ends. Evil deeds of killers who destroy a dynasty create a generation of degraded children.

*utsanna-kula-dharmanam manusyanam janardana
narake niyatam vaso bhavaty anususruma [43]*

(he) janardana—O Janardan; (vayam) anususruma—We have heard; iti—that; manusyanam—for those persons; utsanna-kula-dharmanam—whose family traditions have been destroyed; niyatam—constant; narake vasah—residence in hell; bhavati—occurs.

43 O Janardana, we have heard the ancestors of a dynasty fall down into a miserable hellish existence when ancient ceremonies and the traditions of their family are stopped.

*aho bata mahat-papam kartum vyavasita vayam
yad rajya-sukha-lobhena hantum svajanam udyatah [44]*

aho bata—Alas, what a tragedy! vayam—We; vyavasitah—have resolved; kartum—

to commit; mahat-papam—a most heinous sin. yat rajya-sukha-lobhena—Out of greed for royal pleasures; udyatah—we are prepared; svajanam hantum—to slay our relatives.

44 Alas! What a grave sin we are determined to commit, driven by our greed for trifling royal happiness. We are about to kill our own kinsmen!

yadi mam apratikaram asastram sastra-panayah

dhartarastra rane hanyus tan me ksemataram bhavet [45]

yadi—If; dhartarastrah—the sons of Dhrtarastra; sastra-panayah—equipped with weapons; hanyuh—kill; mam—me; asastram—unarmed; apratikaram—and unresisting; rane—in battle; tat—that; bhavet—will be; ksemataram—more auspicious; me—for me.

45 If I were to be killed by the armed sons of Dhritarastra on this warfield, killed while unarmed and unresisting, that would be much better for me.

sanjaya uvacha

evam uktoarjunah sankhye rathopastha upavisat

visrjya sa-saram chapam soka-samvigna-manasah [46]

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: arjunah—Arjuna; evam uktoa—having thus spoken; sankhye—on the battlefield; visrjya—casting aside; chapam—bow; sa-saram—and arrows; upavisat—sat down; ratha-upasthah—on the chariot; so-ka-samvigna-manasah—his heart heavy with sorrow.

46 Sanjaya said: Having said this, Arjuna cast aside his arrows and bow. He sat down on the chariot, his heart overwhelmed by grief.

Chapter Two

The Nature of the Self, the Soul

Sankhya-yoga

sanjaya uvacha

*tam tatha krpayavistam asru-purnakuleksanam
visidantam idam vakyam uvacha madhusudanah [1]*

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: madhusudanah—Sri Krishna; tatha—then; uvacha—spoke; idam vakyam—these words; visidantam tam—to the saddened Arjuna; krpayavistam—whose heart was filled with pity; asru-purna-akula-iksanam—his eyes brimming with tears, showing his distress

1 Sanjaya said to Dhritarastra: Lord Sri Krishna the destroyer of fears, Sri Madhusudan, spoke to Arjuna who was full of doubts, and whose sorrowful eyes were filled with tears.

*kutas tva kasmalam idam visame samupasthitam
anarya-justam asvargyam akirti-karam arjuna [2]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; visame—in this crisis; kutah—how; idam kasmalam—has this illusion; tva—of yours; samupasthitam—occured? anarya-justam—This does not befit an Aryan (noble person); asvargyam—it is an obstacle to the attainment of heaven; akirti-karam—and the cause of infamy.

2 Sri Krishna said: Arjuna, why have you let this illusion overwhelm you at this perilous place? Your reticence is wrong for an Aryan (a nobleman who understands the teachings of a true Guru). It an obstacle to the attainment of heaven in the next life, and it will ruin your reputation as a courageous hero.

*klaibyam ma sma gamah partha naitat tvayy upapadyate
ksudram hrdaya-daurbalyam tyaktvottistha parantapa [3]*

(he) partha—O son of Kunti; klaibyam ma sma gamah—do not be overcome by cowardice. etat—This; na upapadyate—does not befit; tvayy—you. (he) parantapa—O subduer of the enemy; tyaktva—giving up; ksudram hrdaya-daurbalyam—petty weakheartedness; uttistha—arise for battle.

3 O Partha, give up your grief! It is unworthy of you! O brave hero, O punisher of murdering sinners! Cast off this weakness of heart and rise up for battle!

arjuna uvacha

*katham bhismam aham sankhye dronan cha madhusudana
isubhik pratiyotsyami pujarhav arisudana [4]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) madhusudana arisudana—O Madhusudan, slayer of the enemy; katham aham—how can I; pratiyotsyami—counterattack; isubhih—with arrows; sankhye—in battle; (laksi-krtya)—aiming at; puja-arhau—worshippable; bhisman dronam cha—Bhisma and Drona?

4 Arjuna said: O Madhusudan, how can I counter-attack, shooting arrows at Bhishma my grandfather and Drona my Guru? Men worthy of my worship.

*gurun ahatva hi mahanubhavan
sreyo bhoktum bhaiksyam apiha loke
hatvartha-kamams tu gurun ihaiva
bhunjiya bhogan rudhira-pradigdhan [5]*

sreyah—Better; bhaiksyam api bhoktum—to live on food obtained by begging; iha loke—in this world; ahatva hi—without killing; maha-anubhavan gurun—noble elders and teachers. tu—Otherwise; gurun hatva—by killing our teachers and superiors; bhunjiya—we shall enjoy; rudhira-pradigdhan—their blood-tainted; artha-kaman bhogan—wealth and coveted enjoyable objects; iha eva—here.

5 It is better to live in this world by begging than by taking the lives of nobles, elders and teachers. Otherwise, by killing them, afterwards we shall have to live in the world enjoying their wealth and properties they lost to us tainted with blood.

*na chaitad vidmah kataran no gariyo
yad va jayema yadi va no jayeyuh
yan eva hatva na jijivisamas
te 'vasthitah pramukhe dhartarastrah [6]*

yat va—If indeed; (vayam)—we; jayema—win; yadi va—or if; (ete)—these men; nah jayeyuh—happen to conquer us; na cha vidmah—we do not understand; etat katarat—which of these; gariyah—is more beneficial; nah—for us. te dhartaras-trah—Those very sons of Dhrtarastra; yan hatva—by killing whom; na jijivisama eva—we do not wish to even live; avasthitah—are present; pramukhe—before us for battle.

6 I cannot understand what will be better for us, victory or defeat. We ourselves will not want to live after killing our cousins, these vainglorious sons of Dhritarastra. These cousins of ours gathered on this field where they are certain to die.

*karpanya-dosopahata-svabhavah
prchchhami tvam dharma-sammudha-chetah
yach chhreyah syan nischitam bruhi tan me
sisyas te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam [7]*

karpanya-dosa upahata-svabhavah—Losing heart, thus losing the courage of the warrior by apprehending the fall of the dynasty; (tatha)—and; dharma-sammudha-chetah—bewildered in determining my duty and non-duty; (aham)

prchchhami—I am asking; tvam—You; (tvam) bruhi—You please say; tat—that (course of action); yat—which; syat—may; nischitam—be ascertained; sreyah—as best; me—for me. aham—I am; te sisayah—ready for Your counsel and direction; (atah)—therefore; sadhi—please instruct; mam—me; tvam prapannam—Your surrendered soul.

7 Overwhelmed by my trembling heart and the horrific sin of killing my kinsmen, I am bewildered about what my real duty is. I beg You, please tell me which course of action is best for me. I am your disciple, surrendered to You. Please instruct me.

*na hi prapasyami mamapanudyad
yach chhokam uchchhosanam indriyanam
avapya bhumau asapatnam rddham
rajjyam suranam api chadhipatyam [8]*

avapya—After gaining; asapatnam—an unrivalled; rddham—expansive; rajyam—kingdom; bhumau—on earth; cha—and; adhipatyam—sovereignty; suranam api—over even the gods; (aham)—I; na hi prapasyami—do not see; yat—that which; apanudyat—will dispel; mama—my; sokam—grief; uchchhosanam—that saps; indriyanam—my senses.

8 We may gain a prosperous empire, we may attain supremacy and become rulers of the world – like gods! But I see no way I can get any relief from this grief weakening my senses.

*sanjaya uvacha
evam uktva hrsikesam gudakesah parantapah
na yotsya iti govindam uktva tusnim babhuva ha [9]*

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: evam uktva—Having spoken thus; hrsikesam—unto Sri Krishna; gudakesah—sense-controlled Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep; parantapah—the chastiser of the enemy; uktva iti—then said; govindam—to Govinda: (aham) na yotsye—“I shall not fight”; babhuva ha—and then was; tusnim—silent.

9 Sanjaya said: Arjuna said this to Rishikesh, the omniscient, all-pervading Higher Self, the Supreme Lord who understands the minds of everyone. Then Arjuna told Sri Krishna, “Govinda I will not fight,” and became silent.

*tam uvacha hrsikesah prahasann iva bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye visidantam idam vachah [10]*

(he) bhārata—O Dhṛtarāstra; ubhayor senayor madhye—situated between both armies; hrsikesah—Hṛsīkesa, Krishna; prahasann iva—smilingly; uvacha—spoke; idam vachah—these words; visidantam—to the grief-stricken; tam—Arjuna.

10 Krishna was there between the two armies. Krishna was with Arjuna in the midst of Arjuna’s great trauma. Sri Krishna smiled, then spoke.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

asochyan anvasochas tvam prajna-vadams cha bhasase

gatasun agatasums cha nanusochanti panditah [11]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *tvam*—you; *anvasochah*—are lamenting; *asochyan*—for those unworthy of grief; *prajna-vadan cha bhasase*—and speaking like a wise man. *panditah*—The wise; *na anusochanti*—do not lament; *gatasun*—for the dead; *agatasun cha*—or the living.

11 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: You say words that sound like the words wise sages say, yet you are filled with grief. But Arjuna the truly wise never grieve. They never lament for the living or for the departed.

na tv evaham jatu nasam na tvam neme janadhipah

na chaiva na bhavisyamah sarve vayam atah param [12]

(iti) tu na eva—It is not a fact that; *aham*—I; *na asam*—did not exist; *jatu*—ever before; *(iti) na*—nor is it that; *tvam na*—you did not exist; *(iti na)*—nor is it that; *ime janadhipah*—all these kings; *na*—did not exist; *cha*—and; *(iti na) eva*—nor is it that; *sarve vayam na bhavisyamah*—we will all no longer exist; *atah param*—hereafter.

12 There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these people assembled before us. We exist forever. We will continue to exist for all eternity.

dehino 'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara

tatha dehantara-praptir dhiras tatra na muhyati [13]

yatha—As; *asmin dehe*—in this body; *dehinah*—of the embodied living being; *kaumaram*—childhood; *yauvanam*—youth; *jara*—and old age; *(bhavati)*—occur; *tatha*—so also; *deha-antara praptih*—the attainment of yet another body; *(bhavati)*—occurs. *dhirah*—The wise; *na muhyati*—are not deluded; *tatra*—by that.

13 As a person gradually moves on within this body from childhood to youth to old age, so too that individual soul attains another body after death. Knowing this, the truly wise never grieve or feel bewildered.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

What the Greeks called ‘metempsychosis’ or what is called ‘transmigration’ in the English language was at one time, more or less, admitted in ancient Greece, Egypt and many places in the West. Some say the apostles of Christ the Great, failing to reconcile their conclusions with the Doctrine of Transmigration, were compelled to discard it. Yet even in the Bible we find, “And as Jesus passed by he saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, ‘Master, who had committed the sin? This man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” It is seen that even some Christian Fathers considered transmi-

gration. Then also, Goethe said, “I am sure that I, such as you see me here, have lived a thousand times, and that I shall come again another thousand times.”

*matra-sparsas tu kaunteya sitosna-sukha-duhkha-dah
agama-payino 'nityas tams titikshasva bharata [14]*

(he) kaunteya—O Arjuna, son of Kunti; matra-sparsah tu—material contact—the engagement of the senses with their objects; sita-usna-sukha-duhkha-dah—produces cold and heat, pleasure and pain sensations. (te) agama-apayinah—These come and go; anityah—and are temporary. (atah)—Therefore; (he) bharata—O Arjuna; titikshasva—endure; tan—them.

14 O Arjuna! Perceptions of cold, heat, pleasure and pain arise in the mind. They arise when the body's senses connect with external objects of perception. But external objects are transforming, transient things. You must try to tolerate all your perceptions.

*yam hi na vyathayanty ete purusam purusarsabha
sama-duhkha-sukham dhīram so 'mrtatvaya kalpate [15]*

(he) purusa-rsabha—O noblest of men; sah dhīram purusam—the wise man; sama-duhkha-sukham—equipoised in happiness and unhappiness; yam—who; ete—these; (matra-sparsah)—actions of the senses engaging with material sense objects; na vyathayanti—cannot disturb; kalpate hi—is alone qualified; amrtatvaya—for immortality.

15 A truly wise person of steady intelligence, equipoised whilst experiencing both pleasures and pains, remains detached from their sense perceptions. A detached person is eligible for liberation, they become qualified to attain complete release from *karma*.

*nasato vidyate bhavo nabhavo vidyate satah
ubhayor api drsto 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darsibhih [16]*

asatah—Of a destructible object; na vidyate—there is no; bhavah—eternal existence; tu—and; satah—of an eternal object; na vidyate—there is no; abhavah—destruction. antah—Such a conclusion, i.e., of the nature; anayoh ubhayoh api—of each; drstah—has been realised; tattva-darsibhih—by the seers of the truth.

16 Changing things such as physical bodies are not eternal, but the self stays as it is eternally. The self is sat – an eternal substance. The calm self never changes from what it is and it cannot be destroyed. This is how ‘the eternal’ and ‘the impermanent’ are seen to be in reality. This is the truth wise seers see in sankhya philosophy.

*avinasi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam
vinasam avyayasya na kaschit kartum arhati [17]*

tu—But; viddhi—know that; tat—the soul; yena—by which; idam sarvam—this entire body; tatam—is pervaded; avinasi—is indestructible. na kaschit—No one; arhati—is able; vinasam kartum—to bring about the destruction; avyayasya asya—of this imperishable soul.

17 Know that you are the self, the calm soul within. The self knows the thoughts and feelings of their body but a soul enshrined in a body is different from the body – it is self-aware, and immortal. The self is an eternal, conscious substance (*sat chit ananda*), and although it is only a tiny ray of the energy of the Higher Self, the *jiva-atma* or individual self is enervating their body with life-force, the breath of life (*prana*). The calm self is an everlasting reality and nothing can destroy it.

Chhandogya Upanishad 8.12.3:

As a charioteer is appointed by his master to drive a carriage, just so this *prana* (the living self, the *jiva* soul) is appointed to drive the chariot of his body.

*antavanta ime deha nityasyoktah saririnah
anasino 'prameyasya tasmad yudhyasva bharata [18]*

saririnah—Of the living being; *nityasya*—who is always the same; *anasinah*—indestructible; *aprameyasya*—and immeasurable, due to his extremely subtle nature; *ime dehah*—all these bodies; *uktah*—are said to be; *antavantah*—subject to destruction; *tasmat*—therefore; (he) *bharata*—O Arjuna; *yudhyasva*—fight.

18 Only the physical body dies. The external body of an eternal, indestructible, immeasurable spiritual being. Therefore fight for justice and do not give up your ideals.

*ya enam vetti hantaram yas chainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijanito nayam hanti na hanyate [19]*

yah—Those persons who; *vetti*—think; *enam*—this soul to be; *hantaram*—a killer; *yah cha enam manyate*—and those who think it; *hatam*—killed; *tau ubhau*—both of them; *na vijanitah*—are ignorant; (*yasmat*)—since; *ayam*—this soul; *na hanti*—neither kills anyone; *na hanyate*—nor is killed by anyone.

19 Those who think the self is a killer and those who think the self can be killed know nothing about the true nature of the self. The self does not kill anyone, nor can the self be killed.

*na jayate mriyate va kadachin nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah ajo nityah
sasvato 'yam purano na hanyate hanyamane sarire [20]*

ayam—This soul; *na jayate*—is neither born; *va na mriyate*—nor dies; *kadachit*—at any time; *bhutva na va*—nor being; *bhavita*—will it be created; *bhuyah*—again. *ayam ajah*—This soul is birthless; *nityah*—eternal; *sasvatah*—free from decay; *puranah*—ancient, changeless; (*cha*)—and; (*ayam*)—the soul; *na hanyate*—is never destroyed; *sarire hanyamane (api)*—even if the body is destroyed.

20 The transcendental self has no beginning. It is inexhaustible, ever-youthful yet ancient. The self is never born and never dies, nor

does it come into being repeatedly then undergo changes. Although the body gets born and dies the inner self can never be destroyed.

*vedavinasinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam
katham sa purusah partha kam ghatayati hanti kam [21]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; yah—that person who; veda—knows; enam—this soul as; nityam—eternal; ajam—birthless; avyayam—immutable; avinasinam—and indestructible; katham—how can; sah purusah ghatayati—that person cause the death; kam—of anyone; (va)—or; (katham)—how can; hanti—he kill; kam—anyone?

21 O Arjuna, how could the self kill someone? The self is pure awareness, *chit*. The self is serene, a calm being; the self is a seer looking at the living world from a detached vantage point. How could that immaculate intelligence cause someone to be killed?

Srila Sanatan Goswami:

*jiva-svarupa-bhutasya sac-cid-ananda-vastunam
saksad-anubhavenapi syat tadrk sukham alpakam
suddhatma-tattvam yad vastu tad eva brahma kathyate
nirgunam tac ca nimsangam nirvikaram nirहितam
bhagavams tu param brahma paratma paramesvaram
su-sandra-sac-cid-ananda-vigraho mahimarnavam*

The true nature of the *jiva-atma* (the individual self) is *sat-chit-ananda* (eternal consciousness filled with bliss). However, the bliss that arises from direct perception of one's own true self as a tiny *jiva-atma* is not infinite bliss, it is tiny happiness. The Supreme Lord is different from tiny individual souls since He is infinite Bliss. He is the Supreme Brahman, the Higher Self, the Supreme Enjoyer and the absolute Controller of everything. The Lord's form is an ocean of eternal consciousness full of infinite, limitless bliss.

– Brihad-Bhagavatamritam 2.2.176–178

*vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya navani grhnati naro 'parani
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany anyani samyati navani dehi [22]*

yatha—As; narah—a man; vihaya—rejecting; jirnani vasamsi—torn clothes; grhnati—accepts; aparani navani—new garments; tatha—similarly; dehi—the soul; vihaya—rejecting; jirnani—old and decrepit; sarirani—bodies; samyati—accepts; anyani navani—new bodies.

22 The eternal self accepts then discards one new body after another repeatedly, just as when people take off wornout clothes then put on new clothing.

*nainam chhindanti sastrani nainam dahati pavakah
na chainam kledayanty apo na sosayati marutah [23]*

sastrani—Weapons; na chhindanti—cannot pierce; enam—the soul; pavakah—fire; na dahati—cannot burn; enam—the soul; apah—water; na kledayanti—cannot dampen; enam—the soul; cha—and; marutah—the air; na sosayati—cannot dry; (enam)—the soul.

23 Weapons cannot pierce the individual self and fire cannot burn it. The self cannot be wet with water or dried by air. The self is unbreakable and insoluble, it cannot be burned or dried up.

*achchhedyo 'yam adahyo 'yam akledyo 'sosya eva cha
nityah sarva-gatah sthanur achalo 'yam sanatanah [24]*

ayam achchhedyah—The soul is indivisible; ayam adahyah—it cannot be burned; (ayam) akledyah—it cannot be moistened; (ayam) asosyah eva cha—and it cannot be dried. ayam nityah—It is everlasting; sarva-gatah—reaching all planes, migratory through all species of life according to its actions; sthanuh—still; achalah—immovable; sanatanah—beginningless, changeless, ever-present.

24 Nothing can wet or dry the soul, it can never be torn apart or burned. The individual *jiva-soul* is an eternal being that enters and pervades all types of bodies but always remains the same.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The real 'I' has no beginning or end. I am neither the gross physical body nor the mind. I am not the mind that changes when the morning changes into noon and noon into evening. I am not the mind which is sometimes cheerful and at other times miserable.

The conception of 'reality' that undergoes change is a function of the mind. That non-eternal consciousness which is capable of becoming mixed up is a product of the *jiva-soul*. What wickedness it is, that a *jiva-soul* with mixed up consciousness can produce and hold onto the idea that they can be in control of Nature.

*avyakto 'yam achintyo 'yam avikaryo 'yam uchyate
tasmad evam viditvaina nanusochitum arhasi [25]*

ayam uchyate—It is said to be; avyaktah—imperceptible due to its extremely subtle nature; ayam achintyah—inconceivable; ayam avikaryah—and untranslatable. tasmad—Therefore; viditva—knowing; enam—the soul; evam—as such; anusochitum na arhasi—it is inappropriate to grieve for it.

25 Sages say a soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this, you need not feel mournful when you realize the truth that the destiny of a material body born from nature is that it must die.

*atha chainam nitya-jatam nityam va manyase mrtam
tathapi tvam maha-baho nainam sochitum arhasi [26]
jatasya hi dhruvo mrtyur dhruvam janma mrtasya cha
tasmad apariharye 'rthe na tvam sochitum arhasi [27]*

(he) maha-baho—O best of warriors, Arjuna; atha cha—and even if; manyase—you think; enam—the soul; nitya-jatam—to be always born; va—or; nityam mrtam—always subject to death; tatha api—even then; tvam—you; sochitum na arhasi—ought not grieve; enam—for it; hi—since; jatasya—for one who has taken birth; mrtyuh—death; dhruvah—is certain; mrtasya cha—and for one who is dead; janma—birth, for undergoing the reactions to his past actions; dhruvam—is certain. tasmad—Therefore; tvam—you; na arhasi—ought not; sochitum—grieve; apariharye arthe—for the inevitable.

26–27 O mighty warrior! Even if you think a person is born and dies you still have no reason to lament. Whenever someone is born their death is certain. And when someone dies there is rebirth. The self is a seer witnessing changes arising from prior actions (*karma*). Do not feel distraught, all the changes happening in the mortal world are inevitable transformations created by nature.

*avyaktadini bhutani vyakta-madhyani bharata
avyakta-nidhanany eva tatra ka paridevana [28]*

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; bhutani—of the living beings; avyaktadini—the situation before birth is unknown; vyakta-madhyani—the period between birth and death is known; avyakta-nidhanany eva—and the situation after death is again unknown; ka paridevana—so what cause is there for grief; tatra—in that matter?

28 O Bharata, if no self existed before their birth, and they exist only during the time between birth and death, and not after death, why mourn for them?

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

This conclusion is not accepted by saints and learned pundits. Yet for the sake of argument Krishna says: “Arjuna it is your duty to fight for justice and to uphold religious principles.”

*ascharyavat pasyati kaschid enam
ascharyavad vadati tathaiva chanyah
ascharyavach chainam anyah srnoti
srutvapy enam veda na chaiva kaschit [29]*

kaschit—Some persons; pasyati—see; enam—the soul; ascharyavat—as astonishing. tatha eva—Similarly; anyah cha—others, too; vadati—describe; (enam)—the soul; ascharyavat—as astonishing; anyah cha—and others; srnoti—hear; enam—of the soul; ascharyavat—as astonishing; kaschit cha eva—and some; srutva api—though hearing about it; na veda—do not know; enam—the soul.

29 Some see the self as something amazing, some describe it as an amazing thing, some hear of it as something amazing, while others, even after hearing about the Atma, cannot comprehend it at all.

*dehi nityam avadhyo 'yam dehe sarvasya bharata
tasmāt sarvaṇi bhūtāni na tvam sochitum arhasi [30]*

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; dehe—in the bodies; sarvasya—of all living beings; ayam—this; dehi—soul; nityam—is eternal; avadhyah—unslayable. tasmāt—Therefore; tvam—you; sochitum na arhasi—should not lament; sarvaṇi bhūtāni—for any living beings.

30 O Bharata (Arjuna), the individual Atma within a living body is eternal and indestructible. Therefore, do not grieve for any soul since it is only their mortal body that dies.

*svadharmam api chhaveksya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyaddhi yuddhach chhreyo 'nyat ksatriyasya na vidyate [31]*
api—Moreover; na arhasi—you should not; vikampitum—fear; cha aveksya—considering, too; svadharmam—your natural duty as a warrior; hi—since; ksatriyasya—for a ksatriya, or one who upholds the law; na vidyate—there is no; anyat sreyah—better course of action; dharmyat yudhat—than a battle for justice.

31 Moreover, if you consider your *swa-dharma*, your specific duty as a *kshatriya* (a member of the warrior caste), you have no reason to waver because no action is more fitting for a *kshatriya* than fighting for justice.

Mahabharata:

A man may be born in the Sudra caste (the labourer class, the lowest caste) but if he possesses proper qualities he can attain the state of Vaisya and similarly that of a Kshatriya, and if he is steadfast in goodness he may become a Brahmin.

— Mahabharata, Vana Parva

*yadrchchhaya chopapannam svarga-dvaram apavrtam
sukhinah ksatriyah partha labhante yuddham idrsam [32]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; sukhinah—the fortunate; ksatriyah—warriors; labhante—attain; yuddham—a battle; idrsam—like this; upapannam—present; yadrchchhaya—of its own accord; apavrtam svarga-dvaram cha—as an open door to heaven.

32 O Partha! A battle such as this, a battle forced upon you, is like an open gateway to heaven. An opportunity that can only be had by very fortunate warriors.

atha chet tvam imam dharmyam sangramam na karisyasi

tatah svadharmam kirtin cha hitva papam avapsyasi [33]

atha—Otherwise; chet—if; tvam—you; na karisyasi—do not engage; imam dharmyam sangramam—in this battle for justice; tatah—then; hitva—leaving; svadharmam kirtin cha—the ksatriya’s duty and glory; avapsyasi—you will incur; papam—sin.

33 If you refuse to engage in this war for justice you will deviate from your noble character, lose your reputation and incur sin.

akirtin chapi bhutani kathayisyanti te ’vyayam

sambhavitasya chakirtir maranad atirichyate [34]

cha—Also; bhutani—the people; kathayisyanti—will speak; avyayam—for all time; te—of your; akirtim api—infamy; cha—and; akirtih—infamy; atirichyate—is worse; maranat—than death; sambhavitasya—for the respected.

34 People will speak of your infamy in times to come. Noblemen such as yourself regard infamy as far worse than death.

bhayad ranad uparatam mamsyante tvam maha-rathah

yesam cha tvam bahu-mato bhutva yasyasi laghavam [35]

avachya-vadams cha bahun vadisyanti tavahitah

nindantas tava samarthyam tato dukkhataram nu kim [36]

maha-rathah—Great warriors like Duryodhan and others; mamsyante—will consider that; tvam—you; uparatam—desisted; ranat—from battle; bhayat—out of fear; cha—and; yesam—of those for whom; tvam—you; bahu-matah bhutva—have been the object of great honour; laghavam yasyasi—you will be held the object of ridicule. tava ahitah—Your enemies; vadisyanti—will speak; bahun avachya-vadan cha—many unworthy words; nindantah—condemning; tava samarthyam—your capabilities. nu—Alas, Arjuna; kim—what could be; dukkhataram—more painful; tatah—than that?

35–36 Great warriors who respected you in the past will consider you insignificant, thinking you were afraid. Your enemies will scorn you and say crude words. What can be more shameful?

hato va prapsyasi svargam jitva va bhoksyase mahim

tasmad uttistha kaunteya yuddhaya krta-nischayah [37]

hatah va—If killed in battle; svargam prapsyasi—you will attain heaven; jitva va—or by gaining victory; bhoksyase—you will enjoy; mahim—the earth. tasmad—Therefore; (he) kaunteya—O Arjuna; krta-nischayah (san)—being confident of success; uttistha—arise; yuddhaya—for battle.

37 If you are killed you will attain heaven and if you are victorious you will rule a kingdom on Earth. So be confident of success and arise for battle.

sukha-duhkhe same krta labhalabhau jayajayau

tato yuddhaya yujyasva naivam papam avapsyasi [38]

same kṛtvā—By seeing with an attitude of equanimity; sukha-duḥkhe—pleasure and pain; labha-alabhau—gain and loss; jaya-ajayau (cha)—and victory and defeat; tatah—thereafter; yujyasva—engage; yuddhaya—in battle. evam—In this way; na avapsyasi—you will not incur; papam—sin.

38 Fight for justice. Consider happiness and misery, gain and loss, victory and defeat, as one and the same. You will not incur any sin by fighting since you fight for a just and proper reason.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

The essential advice of the Bhagavad Gita is that however lowly the present habits of a person may be, he should start his upwards journey from that present state of existence. By the practice of withdrawal from a lifetime of materialism the seeker should do his endeavours according to his natural course of development. Disregarding his own natural habits, if someone follows another path they will become either impassioned or vicious; that unnatural renunciation will not be fruitful.

We must study the advice of Lord Krishna to Uddhava in the 11th Canto of *Srimad Bhagavata Purana*. Both Uddava and Arjuna were born of the kshatriya caste, furthermore both of them heard the same teachings spoken to them directly by Sri Krishna, but the two acted differently after hearing Krishna's advice. After hearing the Gita, Arjuna then engaged in warfare. Arjuna decided to engage in the actions of a warrior. Whereas, Uddhava uttered a prayer to the Lord then renounced the world.

Here it is understood that because of his brahmin character Uddhava was merited to take recourse to the path of renunciation. This is so, irrespective of his birth in the kshatriya caste. All living beings should engage in appropriate activities relevant to their own merits. Had Uddhava engaged in warrior activities it would have been averse to his own nature. Similarly the acceptance by Arjuna of the path of a brahmin would have been absurd.

The esoteric study of this subject reveals that if a person born of a brahmin family is not endowed with the brahminical qualities of tranquility, endurance etc. then it is quite improper for him to engage in the activities of a brahmin. Indeed, those who regard that type of unqualified person as a brahmin, accepting them as a guru, will also meet with downfall. Additionally, if a person with bad habits, born in the lower classes that are not endowed with piety, tranquility etc., unduly accepts the practices and rites of renunciation, he will also be debarred from attaining his ultimate spiritual well-being. Seeing the natural characteristics of such an imposter, if anybody honours him as a person of superior qualities and status then they are also rightfully accused of engaging in cheating and deemed to be guilty of that. Those who show contempt towards this science of working according to one's individual nature (swa-dharma) and argue about this cannot be called Vaishnavas. A person who is not aware of his own characteristic status cannot be trusted by anybody because he may engage himself in all types of

irregular activities. Then again, if anybody is unable to decide his own status the Lord has advised them with the following verse in the Gita:

“Try to learn the truth by approaching a genuine Guru. Inquire from him submissively and render service to him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge to you because they know the truth.”

– Commentary to Sri Tattva Sutram, verse 46

esa te 'bhihita sankhye buddhir yoge tv imam srnu

buddhya yukto yaya partha karma-bandham prahasyasi [39]

(he) partha—O son of Kunti; abhihita te—I have revealed to you; esa buddhih sankhye—this knowledge of the soul. tu—Further; srnu—hear of; imam—this knowledge; yoge—in (bhakti-) yoga, in practice; yaya buddhya yuktah—attaining which wisdom; prahasyasi—you will be completely freed; karma-bandham—from the bondage of action.

39 This knowledge I have explained is *sankhya* philosophy, now hear of *buddhi-yoga*. You will become free from *karma* by practicing *buddhi-yoga* the *yoga* of wisdom – the *yoga* practiced by liberated seers who know and directly see the Lord in the heart.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

It will be shown herein that *buddhi-yoga* is a singular path. When this *buddhi-yoga* mostly involves performing actions it is known as *karma-yoga*; when it involves cultivating insights and developing spiritual knowledge it is known as *jnana-yoga* or *sankhya-yoga*; then finally, when it transcends the limitations of both *jnana* and *karma* and touches *bhakti*, or devotion, it is known as *bhakti-yoga*, the fulfillment of pure and perfect *buddhi-yoga*.”

nehabhikrama-naso 'sti pratyavayo na vidyate

svalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat [40]

iha—In this (bhakti-) yoga; *na asti*—there is no; *abhikrama-nasah*—failure in the beginning; *na vidyate*—and there is no; *pratyavayah*—diminution of results. *svalpam api*—Even the slightest practice; *asya dharmasya*—of this bhakti-yoga; *trayate*—saves one; *mahatah bhayat*—from the great fear of birth and death in the material world.

40 Even a small start in insightful *yoga* will not go in vain. Even a tiny engagement in acts of insightful devotion to the Lord of the heart can rescue a soul from their greatest fear.

vyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana

bahu-sakha hy anantas cha buddhaya 'vyavasayinam [41]

(he) kuru-nandana—O Arjuna, descendant of the Kuru dynasty; vyavasaya-atmika buddhih—the resolute intelligence; iha—to practise this (bhakti-) yoga; eka (eva)—is onepointed; (tu)—but; buddhayah—the intelligence; avyavasayinam—of the irresolute—those who nurture mundane desires; hi—is certainly; anantah—endlessly; bahu-sakhah cha—many-branched, splayed.

41 O Arjuna, the intellect of saintly devotees is fixed on the Higher Self within their heart. They remain mindful of Me, loving Me in their heart. I am the sole goal of their pure intelligence, their reachable goal, but the intelligence of those who avoid Me is flawed. It is dominated by many desires since their splayed intelligence clings to the many things they are attached to, and to the many sensations they love.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The individual self is consciousness. The self is a conscious being with the innate power to know other objects beyond oneself.

*yam imam puspitam vacham pravadanty avipaschitah
veda-vada-ratah partha nanyad astiti vadinah [42]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; avipaschitah—the unwise; veda-vada-ratah—who are fond of interpreting the Vedas, not knowing the true directive of the Vedas; vadinah iti—say that; na asti—there is no; anyat—other (divine or controlling) principle beyond beasts, food, offspring, heaven, etc.; pravadanti—and they glorify as supreme; yam imam vacham—those statements which; puspitam—momentarily please the ear (which, thus taken out of context, are effectively poisonous as they do not help the spiritual progress of the soul).

42 O Partha, vain people and foolish followers of ritual like to remain ignorant. They don't know the chief teaching of the philosophy of the Veda is to develop determined spiritual intelligence (*vyavasayatmika buddhi*) through the practice of *yoga*. They busy themselves with speculations and self-serving interpretations of the Veda.

*kamatmanah svarga-parah janma-karma-phala-pradam
kriya-visesa-bahulam bhogaisvarya-gatim prati [43]*

kama-atmanah—Their hearts filled with selfish desires; svarga-parah—heaven is their goal; kriya-visesa-bahulam—and they advocate the various ceremonies and rituals; janmakarma-phala-pradam—which yield high birth; bhoga-aisvarya-gatim prati—and lead to enjoyment and opulence.

43 Unintelligent people say, "There is nothing to know beyond what we already know. The truth about the hymns of the Veda we learned from our elders." Wanting to enjoy the fruits of their labours, wanting to be born in heaven in the afterlife, the ignorant and the foolish remain attracted by the enchanting but ultimately poison-

ous words of the Veda, the scriptural statements recommending that people should do *karma*, fruitive actions. *Karma* is action involving sacrifices and rituals, *karma* yields wealth, enjoyment and a pleasant rebirth in a future lifetime.

*bhogaisvarya-prasaktanam tayapahrta-chetasam
vyavasayatmika buddhih samadhau na vidhiyate [44]*

bhoga-aisvarya-prasaktanam—Of those persons attached to enjoyment and opulence; *apahrta-chetasam*—whose minds are deluded; *taya*—by those flowery words of the Vedas; *vyavasaya-atmika buddhih*—the resolve; *samadhau*—in dedication to the Supreme Lord; *na vidhiyate*—is not accomplished.

44 Deluded by flowery words of the Veda, enamored by a worldly life forever creating *karma*, the thinking of these people lacking deeper insights never attains the fully awakened stage. They never have a glimpse of pure spiritual knowledge or any inkling of love for the Supreme Being, the Higher Self, God.

Srila Baladev Vidyabhusan:

Those with little knowledge say words such as *vyotistomena svargakarmo yajet*, “A person who desires to attain heaven should perform the *vyotistomena* ritual.” They think these are the best words in the Veda.

*traigunya-visaya veda nistraigunyo bhavarjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho niryoga-ksema atmavan [45]*

(he) *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *vedah*—the Vedas; *traigunya-visayah*—deal with the modes of material nature—worldly subjects. *nirdvandvah*—Give up duality (honour and dishonour, etc., in the purview of these modes); *nitya-sattva-sthah*—be always situated in the truth (or remain with the true devotees); *niryoga-ksema*—free from acquisition and preservation; (*cha*)—and; *atmavan (san)*—engaging in this *buddhi-yoga*, *yoga* of wisdom that I teach you; *bhava*—become; *nistraigunyah*—transcendental to the three modes of material nature.

45 The Veda celebrates life within the three modes of material consciousness *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* — ignorance, passion and goodness. Words of the Veda encourage worshipers to absorb themselves in worldly knowledge and activities (*jnana* and *karma*). Moved by ignorance, going round in circles in the great wheel of *samsara*, experiencing rebirth and death, those passionate believers with foolish conclusions remain unaware of the true revelation of the Veda, they don’t know the Supreme Being! But Arjuna be free from ignorance. Abandon worldly desires and live in the association of saintly devotees, then, by *buddhi-yoga*, by dedicating yourself to Me, you will reach that pure state of understanding where you are free from all

materialistic tendencies. Situate yourself in that holy state, the true goal of the Vedas. In other words withdraw yourself from the paths of *karma* and *jnana* and instead take to the path of *bhakti-yoga*. Devote yourself to worship of the Supreme Being.

Svetasvatara Upanishad 1.1.1–3:

Sages, discussing Brahman, ask, is Brahman the cause? From where are we born? By what do we live? Where do we dwell at the end? Please tell us, O you who know Brahman, under whose control do we live our lives, whether in pleasure or in pain? Should time, or nature, or necessity, or chance, or the elements of nature be regarded as the ultimate cause of existence? Or is it He who is called the Purusha, the Higher Self, the Lord?

The sages, absorbed in meditation through one-pointedness of mind, discovered nature's creative power is a power belonging to the Lord. The One Lord, Who is non-different from his power (*devatmashakti*), rules over all other causes such as time and the rest. This, they discovered.

*yavan artha udapane sarvatah samplutodake
tavan sarvesu vedesu brahmanasya vijanatah [46]*

yavan arthah—Of various purposes; (*sidhyati*)—achieved; *udapane*—by a well or pond; *tavan* (*eva arthah*)—all the purposes; *sarvatah*—of all these wells; (*sidhyati*)—are achieved; (*tato 'pi vaisistyaena*)—better than that; *sampluta-udake*—by a large expanse of water, a lake. (*evam*)—Similarly; (*yavan arthah sidhyati*)—of the various purposes fulfilled; *sarvesu vedesu*—by the prayers described in all the Vedas for worshipping the various gods; (*tavan arthah sidhyati*)—those purposes are all fulfilled; (*bhagavad aradhane eva*)—by worshipping the Supreme Lord; *brahmanasya vijanatah*—for the brahman who is in full knowledge that devotion to the Lord is the sole purport of the Vedas.

46 Whatever purposes all wells might serve are better served by a huge lake full of water. Similarly, the result achieved by worshiping different deities overseeing the forces of nature is surpassed by worshiping the one Supreme Being. Knowledge of the Supreme Being is the ultimate teaching of the Veda. A self-realized person fulfills their duty perfectly by worshiping the Supreme Being in a mood of loving devotion.

*karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadachana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango 'sto akarmani [47]*

te—Your; *adhiarah*—right; *eva karmani*—is to perform your prescribed duties; *ma kadachana* (*bhuh*)—but never; *phalesu*—to the results. *ma bhuh*—Be neither; *karma-phala-hetuh*—motivated by the fruits of action; *ma*—nor; *astu*—may; *akarmani*—non-performance of your prescribed duties; (*bhuh*)—be; *te*—your; *sangah*—inclination.

47 I shall now describe *karma-yoga*, the *yoga* of selfless action. You have a right to do your work but you are not entitled to enjoy rewards

resulting from your actions. Never act with a desire to enjoy the outcomes of your work, and never neglect your duties either. Give up desires to enjoy the results of your actions and do what is right because it is right. Take to the path of devotion, *bhakti-yoga*, the ultimate path reached by following the paths of *karma-yoga*, *jnana-yoga* and *buddhi-yoga*.

*yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate [48]*

(he) dhananjaya—O Arjuna; yoga-sthah—stand in yoga; tyaktva—giving up; sangam—ego; samah bhutva—and being equipoised; siddhi-asiddhyoh—in success and failure; kuru—do; karmani—your duties; (yatah)—as; samatvam—such equanimity; uchyate—is called; yogah—yoga.

48 While doing your duty, regard your successes and failures with calm perseverance. Do your work, according to your nature. Be a calm observer, be a witness watching things from a detached viewpoint. See the outcomes of actions from an impartial standpoint then, by acting in this way, you will attain *yoga*.

*durena hy avaram karma buddhi-yogad dhananjaya
buddhau saranam anvichchha krpanah phala-hetavah [49]*

(he) dhananjaya—O Dhananjaya; karma hi—action alone; durena avaram—is far inferior; buddhi-yogat—to the yoga of wisdom; (atah)—therefore; anvichchha—seek; saranam—refuge; buddhau—in the wisdom of equanimity. phala-hetavah—Those motivated by the fruits of their actions; krpanah—are misers.

49 Work done for future rewards is miserable in comparison to work done to attain mental equilibrium, *buddhi-yoga*. Those who desire to enjoy the fruits of their labours are misers. Arjuna they are always dissatisfied, tormented by their pleasure-seeking urges. They never know peace and always feel deprived. Embrace calm and peaceful *buddhi*, that type of intelligence that manifests itself in the world in the form of selfless action.

*buddhi-yukto jahatiha ubhe sukrta-duskrte
tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam [50]*

buddhi-yuktah—The wise person; jahati—abstains; ubhe—from both; sukrta-duskrte—pious and sinful actions; iha—in this world. tasmad—Therefore; yujyasva—engage; yogaya—in yoga. yogah—Yoga; kausalam—is the expertise; karma-su—of action.

50 Those who feel no desire to enjoy any benefits produced by their actions rid themselves of the repercussions of all their prior actions. Fix your intelligence through the practice of *buddhi-yoga*. Arjuna, this *yoga* gives perfect guidance, revealing actual enlightenment, and teaching how to properly engage in an active life in the world.

*karma-jam buddhi-yukta hi phalam tyaktva manisinah
janma-bandha-vinirmuktah padam gachchhanty anamayam [51]*
hi—Since; tyaktva—by giving up; phalam—the fruits; karma-jam—born of work; buddhi-yuktah—the wise; manisinah (santah)—are enlightened; janma-bandha-vinirmuktah (santah)—and attaining liberation from the bondage of birth; gachchhanti—attain; padam—the plane; anamayam—beyond suffering.

51 Wise sages free themselves from the bondage of rebirth by renouncing all their attachments and worldly desires, including any desires to enjoy any fruits that will grow in the remote future because of *karma*. The wise sages attain direct realization of the transcendental Atma, the *jiva-atma*, attaining tranquility and freedom from suffering.

*yada te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati
tada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya srutasya cha [52]*
yada—When; te—your; buddhih—intelligence; vyatitarisyati—overcomes; moha-kalilam—the strong illusion (of bodily identification); tada—then; (tvam) gantasi—you will attain; nirvedam—indifference; srotavyasya—of all to be heard; srutasya cha—and already heard.

52 When your intelligence emerges from the darkness of delusion you will be indifferent to all the concerns the people who are ignorant of the truth talk about and hear about.

*sruti-vipratipanna te yada sthasyati nischala
samadhav achala buddhis tada yogam avapsyasi [53]*
yada—When; te buddhih—your intelligence; achala—unmoved; sruti-vipratipanna—by the apparent contradictions of the Vedas; sthasyati—remains; nischala samadhau—steadily absorbed in consciousness of the Supreme; tada—then; avapsyasi—you will attain; yogam—yoga.

53 Subsequently, naturally remaining fixed without motion in the immutable Atma, with your perfected intelligence undisturbed by arguments and interpretations of the scriptures professed by bickering sages, you will enter the transcendental state known as *samadhi*. You will be a *jivan-mukta*, a liberated being.

*arjuna uvacha
sthita-prajnasya ka bhasa samadhi-sthasya kesava
sthita-dhii kim prabhaseta kim asita vrajeta kim [54]*
arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) kesava—O Kesava; ka bhasa—what is the description; sthita-prajnasya—of a person of firmly established wisdom; samadhi-sthasya—one in samadhi, absorbed in thought of the Supreme? sthita-dhii kim prabhaseta—How does such a person of steady mind speak? kim asita kim vrajeta—How does he be and act?

54 Arjuna said: O Keshava, what are the symptoms of great souls who attain *samadhi*? Those saints whose consciousness is fixed in the

trance of self-realization. What do they say, and how do they respond when they experience a loss or happiness? How do they live their life, and what are their endeavours? I want to know this.

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha mano-gatan
atmany evatmana tustah sthita-prajnas tadochyate [55]*

sri bhagavan uvacha—Sri Krishna said: (he) partha—O son of Kunti; yada—when; (jivah)—the living being; prajahati—gives up; sarvan—all; kaman—desires; manah-gatan—entering the mind; tustah (bhavati)—and is content; atmana eva—by the self; atmani—within the self; tada—then; (sah)—that person; uchyate—is said to be; sthita-prajnah—of steady intelligence.

55 Sri Krishna said: When someone abandons all desires arising from the selfish mind, feeling satisfied by the vision of the pure self they can envision inwardly, then they realize their own purest consciousness. A seer sees the reality of their own spiritual self, seeing oneself as a being who is eternal consciousness and bliss.

*duhkhesv anudvigna-manah sukheshu vigata-sprhah
vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah sthita-dhir munir uchyate [56]*

anudvigna-manah—One whose mind is undisturbed; duhkhesu—by sorrow; vigata-sprhah sukheshu—and whose hankering for pleasure has gone; (cha)—and; vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah—who is free from attachment, fear, and anger; (sah eva)—such a person; uchyate—is said to be; munih—a silent sage; sthita-dhih—of steady intelligence.

56 A person undisturbed by mental afflictions, free from desires, free from attachments, fear and anger, is a seer of truth.

*yah sarvatranabhisnehas tat tat prapya subhasubham
nabhinandati na dvesti tasya prajna pratisthita [57]*

yah—One who; anabhisneha—is without attachment; sarvatra—for anything in this world; na abhinandati—neither joyful; na dvesti—nor resentful; prapya—in the event of; subha-asubham—auspiciousness or inauspiciousness; tat tat—respectively; tasya—his; prajna—wisdom; pratisthita—is firmly established.

57 Without attachments, never resentful or elated when they meet with difficulties or moments of pleasure, the consciousness of the liberated Atma remains equipoised in the state of divine trance.

*yada samharate chayam kurmo 'nganiva sarvasah
indriyanindriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita [58]*

yada cha—When; ayam—this person; sarvasah—completely; samharate—with-draws; kurmah angani iva—like the limbs of a tortoise; indriyani—the perceptual senses; indriya-arthebhyah—from their objects (sound, touch, form, taste, and smell); (tada)—then; tasya—his; prajna—wisdom; pratisthita—is firmly established.

58 A person in control of their senses, a person withdrawing from any attachment to external objects of perception, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs into its shell, always feels the calm of *samadhi*.

*visaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya param drstva nivartate [59]*

dehinah—For the embodied; niraharasya—who restricts the senses; visayah—the objects of the senses; vinivartante—recede; rasa-varjam—but not the taste to enjoy them. rasah api—But even the taste; nivartate—disappears; asya—for the man of wisdom; drstva—by the vision; param—of the Supreme.

59 Arjuna, understand that the practices of self-denial and abstinence from food are only for the ignorant. Some try to control their senses with eight processes for concentration of the mind, such as forbearance, and certain methods of sitting, breathing and meditating. But understand that embodied souls who are constantly striving to restrict their senses nevertheless continue to feel desires. They still yearn for pleasures, they still feel their unquenched thirst. However, all desires for enjoyment are extinguished in the saints who know the Supreme Being directly: Paramatma the Higher Self.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

Many, when being troubled with the distress and miseries of the world, think of being delivered from the world, like the old woman from the fable who, while gathering firewood from the woods complained that God had been giving her all her hardships. She invoked Pluto the god of death to come take her away to his place, then when Pluto actually came before her she did not want to go with him, but only asked him to help her lift her load onto her head. Thus she wished to live among the privations and troubles of the world, though she was given a chance of being relieved therefrom. Such is the case with those who want liberation. Within them the stream of worldly desires flows like a river that keeps moving endlessly onwards.

*yatato hy api kaunteya purusasya vipaschitah
indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah [60]*

(he) kaunteya—O Arjuna; hi—yet; indriyani pramathini—the turbulent senses; prasabham—forcibly; haranti—snatch away; manah—the mind; vipaschitah purusasya api—of even the wise person; yatatah—striving for liberation.

60 The turbulent senses can forcefully carry away the mind of a *yogi* aspiring for liberation, creating false impressions, perplexing illusions and misgiven thoughts that confuse even a determined *yogi* struggling with great care, a sage constantly trying to control their senses. But there is no possibility of this for someone whose heart loves the Higher Self.

*tani sarvani samyamya yukta asita mat-parah
vase hi yasyendriyani tasya prajna pratisthita [61]*

samyamya—Controlling; *tani sarvani*—all these senses; *mat-parah*—the person absorbed in consciousness of Me, devoted to Me; *yuktah asita*—should remain one-pointed in concentration; *hi—for*; *yasya*—he whose; *indriyani*—senses; *vase*—have been brought under control; *tasya*—his; *prajna*—intelligence; *pratisthita*—is steady.

61 By the practice of meditating on Me, a *bhakti-yogi* whole-heartedly engaged in My devotional service gains full control of their senses. This *bhakti-yogi* in full control of their senses becomes perfectly calm, and a knower of profound wisdom. Their knowledge is the self-evident truth they realize by direct perception (*vaidusa pratyaksa*), their direct understanding of My divine Nature and Qualities that they envision.

*dhyayato visayan pumsah sangas tesupajayate
sangat sanjayate kamah kamat krodho 'bhijayate [62]*

dhyayatah—(Otherwise, without devotion, renunciation alone fails:) By thinking of; *visayan*—the objects of the senses; *pumsah*—a person's; *sangah*—attachment; *tesu*—to them; *upajayate*—is born. *sangat*—From attachment; *kamah*—desire; *sanjayate*—is born. *kamat*—From desire; *krodhah*—anger; *abhijayate*—arises.

62 Consider mock asceticism. An ascetic engaged in silent meditation might never stop thinking about the physical objects they like to enjoy. Gradually, they return to those things they find alluring – even though they want to reject those things. From attachment, desire is generated, then when desire is frustrated a feeling of anger rises up.

*krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohat smrti-vibhramah
smrti-bhramsad buddhi-naso buddhi-nasat pranasyati [63]*

krodhat—From anger; *sammohah*—delusion; *bhavati*—occurs. *sammohat*—From delusion; *smrti-vibhramah*—forgetfulness of scriptural morality; (*bhavati*)—occurs. *smrti-bhramat*—From forgetfulness; *buddhi-nasah*—loss of truth-seeking intelligence; (*bhavati*)—occurs. *buddhi-nasat*—From loss of intelligence; (*puman*)—a person; *pranasyati*—falls into *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death in the material world.

63 From anger, delusion arises. Delusion causes the distortion of memory as well as forgetfulness of one's own best interests. The state of ignorant forgetfulness destroys good intelligence until finally one's intelligence fails and a person loses everything.

*raga-dvesa-vimuktais tu visayan indriyaiś charan
atma-vasyair vidheyatma prasadam adhigachchhati [64]*

tu—But; *vidheya-atma*—the person who can control his mind at will—whose mind is obedient to him; *raga-dvesa-vimuktaiḥ* (or *-viyuktaiḥ* in another reading)—free from attraction and repulsion, adopting *yukta-vairagya* or devotionally integrated detachment; *charan*—actively accepting; *visayan*—objects;

atma-vasyaih indriyaih—through senses under his own control; adhigachchhati—attains; prasadam—tranquillity.

64 However, My devotees who practice My devotional service and follow the path of renunciation in devotion, *yukta-vairagya*, do everything they do only for Me alone. Living in the world, experiencing different kinds of perceptions with their senses – yet being free from attachments – My devotees feel contented.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The holy name of Krishna is not a fabrication of the human brain like other names current among the nations of the world. What the ignorant masses understand about ‘Krishna’ is not the real object of the word Krishna. In other words, ‘God’, ‘Allah’ and even the Sanskrit words ‘Isvara’, ‘Paramatma’ etc. only indicate a great energy coming out of Krishna. They do not indicate the total meaning of the word Krishna.

*prasade sarva-duhkhanam hanir asyopajayate
prasanna-chetaso hy asu buddhih paryavatisthate [65]*

prasade (sati)—When the heart is tranquil; asya—for such a person; hanih—the end; sarva-duhkhanam—of all sorrows; upajayate—occurs; hi—since; buddhih—the wisdom; prasanna-chetasah—of the peaceful-hearted person; asu—swiftly becomes; pari-avatisthate—steadfast.

65 All the miseries of those who attain a contented heart are vanquished, and the consciousness of those peaceful saints is firmly fixed on their desired goal. It is only by love and devotion that someone can attain a tranquil heart.

*nasti buddhir ayuktasya na chayuktasya bhavana
na chabhavayatah santir asantasya kutah sukham [66]*

ayuktasya—For a person without self-control; na asti—there is no; buddhih—wisdom, self-knowledge. ayuktasya—For such a person devoid of this intelligence; na cha (asti)—there is no; bhavana—meditation on the Lord, purity of thought. abhavayatah—For one without meditation; na cha (asti)—there is no; santih—peace. asantasya—For a person who has no peace; kutah—where is; sukham—happiness?

66 People with uncontrolled senses have no proper power of judgement and their thoughts are confused. They remain fixated on transient things. Someone lacking purity of thought can never find calm peace, so how will they ever enjoy any enduring state of happiness?

Srila Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj:

The condition of the human body varies according to the time and weather, undergoing more transformations than the moon itself; so also must the state of the mind rise and fall like mercury in a tube. One hour the mind is as pure as the sky, and the next moment it is as foul as the thickest fog. Where, then, is the reliability of the human intellect? Where are the grounds to boast of its prowess? This fickleness of the mortal frame, this instability of human wisdom, should teach us humility and abate our pride.

This point is overlooked by many philosophers, most of whom are found to be strongly prejudiced in favour of their own preferred opinions. Prejudice generally stands like a stumbling block in the way of justice and does not allow our reason to look beyond it. It is this fatal propensity that shamefully misleads our judgment. To avoid being led astray by such a dangerous error, we must be very careful to deprive ourselves of acquired prejudices and listen impartially before we pass a sweeping remark on any subject.

It is admitted on all counts that the powers of the mind depend upon the organs of the body, which alter over time. The mind, being inseparably connected with matter, cannot proceed beyond material phenomena. It therefore has no access to the spiritual world, the door to which is shut to all who want to enter with their dim light of worldly wisdom.

*indriyanam hi charatam yan mano 'nuvidhiyate
tad asya harati prajnam vayur navam ivambhasi [67]*

hi—Because; iva—as; vayuh—an unfavourable wind; (harati)—carries away; navam—a boat; ambhasi—on the ocean; (tadvat)—similarly; indriyanam—of the senses; charatam—that wander about their objects; yat—whichsoever sense; manah—the mind; anuvidhiyate—follows; tat—that sense; harati—carries away, lures towards its object; prajnam—the wisdom, intelligence; asya—of that person bereft of self-control.

67 A boat on the sea gets tossed by waves and winds. Similarly, a mind that likes to be agitated by delightful things that stimulate the senses, a mind that likes to enjoy material existence, this mind attached to earthly life – this deluded mind – this is the very thing concealing the deeper, intuitive intelligence of the self.

*tasmad yasya maha-baho nigrhitani sarvasah
indriyanindriyarthebhyas tasya prajna pratisthita [68]*

(he) maha-baho—O subduer of the enemy; tasmad—therefore; yasya—he whose; indriyani—senses; nigrhitani—are withdrawn; sarvasah—fully; indriya-arthebhyah—from the sense objects; tasya—his; prajna—wisdom; pratisthita—is firmly established.

68 O subduer of enemy forces, Arjuna, a person whose senses are subdued completely through *yukta-vairagya*, renunciation in devotion, is a person whose intelligence is perfectly adjusted, *prajna pratisthita*.

*ya nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh [69]*

sarva-bhutanam ya nisa—That which is night for all living beings (who, immersed in ignorance, remain asleep to spiritual knowledge); *tasyam*—in that night; *samyami*—the self-disciplined person; *jagarti*—remains awake (joyful in his spiritual intelligence). *yasyam*—That (mundane intelligence) in which; *bhutani*—all living beings; *jagrati*—remain awake (experience the pleasures and pains, sorrows and delusions of worldly life); *sa*—such (mundane intelligence) is; *nisa*—night; *muneh*—for the sage; *pasyatah*—who sees (the futility of mundane endeavours and remains indifferent to the dualities).

69 The spiritually awakened Atma remains awake during the dark night of delusion when all other beings are asleep in ignorance. When the souls bewildered by illusion are awake to their body's experiences of pleasures and suffering, that time seems like night time to the pure self, the liberated Atma.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

Vaishnavism says in effect that the soul who is an embodiment of pure consciousness cannot function properly in this material universe for the reason that here he finds himself dislocated from his own proper plane and banished from truth and happiness.

*apuryamanam achala-pratistham
samudram apah pravisanti yadvat
tadvat kama yam pravisanti sarve
sa santim apnoti na kama-kami [70]*

yadvat—As; *apah*—water; *pravisanti*—enters; *samudram*—the ocean; *apuryamanam*—always full; *achala-pratistham*—it remains steady, its water never crossing the shore; *tadvat*—similar is; *yam*—that sage who; *sarve*—all desires; *pravisanti*—enter to be enjoyed (for they cannot disturb his mind). *sah*—He alone; *apnoti*—attains; *santim*—peace; (*tu*)—but; *kama-kami*—a person who nurtures desires; *na (tad apnoti)*—cannot achieve that.

70 The deep ocean, always full in itself, is never disturbed when rivers bring in fresh water onto the surface. Similarly, liberated souls situated in the trance of *samadhi* are not agitated when fresh sense perceptions appear in their minds. They alone feel true peace, whereas those who hanker for material enjoyment feel unsatisfied.

*vihaya kaman yah sarvan pumams charati nisprah
nirmamo nirahankarah sa santim adhigachchhati [71]*

yah puman—That person who; *vihaya*—giving up; *sarvan kaman*—all desires; *charati*—moves through the world; *nisprah*—free from hankering; *nirahankarah* *nirmamah*—free from the false ego of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in relation to the body and its attachments (having a divine relationship with the Supreme); *sah*—he; *adhigachchhati*—attains; *santim*—peace.

71 Giving up every desire, giving up all attachments to sense objects, egotism and possessiveness, a wise soul, a *jnani*, attains real peace.

*esa brahmi sthitih partha nainam prapya vimuhyati
sthitvasyam anta-kale 'pi brahma-nirovanam rchchhati [72]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; *esa brahmi sthitih*—this is the state of realising Brahma, the Absolute. *enam prapya*—Having reached this; *(narah)*—a person; *na vimuhyati*—is freed from the delusion of mundane existence. *rchchhati*—He attains; *brahma-nirovanam*—liberation from matter and entrance into the divine plane; *sthitva*—being situated; *asyam*—in this state; *anta-kale api*—even at the time of death.

72 O Partha, this determined indifference to earthly enjoyments first leads a *jnani* to the realization of *brahma-nirovana*. Even in the closing stages of their life, when someone realizes their own pure essence, their inner Atma, as something sacred, something divine, and of the same spiritual nature as Paramatma the Supreme Lord — their own soul, which is smaller in size than an atom — that dying person attains the state called *brahma-nirovana*. They get release from material existence. The liberated *jnani* becomes settled in that spiritual state transcending time and space. Then, within *brahma-nirovana*, their mood of indifference to egotism and selfishness can lead the awakened soul further onwards, leading them to a feeling of attraction to the path of *bhakti-yoga*, the *yoga* of selfless love which leads to the most lofty region of transcendental experience.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

The second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is called Gita-Sutra. It is a full summary of the Gita, since in this chapter karma and *jnana* are clearly described and their goal, *bhakti*, is indistinctly described.

Chapter Three

The Yoga of Action

Karma-yoga

arjuna uvacha

*iyayasi chet karmanas te mata buddhir janardana
tat kim karmani ghore mam niyojayasi kesava [1]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) janardana—O Janardan; (he) kesava—O Keshava; chet—if; te mata—it is Your opinion that; buddhih—wisdom; iyayasi—is superior; karmanah—to action; tat kim—why, then; niyojayasi mam—do You urge me to engage; ghore karmani—in the terrible action of warfare?

1 Arjuna asked: O Janardana, O Keshava, You said *buddhi-yoga* leads to the goal of perfect peace. You said direct experience of the self, the Atma, in the transcendental state of *samadhi*, is the goal of *yoga*. You explained that striving to attain resolute spiritual intelligence (*vyavasayatmika buddhi*, Bg. 2.44) is better than engaging in actions under the influence of goodness, passions and ignorance. So why do You want me to participate in the violence of war?

vyamisreneva vakyena buddhim mohayasiva me

tad ekam vada nischitya yena sreya 'ham apnuyam [2]

mohayasi iva—You are bewildering; me—my; buddhim—intelligence; vakyena—by Your words; vyamisrena iva—by their ambiguous meanings, sometimes praising action and sometimes praising wisdom. tat—Therefore; nischitya—ascertaining; ekam—one; vada—please say; yena—that by which; aham—I; apnuyam—can obtain; sreya—the highest benefit.

2 I feel confused by Your ambiguous words. Sometimes You say I should engage in action, in warfare. At other times You say I should be detached from the world and realize a higher understanding. Please tell me clearly which course is best for me.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

loke 'smin dvi-vidha nistha pura prokta mayanagha

jnana-yogena sankhyanam karma-yogena yoginam [3]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Lord said: (he) anagha—O sinless Arjuna; asmin loke—in this world; dvi-vidha nistha—two ways; prokta—have been spoken of; maya—by Me; pura—in the previous chapter: (nistha sthapita)—the established practice; sankhyanam—of the realised; jnana-yogena—by the yoga of knowledge; (nistha sthapita)—and the established practice; yoginam—of those engaged in action in the world; karma-yogena—by the yoga of selfless action.

3 Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the Supreme Lord, answered: I said both the path of a *jnana-yogi*, a learned person awakened by knowledge, and the path of a *karma-yogi*, an active person engaged in dutiful work, are beginning steps, two paths that lead to *bhakti-yoga* the path of loving devotion. Indeed, the path is one but the faith of people on the path is twofold, since they have different understandings.

*na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam puruso 'snute
na cha sannyasanad eva siddhim samadhi-gachchhati* [4]

purusah—A person; *na asnute*—cannot attain; *naiskarmyam*—to the state of spiritual consciousness beyond material activity; *anarambhat*—by refraining from; *karmanam*—(scripturally prescribed) actions; *na samadhi-gachchhati*—and he cannot attain; *siddhim*—fulfillment, perfection; *sannyasanat eva cha*—by renunciation alone.

4 Without performing selfless activities no-one can attain divine knowledge that gives them freedom from *karma*. How can a person whose heart is impure obtain perfection after abandoning their proper duties, ceasing to do good works?

*na hi kaschit ksanam api jatu tisthaty akarmakrt
karyate hy avasah karma sarvaih prakrti-jair gunaih* [5]

kaschit—One; *na hi tisthati*—cannot remain; *jatu*—at any time; *akarma-krt*—without engaging in activity; *ksanam api*—even for a moment. *sarvaih*—Indeed, all living beings; *avasah*—are helplessly; *karma karyate*—engaged in activity; *prakrti-jaih gunaih*—by the modes or qualities born of material nature.

5 No-one can remain still doing nothing at all. Not for a moment. Everyone is forced to act helplessly, compelled to act by the material circumstances they are born into. Therefore it is wrong for a person whose consciousness is impure, a person full of worldly sentiments, to reject the purifying work and duties mentioned in the Veda. The duties assigned to people with responsibilities in a society.

*karmendriyani samyamya ya aste manasa smaran
indriyarthan vimudhatma mithyacharah sa uchyate* [6]

yah—That person who; *samyamya*—having controlled; *karma-indriyani*—the senses of action—the hands, legs, etc. (see 13.6); *smaran aste*—remembers, dwells on; *indriya-arthan*—the sense objects; *manasa*—within his mind; *sah*—that person; *uchyate*—is known as; *vimudha-atma*—a fool; *mithya-acharah*—and a hypocrite.

6 A person who externally restrains their hands, legs and senses from activity but whose mind likes to dwell on enjoyable things is a fool. Know them as a hypocrite.

yas to indriyani manasa niyamyarabhate 'rjuna
karmendriyaih karma-yogam asaktah sa visisyate [7]

(he) arjuna—O Dhananjaya; yah tu—but he, who; niyamyā—having stabilised; indriyani—the senses; manasa—by the mind; arabhate—engages in; karma-yogam—the yoga of action as directed by the scriptures; karma-indriyaih—utilising the senses of action; asaktah—without any desire for the results; sah—that person; visisyate—is superior to such a hypocrite.

7 O Arjuna, a man performing his duties in daily life, mindfully controlling his senses, performing *karma-yoga* and working in the world using his senses, that man without attachments is far superior to a hypocrite engaged in silent meditation.

niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyayo hy akarmanah
sarira-yatrapī cha te na prasiddhyed akarmanah [8]

tvam—You; kuru—perform; niyatam karma—prescribed duties; hi—since; karma—the performance of duty; jyayah—is superior; akarmanah—to renouncing duty. akarmanah cha—By becoming inactive; te sarira yatra api—even your bodily sustenance; na prasiddhyet—will not be accomplished.

8 Perform your duties. Do your worship and other regular activities. Even bodily preservation is impossible without activity, and it is better for a beginner on the path of spiritual progress to perform their duties in the world than to withdraw from the world. Give up personal desires for rewards. Purify your mind by doing your daily duties such as fighting, governing and prayer. Your heart will be purified gradually until you finally attain divine love of God. Ultimately you will realize that transcendental state of spiritual existence existing apart from mundane existence.

yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanah
tad-artham karma kaunteya mukta-sangah samachara [9]

(he) kaunteya—O Arjuna; ayam lokah—all the living beings of this world; karma-bandhanah (bhavati)—come into bondage by their action; karmanah anyatra—other than action; yajna-arthat—as selfless duty offered to Lord Visnu. (atah)—Therefore; mukta-sangah (san)—being free from attachment; karma samachara—be fully active; tat-artham—for the purpose of such sacrifice, for Him.

9 Selfless duty performed as an offering to the Supreme Lord Vishnu is called *yajna* or holy sacrifice. O Arjuna, any action performed for other purposes besides holy sacrifice causes *karma*. It is the cause of future bondage in the world of repeated birth and death, *samsara*. Therefore, be unattached to any rewards arising from your actions and do your duty in the spirit of sacrifice. This path of selfless action or *karma-yoga* leads to *bhakti-yoga* the path of devotion to God. In the awakening of your proper understanding of the reality and spiritual nature of the Supreme Lord you will attain a proper understanding

of pure devotion to God. You will have an inner awakening of pure knowledge, a knowledge free from all material traces.

*saha-yajnah prajah srstva purovacha prajapatiḥ
anena prasaviśyadhvam esa vo 'stv ista-kama-dhuk [10]
devan bhavayatanena te deva bhavayantu vah
parasparam bhavayantah sreyah param avapsyatha [11]
istan bhogan hi vo deva dasyante yajna-bhavitah
tair dattan apradayaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sah [12]*

pura—At the universal manifestation; *srstva*—after manifesting; *saha-yajnah prajah*—the progeny of the world, with sacrifices for Lord Viṣṇu; *prajapatiḥ*—Lord Brahma; *uvacha*—said: *prasaviśyadhvam*—“May your prosperity flourish; *anena*—by this religious practice. *esah astu*—May this sacrifice be; *vah*—your; *ista-kama-dhuk*—bestower of desired objects.” *anena*—“By this yajna; (*yujam*)—you all; *bhavayata*—propitiate; *devan*—the gods; *te devah (api)*—and the gods being thus pleased; *bhavayantu vah*—may bestow upon you your desired fruits. (*evam*)—In this way; *parasparam*—mutually; *bhavayantah*—nourished; *avapsyatha*—you will obtain; *param sreyah*—the ultimate auspiciousness.” *devah*—The gods (as limbs of My universal form); *yajna-bhavitah (santah)*—being pleased by sacrifices; *dasyante*—will bestow; *vah*—upon you; *istan bhogan*—desired enjoyable objects. *hi*—Therefore; *yah*—he who; *bhunkte*—enjoys; *tair dattan*—food provided by the gods; (*vrstyadi dvarena*)—via the rain, etc.; *apradaya*—without making any offerings (of that food); (*pancha-yajna-adhibih*)—by means of the five kinds of sacrifices, etc.; *ebhyah*—to those gods, who are all under My shelter; *sah*—that person; *stenah eva*—is but a thief.

10–12 In the beginning, all the individual *jiva*-souls were devoid of names and forms. They were merged in the Lord’s power called *jiva-prakṛiti*. Then Viṣṇu the Lord of Creation made forms and names for the self-aware beings so they could pursue their selfish goals in life. Viṣṇu also began the sacrificial rite, *yajna*, because it is only through sacrifice that the *jiva*-souls can attain their desires. Sri Viṣṇu said: By means of sacrifice you will prosper, sacrifice will grant your desires. Through sacrifice you can worship the gods of nature then the gods will nurture you in return. Serving one another you will gain great benefit because the gods, pleased by sacrifice, will bestow all the enjoyment you desire upon you. Those who enjoy the bounty of the gods without offering them anything in return are thieves.

Tridandi Swami B.H. Bon:

Promoting the universal good, doing pious deeds and performing Yajna, born of the cosmic potency of God, the spiritual beings who act unseen enacting the universal good are known as ‘gods’.

*yajna-sistasinah santo muchyante sarva-kilbisaih
bhunjate te tv agham papa ye pachanty atma-karanat [13]*

santah—Virtuous people; *yajna-sista-asinah*—who partake of the remnants of sacrifice to the gods (universal administrators subordinate to the Lord); *muchyante*—are liberated; *sarva-kilbisaih*—from all sin (*pancha-suna*, five types of sin due to five kinds of violence to other living beings). *ye tu*—But those who; *pachanti*—cook; *atma-karanat*—for their own pleasure; *te*—those; *papah*—sinful persons; *bhunjate*—eat; (*eva*)—only; *agham*—sin.

13 Virtuous souls eat consecrated food that is the remnant of rituals of sacrifice. They become free from the sins of violence committed against other beings. But sinners who cook for their own sake only eat sins.

Sri Chaitanyadev:

The killing and eating of cows and bulls is forbidden. The Vedas clearly enjoin that cows should not be killed. Therefore every Hindu, whoever he may be, avoids cow-killing. In the iron age of Kali five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in a sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of sannyasa, the offering of oblations of animal flesh to the forefathers, and a man begetting children in his brother's wife.

*annad bhavanti bhutani parjanya anna-sambhava
yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karma-samudbhava [14]*

annat—From food (transformed into semen and blood); *bhutani*—(the physical bodies of) all living entities; *bhavanti*—are manifest. *anna-sambhava*—Food is manifest; *parjanyat*—due to rainfall. *parjanya*—Rainfall; *bhavati*—occurs; *yajnat*—due to yajna, sacrifice. *yajnah*—Sacrifice; *karma-samudbhava*—is born of action.

14 From food, living beings come to life, and food is produced by rain. The rain falls because of the universal harmony holy acts of sacrifice create. And sacrifice, *yajna*, is the result of action, *karma*.

Tridandi Swami B.H. Bon:

The Yajnas, they are five: Brahma-Yajna, performed by studying the Vedas; Priti-Yajna, oblations of sesame and water to the ancestors who are dead; Dai-va-Yajna, offering butter to the gods by burning it in the holy fire; Bhuta-Yajna, offering food to needy beings; and lastly Nri-yajna, offering hospitality to guests.

*karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahmaksara-samudbhavam
tasmad sarva-gatam brahma nityam yajne pratisthitam [15]*

viddhi—Know that; *karma*—action; *brahma-udbhavam*—is born of the Vedas. *brahma*—The Vedas; *aksara-samudbhavam*—are born of Aksara, the Imperishable. *tasmad*—Therefore; *sarva-gatam*—the all-pervading; *brahma*—Supreme Lord; *nityam pratisthitam*—is always situated; *yajne*—within sacrifice.

15 *Karma* arises from actions recommended in the Vedas, and Aum (om) the transcendental Word of God is the origin of the Vedas, the holy revelation. Thus Aum the divine Word of God is worshiped by acts of sacrifice performed in accord with revelations revealed in the Veda.

Taittiriya Upanishad:

Aum is Spirit, Brahman.

Aum is all of this, everything.

Aum pervades all other words

and the earth and all of the heavens.

Aum is Spirit, pure, divine.

*evam pravartitam chakram nanuvaratayatiha yah
aghayur indriyaramo mogham partha sa jivati [16]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; yah—one who; iha—in this life; na anuvaratayati—does not follow; chakram—the cycle; evam pravartitam—thus established in the nature of cause and effect; (parama-purusena)—by the Supreme Personality; sah—he; jivati—lives; agha-ayuh—a life of sin; indriya-aramah—enjoying the senses; mogham—in vain.

16 A person in the beginning stages of spiritual progress should perform yajna, the causal factor nourishing and preserving the living creation. People live in error when they don't make sacrifices and do their duty. Sins can be dissipated by performing acts of sacrifice, in the revolving cycle of action known as the Karma-Chakra or 'mighty wheel of action.' Those who selfishly seek to enjoy pleasures endlessly, who cling to pleasing things they perceive with their senses, live in vain.

*yas tv atma-ratir eva syad atma-trptas cha manavah
atmany eva cha santustas tasya karyam na vidyate [17]*

tu—But; yah manavah—that man who; syat—is; atma-ratih—internally ecstatic; atma-trptah eva cha—internally satiated; cha—and; santustah—fully satisfied; atmani eva—in the self alone; tasya—his; karyam—duties; na vidyate—are none.

17 Those who revolve mechanically, moving in the wheel of *karma*, perform actions under harsh compulsion. But there is no duty to fulfill whatsoever for a *jiva-soul* who finds delight in the Atma, the true self. For them there is no irksome toiling at the wheel of action, but instead the bliss and dignity they find within oneself. They remain self-satisfied, working only for the bare necessities of bodily maintenance.

*naiva tasya krtenartha nakrteneha kaschana
na chasya sarva-bhutesu kaschid artha-vyapasrayah [18]*

iha—In this world; *tasya*—for that atmarama, one who delights in the self; *arthah* *na eva*—no piety is gained; *krtena*—by action; *kaschana* (anarthah) *na*—nor is any sin committed; *akrtena*—by inaction; *sarva-bhutesu cha*—and of all beings; *kaschid na (bhavati)*—no one is; *asya artha-vyapasrayah*—depended on by him for any purpose.

18 A self-realized person rejoices internally. They have no merit to gain by doing work, nor is it a sin if they don't do any work. For them, there is nothing to be done in the world and nothing to be sought for.

*tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samachara
asakto hy acharan karma param apnoti purusah [19]*

tasmad—Therefore; *asaktah* (san)—being unattached to the fruits of your actions; *satatam*—always; *samachara*—perfectly perform; *karyam karma*—prescribed duties; *hi*—since; *karma acharan*—performing these duties; *asaktah*—without attachment; *purusah*—a person; *apnoti*—attains; *param-bhakti*—pure devotion.

19 But Arjuna always perform your duty. Being indifferent to any and all rewards that accrue from your work, perform your duties without attachment and you will attain the highest goal.

*karmanaiva hi samsiddhim asthita janakadayah
loka-sangraham evapi sampasyan kartum arhasi [20]
yad yad acharati sresthas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate [21]*

janaka-adayah—The learned, such as King Janaka and others; *hi*—certainly; *asthitah*—obtained; *samsiddhim*—success—devotion; *karmana eva*—by fulfilling their duties. *arhasi*—Be prepared; *kartum*—to do; (karma)—work; *api*—also; *loka-sangraham sampasyan eva*—in the consideration of the welfare of the people. *yad yad*—However; *srestha*—the great personality; *acharati*—conducts himself; *itarah janah*—other lesser men; (acharati)—will conduct themselves; *tat tat eva*—accordingly. *yad*—Whatever; *sah*—the great personality; *kurute*—accepts; *pramanam*—as the standard; *loka*—ordinary men; *tad anuvartate*—follow that.

20–21 King Janaka and other wise men attained direct realization of the Atma by performing *karma-yoga*, so it is right and proper for you to do your duty too, setting an example for the masses. Whatever an acclaimed person does the other people also do. The world follows whatever standard he sets.

*na me parthasti kartavyam trisu lokesu kinchana
nanavaptam avaptavyam varta eva cha karmani [22]*

(he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *trisu lokesu*—in the three worlds; *na asti*—there is not; *kinchana*—any; *kartavyam*—duty to be done; *me*—for Me; (yatah)—since; *na (asti kinchana)*—there is nothing; *anavaptam*—unobtained; *avaptavyam*—or to be obtained; (mama)—for Me; (tathapi)—and yet; *varte eva cha*—I am engaged; *karmani*—in activity.

22 O Arjuna, I am Vasudeva, the Soul of the universe, the controller of everything, and I appear in the world in the dynasty of the Yadavas who are rulers. By My own example in My personal life I show the Yadavas that I too perform duties and accept responsibilities. I engage in action, *karma-yoga*.

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur:

In this and the next two verses Sri Krishna presents Himself as an example of a liberated soul who comes into the world to teach the common people.

*yadi hy aham na varteyam jatu karmany atandritah
mama vartmanuvartante manusyah partha sarvasah [23]
utsideyur ime loka na kuryam karma ched aham
sankarasya cha karta syam upahanyam imah prajah [24]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; *yadi jatu*—if ever; *aham—I*; *na varteyam*—do not engage; *atandritah*—attentively; *karmani*—in duties; (*tarhi*)—then; *hi*—certainly; *manusyah*—all men; *anuvartante*—will follow; *mama*—My; *vartma*—path; *sarvasah*—in all respects. *chet*—If; *aham—I*; *na kuryam*—do not engage in; *karma*—duty; (*tarhi*)—then; *ime lokah*—the inhabitants of these worlds; *utsideyuh*—will be ruined; (*karma tyaktoa*)—by renouncing their duty; *cha*—and; (*aham*)—I; *syam*—will be; *karta*—the maker; *sankarasya*—of *varna-sankara*, or adulterated progeny; (*evam aham eva*)—and in this way, I alone; *upahanyam*—will cause the downfall; *imah prajah*—of these people.

23–24 O Arjuna, if I were to avoid doing good works then everyone, following Me, would also give up doing anything good. These worlds would descend into chaos if I did not perform pious activities. I would be the author of confusion and the cause of destruction of all the living beings struggling here to attain freedom from the misery of *samsara*, the endlessly turning wheel of *karma*.

*saktah karmany avidvamsa yatha kurvanti bharata
kuryad vidvams tathasaktas chikirsur loka-sangraham [25]*

(he) *bharata*—O Arjuna; *yatha*—just as; *avidvamsah*—the ignorant; *karmani saktah*—attached to work; *kurvanti*—perform; (*karmani*)—work; *tatha*—similarly; *vidvan*—the wise; *asaktah (san)*—being unattached; *kuryat*—should work; *chikirsuh*—wishing; *lokasan graham*—to guide the people.

25 The wise perform actions for the welfare of the world. Arjuna, the ignorant engage in actions and remain attached to the results of their work, but the wise should also act, acting without selfish intentions or attachments. The difference is not in the work people do but in their understandings about attachment and detachment.

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajnanam karma-sanginam
yojayet sarva-karmani vidvan yuktah samacharan [26]*

vidvan—The learned, the teacher of jnana-yoga; *na janayet*—must not create; *ajnanam*—among ignorant men; *karma-sanginam*—who are attached to work; *buddhi-bhedam*—the confusion to neglect duties and cultivate knowledge. (*api tu*)—Rather; *yuktah (san)*—remaining unattached; *samacharan*—fully executing; *sarva-karmani*—all duties; (*ajnan*) *yojayet*—they should encourage the ignorant in their duties.

26 A wise person should never confuse an ignoramus who likes to work and feels deeply attached to his worldly activities. Rather, a wise person should do selfless work in the spirit of devotion and inspire others to act in the same way.

*prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah
ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham iti manyate [27]*

karmani—Actions; *kriyamanani*—are effected; *sarvasah*—in all ways; *gunaih*—(by the senses, impelled) by the modes; *prakrteh*—of material nature; (*tu*)—but; *ahankara-vimudha-atma*—one deluded by bodily ego; *manyate iti*—thinks thus; *aham karta*—“I am the doer.”

27 All the actions animate beings living in nature do are instigated and done by the *gunas*,* the forces of material nature. But an ignoramus deluded by the egotistical notion of individual independence thinks, “It is I alone who accomplish all the things I do.”

* NOTE: The *gunas* are goodness, passion and ignorance, the three aspects of material thought (*sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*). *Maya* or “material nature” creates a living body and its physical senses, as well as an organ, the brain, an instrument that calculates material conclusions and directs the movements of the body. All urges, calculations, perceptions, sensations and other aspects of material thought are products of material nature.

*tattvavit tu maha-baho guna-karma-vibhagayoh
guna gunesu vartanta iti matva na sajjate [28]*

tu—But; (*he*) *maha-baho*—O Arjuna, best of heroes; *tattva-vit*—one who is in knowledge; *guna-karma-vibhagayoh*—of the division of the modes of material nature (the three modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance), and action (the functions performed by the gods, the senses, and the sense objects); (*sah*)—he; *matva*—considering; *iti*—that; *gunah*—the modes (in the form of the senses of perception—ear, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose, activated by the gods); *vartante*—are engaged; *gunesu*—within the modes (in the form of the sense objects of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell); *na sajjate*—is not attached to them, not absorbed in them.

28 O Arjuna, someone who sees that the transcendental self is aloof from the *gunas* and also understands *karma* never regards themselves as a doer engaged in worldly activities. They know perfectly well that their senses, their ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose, are in contact

with external objects, and moreover, that the senses are subservient to a far more powerful reality that is greater than oneself, a reality beyond one's control.

Sri Adi Shankara Acharya:

Man's inherited bodily nature influences his conduct. Those who argue they are independent thinkers are deluded and doomed to destruction.

*prakrter guna-sammudhah sajjante guna-karmasu
tan akrtsna-vido mandan krtsna-vin na vichalayet [29]*

prakrteh-guna-sammudhah—Persons bewildered by the modes; sajjante—are absorbed; guna-karmasu—in the functions of the modes (the engagement of the senses with their objects). krtsna-vit—Those possessing knowledge; na vichalayet—should not agitate (by trying to induce them to accept knowledge of self and non-self); tan—those; akrtsna-vidah—ignorant; mandan—unfortunate persons; (kintu gunavesa-nivartakam niskama karmaiva karayet)—but should rather engage them in selfless action which frees them from absorption in the modes of nature.

29 People who are enchanted by material nature remain attached to their bodies and objects they perceive through their senses. The wise should not disturb these people by discussing philosophical truths with them. Instead, they should be encouraged to do selfless actions because selfless work will end all attachment to material existence.

*mayi sarvani karmani sannyasyadhyatma-chetasa
nirasir nirmamo bhutva yudhyasva vigata-jvarah [30]*

sannyasya—Completely surrendering; sarvani karmani—all activities; mayi—unto Me; adhyatma-chetasa—always conscious of the Spiritual Being; bhutva—being; nirasih—without fruitive desire; nirmamah—without possessiveness; vigata-jvarah (cha)—and without anguish; yudhyasva—fight.

30 Surrender to Me with this understanding: "All my actions are under the control of the Lord, the controlling Deity in my heart." Thinking this, free your mind from grief and all feelings of possessiveness. Rise up and engage in this battle for justice. Act now, act in accord with your *swa-dharma* doing your natural duty in this fight to achieve justice.

Srimad Bhagavat Purana (4.29.45):

Because of the intense love of His surrendered soul, the Supreme Lord bestows His grace upon that devotee by ushering divine inspiration into his heart. Such a devotee then abandons the preoccupation with adhering to worldly obligations and Vedic religiosity.

*ye me matam idam nityam anutisthanti manavah
 sraddhavantō 'nasuyanto muchyante te 'pi karmabhih [31]
 ye tv etad abhyasuyanto nanutisthanti me matam
 sarva-jnana-vimudhams tan viddhi nastan ahetasah [32]
 sadrsam chestate svasyah prakrter jnanavan api
 prakrtim yanti bhutani nigraha kim karisyati [33]*

ye manavah—Those men who; *sraddhavantah*—faithfully; *anasuyantah*—and unbegrudgingly; *nityam*—always; *anutisthanti*—execute; *idam*—this; *me matam*—teaching of Mine, of selfless action; *te api*—they too; *muchyante*—are liberated; *karmabhih*—from the bondage of karma, or action and reaction in the mundane plane. *ye tu*—But those who; *abhyasuyantah*—out of resentment; *na anutisthanti*—do not follow; *etat me matam*—that teaching of Mine; *tan viddhi*—know them to be; *sarva-jnana-vimudhan*—deprived of all knowledge; *nastan*—completely deviated from the goal of human life; *ahetasah*—and bereft of good intelligence. *janavan api*—Even a knowledgeable person; *chestate*—acts; *sadrsam*—according to; *svasyah prakrteh*—his nature. *bhutani*—Living beings; *prakrtim yanti*—follow their natures. *kim karisyati*—What will be the use of; *nigraha*—repression; (*tesam*)—of them?

31–33 Faithful souls engaged in *karma-yoga* attain liberation, becoming free from all repercussions resulting from their actions, even while they remain engaged in performing actions. However, those who dismissively reject this teaching of Mine are misguided – they are devoid of good reasoning. Even learned people tend to act according to their predispositions, all living beings follow their natural inclinations, so what good can be achieved by attempting to speak about *karma* and *jnana* to a faithless person?

*indriyasyendriyasyarthe raga-dvesau vyavasthitau
 tayor na vasam agachchhet tau hy asya paripanthinau [34]*

raga-dvesau—Attraction and aversion; *indriyasya*—of all the senses; *vyavasthitau*—exist; *indriyasya-arthe*—for their objects. (*tathapi*)—However; *vasam na agachchhet*—One must not be controlled; *tayoh*—by such attraction and aversion; *hi*—since; *tau pari-panthinau*—they are an obstacle; *asya*—to the spiritual practitioner.

34 Attachment and aversion to objects in the world is inevitable. One should not be a slave to this. It is attachment and aversion that are the real enemies of souls seeking self-realization. These tendencies existed in souls even before they first took birth in the material universe.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

Two principles in a crude form awaken in the jiva: hatred and desire. Then, gradually the soul comes down to mingle with the mundane world. At first, sympathy and apathy develop in a crude form, just as when a sprout springs up with two leaves. Then gradually these two things help us to dive deep into this mundane world. Upon retiring from the world of exploita-

tion, the soul may return to his former position in the Brahma-jyoti as spirit. But, if the soul has gathered the tendency of dedication through his previous devotional activities he does not stop there, he pierces through the Brahma-jyoti and goes towards Vaikuntha the spiritual abode of the Lord.

*sreyan svadharmo vigunah para-dharmat svanusthitat
svadharma nidhanam sreyah para-dharmo bhayavahah [35]*

svadharmah—One's own function; vigunah—tinged with faults; sreyan—is better; para-dharmat—than another's function; su-anusthitat—done well. nidhanam—Even death; svadharma—on one's own path of duty (according to one's appropriate position in the varnasram or God-centred socio-religious system); sreyah—is better. para-dharmah—Another's path of duty; bhaya-avahah—is dangerous.

35 It is better to carry out one's own duties within society imperfectly than to faultlessly perform duties assigned to another person. To die in the performance of one's own natural duty is laudable, whereas the abnormal urge to abandon your duty and imitate someone else, attempting to do their work, is dangerous.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

Someone who executes his duties may die before attaining a more elevated qualification. Still his work is auspicious. However, when a person attains the stage of performing *nirguna-bhakti* (pure devotion to the Lord) they can give up doing their occupational duty (*swa-dharma*) without hesitation.

*arjuna uvacha
atha kena prayukto 'yam papan charati purusah
anichchhann api varsneya balad iva niyojitah [36]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: atha—Now; (he) varsneya—O descendant of the Vrsni dynasty; kena prayuktah (san)—being incited by what; ayam purusah charati—does this living being commit; papam—sinful activities; anichchhann api—even unwillingly; niyojitah iva—as if engaged; balat—by force?

36 Arjuna inquired: O Krishna, O descendant of the Vrishni dynasty, by whom or what is someone compelled to commit sinful actions, even against their own will?

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
kama esa krodha esa rajoguna-samudbhavah
mahasano maha-papma viddhy enam iha vairinam [37]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: esah kamah—It is this desire to enjoy the mundane; esah krodhah—transformed into anger. rajo-guna-samudbhavah—It arises from the mode of passion, and from that desire, blind anger

is born. *viddhi enam*—Know such desire to be; *maha-asanaḥ*—never satisfied; *maha-papma*—greatly wrathful; *vairinaḥ*—and the worst enemy of the living being; *iha*—in this world.

37 Krishna replied: It is lust, born from passion, that causes someone to commit sins. Lust is the root cause of the desire to enjoy pleasures, and in different circumstance lust transforms into anger. Lust is a malicious force, it is insatiable. Lust is the greatest enemy of the souls struggling in the world because lust keeps constantly misguiding them.

*dhūmenavriyate vahnir yathadarso malena cha
yatholbenavṛto garbhas tatha tenedam avṛtam* [38]

yatha—As; *vahnir*—fire; *avriyate*—is covered; *dhūmena*—by smoke; *yatha*—as; *adarsaḥ*—a mirror; (*avriyate*)—is covered; *malena*—by dust; (*yatha*) *cha*—and as; *garbhah*—the embryo; *avṛtaḥ*—is covered; *ulbena*—by the womb; *tatha*—similarly; *idam*—one's consciousness; *avṛtam*—is covered; *tena*—by that desire.

38 To a greater or lesser degree, lust influences the consciousness of a *jīva-soul*. As a fire is thinly veiled by smoke, as a mirror is thickly covered by dust, and as an embryo is fully enclosed within a womb, similarly, in three degrees of intensity, the power of lust influences the thinking of a *jīva-soul*.

*avṛtam jñanam etena jñanino nitya-vairina
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya dūspureṇa nālena cha* [39]

(he) *kaunteya*—O Arjuna, son of Kuntī; *jñanam*—discriminatory knowledge; *avṛtam*—is covered; *etena*—by this; *nitya-vairina*—perpetual enemy; *jñaninaḥ*—of even knowledgeable persons; *kāma-rūpeṇa*—in the form of desire; *dūspureṇa nālena cha*—which is like insatiable fire.

39 O Arjuna, lust and ignorant forgetfulness are the greatest enemies of the *jīva-soul*. Like a fire which is never satisfied and always wants more fuel, lust feeds on foolish thinking and a deluded soul's lack of good judgement.

*indriyāni mano buddhir asyādhisthānam uchyate
etaiḥ vimohayaty eṣa jñanam avṛtya dehinam* [40]
*tasmat tvam indriyāny adau niyamyā bharatarsabha
papmanam prajāhi hy eṇam jñanā-vijnāna-nāsanam* [41]

uchyate—It is said that; *indriyāni*—the senses; *manah buddhiḥ*—mind and intelligence; *adhisthānam*—are the seats; *asya*—of this enemy, desire. *avṛtya*—Covering; *jñanam*—one's knowledge; *etaiḥ*—via these seats; *eṣaḥ*—this desire; *vimohayati*—deludes; *dehinam*—the embodied living being. (he) *bharatarsabha*—O Arjuna, noblest of the Bharatas; *tvam*—you; *tasmat*—therefore; *adau*—first; *indriyāni niyamyā*—bring the senses under control; *hi*—and completely; *prajāhi*—destroy; *eṇam*—this desire; *papmanam*—which is the embodiment of sin; *jñanā-vijnāna-nāsanam*—and the destroyer of both *jñan*, knowledge of the self and non-self as delineated in the scriptures, and *vijnan*, realisation of such knowledge.

40-41 It is said that the senses, mind and intelligence are the favourite haunts of lust, this terrible enemy of the spiritual self. Clouding the good sense of a thinking person, lust misguides them with distorted ideas, bringing them down into a mire of materialism. So Arjuna, first bring your senses under control then deal the death blow to lust, the embodiment of sin. Destroy lust, the cause of ruin of both *jnana* (wisdom learned from scriptures) and *vijnana* (direct, personal realizations of spiritual truth).

*indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu para buddhir buddher yah paratas tu sah [42]*

(panditah)—The wise; ahuh—say that; indriyani parani—the senses are superior; (visayebhyah)—to matter; manah—the mind; param—is superior; indriyebhyah—to the senses; buddhih—the intelligence or faculty of decision; para—is superior; manasah tu—to the mind, too; yah—and that which; paratah—is superior; buddheh tu—to even the intelligence; sah—is he—the *jiva*—the soul.

42 The spiritual, self-illuminated self is an eternal reality whereas material things such as physical bodies are all temporary phenomenon. Wise seers of the truth say the physical senses are nearer to the self than any external objects a living being might be momentarily aware of. The living being's senses constantly experience new sensations and perceptions, and those senses stay with someone until the senses stop functioning. But the mind is nearer to someone than their body's senses. Indeed, the thinking mind stays with a person even when they are asleep and have lost contact with the physical world itself. Sleeping and dreaming, the self sees things that exist in states of mind; but the purified intelligence, *buddhi*, is still nearer to the self than the mind. *Buddhi* is very close to the self, and beyond pure intelligence is the Atma itself. Oneself, the *jiva-atma*, a self-illuminated substance. A bright ray of self-manifest Brahman, the Absolute.

*evam buddheh param buddhva samstabhyatmanam atmana
jahi satrum maha-baho kama-rupam durasadam [43]*

(he) maha-baho—O mighty Arjuna; evam—in this way; buddhva—discerning; buddheh param—the soul to be superior to the intelligence; samstabhya—by steadying; atmanam—the mind; atmana—by resolute intelligence—conviction; jahi—destroy; durasadam—the formidable; satrum—enemy; kama-rupam—in the form of desire.

43 O mighty Arjuna! Know yourself to be a soul. An immortal being whose essence is truly divine. The soul is existing apart from matter and the soul is the controller of pure intelligence. Steady your mind with resolute intelligence and slay this enemy lust.

Chapter Four

The Yoga of Divine Knowledge

Jnana-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam
vivasvan manave praha manur iksvakave 'bravit [1]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Lord said: *aham*—I; *proktavan*—imparted; *imam*—this; *avyayam*—imperishable; *yogam*—yoga of knowledge (*jnana-yoga*) achieved by selfless action; *vivasvate*—to Surya, the sun-god. *vivasvan*—Surya; *praha*—taught; *manave*—his son, *Vaivasvata Manu*; *manuh*—and *Manu*; *abravit*—related it; *iksvakave*—to his son, *Iksvaku*.

1 Sri Krishna said: Previously, I taught this *karma-yoga* which leads to a proper understanding of *jnana-yoga* to the sun-god Surya. The sun-god taught Manu and Manu taught his son Iksvaku.

*evam parampara-praptam imam rajarsayo viduh
sa kaleneha mahata yogo nastah parantapa [2]*

evam—In this way; *parampara-praptam*—attained through disciplic succession; *rajarsayah*—the saintly kings; *viduh*—came to know; *imam*—this path. (he) *parantapa*—O Arjuna, subduer of the enemy; *sah yogah*—that yoga; *nastah*—has been lost; *iha*—at present; *mahata kalena*—after the passage of a long time.

2 O Arjuna, punisher of wrongdoers, the saintly kings who ruled long ago learned this philosophy of *yoga* through a succession of enlightened teachers, but over time this teaching of Mine has been almost lost.

*sa evayam maya te 'dya yogah proktah puratanah
bhakto 'si me sakha cheti rahasyam hy etad uttamam [3]*

(tvam)—You; *asi*—are; *me*—My; *bhaktah sakha cha*—devotee and friend. *iti (hetoh)*—For this reason; *ayam sah eva*—this very same; *puratanah*—ancient; *yogah*—yoga; *proktah*—is described; *adya*—today; *maya*—by Me; *te*—to you; *hi*—although; *etat*—this; *uttamam rahasyam*—is a great secret.

3 You are my devotee and friend so I am revealing this supreme secret to you now, the eternal *yoga*.

arjuna uvacha

*aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvatah
katham etad vijaniyam tvam adau proktavan iti [4]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: *bhavatah*—Your; *janma*—birth; *aparam*—is in these times. *vivasvatah*—The sun-god's; *janma*—birth; *param*—was long ago.

(*tasmat*)—So; (*katham*)—how; (*aham*) *vijaniyam*—am I to understand; (*etat*)—that; (*adau*)—in ancient times; (*tvam*)—You; (*proktavan iti*)—had thus taught; (*imam yoga-am*)—this yoga?

4 Arjuna said: The sun-god was born in ancient times and you were born recently. How am I to understand that in ancient times you told these teachings to him?

sri-bhagavan uvacha

bahuni me vyatitani janmani tava charjuna

tany aham veda sarvani na tvam vettha parantapa [5]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) *parantapa arjuna*—O Arjuna, subduer of the enemy; *bahuni*—many; *janmani*—births; *me tava cha*—of Mine and yours; *vyatitani*—have passed. *aham*—I; *veda*—know; *tani sarvani*—all of them; *tvam*—(but) you; *na vettha*—do not know; (*tani*)—them.

5 Sri Krishna said: Many births of yours and mine have passed. I am omniscient and I remember everything but you do not. The *jiva-soul* is not as powerful as nature, and a forgetful ego, mind and intelligence made by nature influence the awareness of *jiva-souls*, enchanting them and misleading them. Leading them from one birth to the next.

ajo 'pi sann avyayatma bhutanam isvaro 'pi san

prakrtim svam adhithaya sambhavamy atma-mayaya [6]

api—Although; *san*—being; *ajah*—birthless; *avyaya-atma*—of imperishable form; *api*—and although; *san*—being; *isvarah*—the Supreme Lord; *bhutanam*—of all beings; (*aham*)—I; *adhisthaya*—remaining; *svam prakrtim*—in My own divine nature of truth, auspiciousness, and beauty; *sambhavami*—appear in the world; *atma-mayaya*—by My potency, *yogamaya*.

6 I exist beyond the powers of nature, I exist as I am eternally. My eternal Form and I are identical and by My sweet will I descend to reveal Myself through My indwelling power Yoga-Maya.

yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata

abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srjamy aham [7]

paritrānaya sādhanam vinasaya cā dūskṛtam

dharmā-samsthāpanārthaya sambhavāmi yuge yuge [8]

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; yada yada hi—whenever; glaniḥ—a decline; dharmasya—of religion; (cha)—and; abhyutthanam—an uprising; adharmasya—of irreligion; bhavati—occurs; tada—then; aham srjami—I appear, seemingly like a being born in this world—I make My advent; atmanam—Myself. paritrāṇaya—For the deliverance; sadhūnam—of saintly devotees; (tatha)—and; vinasaya—for the vanquishing; duskṛtām—of miscreants; samsthāpana—arthaya cha—and for firmly establishing; dharma—dhyān (meditation), yajana (performance of sacrifice), paricharya (worship), and sankīrtan (congregational chanting of the Holy Names) all centred on Me; (aham)—I; sambhavāmi—appear; yuge yuge—age after age.

7–8 O Bharata, whenever there is a decline of *dharma* (religion) and an uprising of irreligion I personally appear in the world, like a person born in the world. I appear in every age to save the sages and devotees, to vanquish demons and establish proper *dharma*.

*janma karma cha me divyam evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so 'rjuna* [9]

(he) *arjuna*—O Arjuna; *yah*—one who; *vetti*—knows; *evam*—thus; *tattvatah*—the reality; *me*—of My; *divyam*—spontaneous, divine; *janma karma cha*—birth and activities; *sah*—he; *tyaktva*—upon giving up; *deham*—the body; *na eti*—does not accept; *punah janma*—rebirth. *mam eti*—He attains Me.

9 O Arjuna, anyone who knows the divine nature of My descent into the material universe, who knows also that I enact My pastimes by My own sweet will and that I am not subject to the laws of *karma*, that seer of truth never undergoes a rebirth in *samsara*. After giving up their body they attain Me. Surrendering to Me, My devotee is protected by Bhakti-Devi, My inner power Yoga-Maya. My devotee achieves a position of direct service to Me in the transcendental abode of selfless love.

*vita-raga-bhaya-krodha man-maya mam upasritah
bahavo jnana-tapasa puta mad-bhavam agatah* [10]

vita-raga-bhaya-krodha—Free from mundane attachment, fear, and anger; *mat-mayah*—wholeheartedly absorbed in services to Me; *bahavah*—many persons; *mam upasritah*—in My refuge; *putah* (santah)—being purified; *jnana-tapasa*—by knowledge and austerities in relation to My service; *agatah*—attained; *mat-bhavam*—My *bhava*—devotion to Me.

10 Freed from worldly misunderstandings, freed from fear and anger, many awakened souls take refuge in Me. They absorb their hearts and minds in hearing about Me, singing My glories and remembering Me. Becoming thoroughly purified by knowledge of Me, engaging in penances endured for My sake, they attain divine love for Me.

*ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham
mama vartmanuvartante manusyah partha sarvasah* [11]

yatha—Howsoever; *ye*—those who; *prapadyante*—surrender; *mam*—to Me; *aham*—I; *tatha eva*—accordingly; *bhajami*—reward; *tan*—them. (he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *sarvasah manusyah*—all types of men (on all paths); *anuvartante*—follow; *mama vartma*—My path.

11 In whatever way any *jiva*-soul regards Me, I respond accordingly. I am the goal sought by all philosophers, philosophies and doctrines; I am the ultimate goal attained by everyone. Everyone follows the individual paths I create for them.

kanksantah karmanam siddhim yajanta iha devatah

ksipram hi manuse loke siddhir bhavati karmaja [12]

iha—In this world; *kanksantah*—persons who desire; *siddhim*—the fruition; *karmanam*—of worldly actions; *yajante*—worship; *devatah*—the gods; *hi*—since; *manuse loke*—in the human plane; *siddhih*—the fruit (attainment of heaven, etc.); *karma-ja*—born of action; *bhavati*—appears; *ksipram*—very quickly.

12 Souls hankering for rewards in their daily life make sacrifices to the gods of nature such as Indra and soon find their goals are attained. In this world, the performance of religious rites in accord with *dharma*, and in the light of revelations revealed in the Veda, produces fruitful rewards and successes.

chatur-varnyam maya srstam guna-karma-vibhagasah

tasya kartaram api mam viddhy akartaram avyayam [13]

chatuh-varnyam—The four social divisions or *varnas*—*brahman*, *ksatriya*, *vai-sya*, and *sudra*; *srstam*—are manifest; *maya*—by Me; *guna-karma-vibhagasah*—classified according to the modes of nature and corresponding activities (vide 18.41–44). *kartaram api*—Although I am the accomplisher; *tasya*—of that; *vid-dhi*—know; *mam*—Me; *akartaram*—to be the non-doer; *avyayam*—and unchangeable.

13 I manifested *varna-dharma* the social system governing human society, the arrangement of society according to the four kinds of people: (1) the teachers and priestly classes (2) the warriors and leaders (3) peasants, traders and artisans (4) labourers. When someone performs their pious duty in society their work is an act of sacrifice, an activity in accord with *dharma*, thus they are rewarded for their work by Nature. I grant a soul a birth in Nature in accord with a soul's characteristic nature, but this action is not done by I Myself. *Ma-ha-Maya* (Mother Nature) arranges everything under My oversight. Every soul has personal inclinations, every soul is born with *karma* and instinctive urges to do certain actions they feel predisposed to do – the materially attached souls naturally tend to act in states of goodness, passion and ignorance since those qualities cling to them – therefore I grant a soul a new rebirth and the freedom to do whatever they will. I generate *varna-ashrama* and the evolving natural world, but I am aloof from the evolution of material nature and from souls born in accord with their *karma*.

Sri Ramanujacharya:

The whole universe from Brahma down to a clump of grass, together with the system of four social divisions divided according to the three *gunas* (goodness, passion and ignorance), and also the actions like contemplation and self control in accordance with those *gunas*, was projected into being by Krishna.

The statement “I am the generator” is for illustration. It is intended to indicate that the universe is sustained and withdrawn by Krishna alone. Krishna is the source of this activity of manifestation, sustentation and destruction, but at the same time Krishna is aloof.

*na mam karmani limpanti na me karma-phale sprha
iti mam yo 'bhijanati karmabhir na sa badhyate [14]*

karmani—Actions; *na limpanti*—do not implicate or taint; *mam*—Me; (*jivam iva*)—like the living beings. *na (asti)*—There is no; *sprha*—desire; *me*—of Mine; *karma-phale*—for the fruits of action. *yah*—One who; *iti*—thus; *mam abhijanati*—knows Me in truth (as the Supreme Lord); *sah*—he; *na badhyate*—is not bound; *karmabhih*—by karma.

14 Actions do not bind Me and I have no desire to enjoy the fruits materialistic people grow then offer to a god they worship, using those fruits as a means of attaining their self-centred ends. I remain aloof from the activities of the living beings living in nature who endlessly strive to fulfill their selfish, materialistic desires. A wise soul who knows this has a proper understanding of My transcendental nature.

*evam jnatva krtam karma purvair api mumuksubhih
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam purvaih purvataram krtam [15]*

jnatva—Knowing; *evam*—this; *mumuksubhih api*—the seekers of liberation; *purvaih*—of previous times; *krtam*—performed; *karma*—selfless action. *tasmāt*—Therefore; *tvam*—you; *eva*—certainly; *kuru*—must adopt; *karma*—the path of selfless action; *purvataram krtam*—as done in the past; *purvaih*—by the ancient mahajans, great saintly persons, like Janaka and others.

15 The seekers of liberation in previous times, knowing this, acted selflessly. They gained release from the results of all their activities in the world. You too should also adopt this path of selfless action just as those great seers of truth did in the past.

*kim karma kim akarmeti kavayo 'py atra mohitah
tat te karma pravaksyami yaj jnatva moksyase 'subhat [16]*

kim karma—What is action? *kim akarma*—what is inaction? *iti atra*—In this subject; *kavayah api*—even the learned; *mohitah (bhavanti)*—are baffled. (*atah*)—Therefore; *pravaksyami*—I shall describe; *te*—to you; *tat karma*—what is karma and akarma, action and inaction; *yaj jnatva*—knowing which; *moksyase*—you will be liberated; *asubhat*—from inauspiciousness.

16 Even the wise are baffled trying to ascertain what *karma* is, and what the result of not performing proscribed duties really is, *akarma*. I shall explain action and inaction to you now, and knowing this *jnana-yoga* you will attain liberation from *samsara*.

*karmano hy api boddhavyam boddhavyan cha vikarmanah
akarmanas cha boddhavyam gahana karmano gatih [17]*

karmanah api boddhavyam—Action prescribed (by the Vedas) should be understood; cha—and; vikarmanah boddhavyam—action prohibited (by the Vedas) should be understood; cha—and; akarmanah boddhavyam—renunciation of action should be understood; hi—since; gatih—the true nature; karmanah—of action; gahana—is very difficult to comprehend.

17 Proper actions properly performed are *karma*. Therefore work that grows good fruit, the good works described in the Veda, is *karma*. And *vikarma* is forbidden activities. The term *akarma* means stopping doing *karma* – but Arjuna know this, that evil results come to those who stop doing good work and idolize *akarma*, while still being naturally inclined to do material work in the material world. The real truth about *karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma* is hard to understand.

*karmany akarma yah pasyed akarmani cha karma yah
sa buddhiman manusyesu sa yuktah krtsna-karma-krt [18]*

yah—One who; pasyet—sees; akarma—inaction; karmani—in action; cha—and; yah—who; (pasyet)—sees; karma—action; akarmani—in inaction; sah buddhiman—he is wise; manusyesu—among men. sah yuktah—He is a yogi; krtsna-karma-krt—a performer of all actions.

18 A person who realizes that *karma* performed by a man of pure knowledge is never the cause of bondage will soon understand that in reality selfless action is proper *akarma*. The man of pure knowledge is a truly wise *yogi*, a seer who sees perfect harmony everywhere.

*yasya sarve samarambhah kama-sankalpa-varjitah
jnanagni-dagdha-karmanam tam ahuh panditam budhah [19]*

yasya—One whose; sarve—every; samarambhah—undertaking; kama-sankalpa-varjitah—is without fruitive desire; jnana-agni-dagdha-karmanam—and who has burnt all actions in the fire of knowledge; budhah—the wise; ahuh tam—describe him as; panditam—learned.

19 Sages call him a *pundit*, a sage whose desires for fruitive action have been burnt to ashes by the fire of spiritual knowledge. A *pundit* is someone whose every action is devoid of any desire for sensual pleasure.

*tyaktva karma-phalasangam nitya-trpto nirasrayah
karmany abhipravrtto 'pi naiva kinchit karoti sah [20]*

(yah)—One who; tyaktva—giving up; karma-phala-asangam—attachment to the fruits of action; nirasrayah—is free from mundane dependence; nitya-trptah—and content in the eternal bliss within; sah—he; abhipravarttah api—although fully engaged; karmani—in all kinds of activities; na karoti—does not do; kinchit eva—anything at all.

20 A person who gives up attachment to the fruits of their actions, a person who remains self-satisfied and perfectly free from anxieties and cares, does nothing at all. It seems they are engaged in activities in the world but in reality they are doing nothing at all.

*nirasir yata-chittatma tyakta-sarva-parigraha
sariram kevalam karma kurvan napnoti kilbisam [21]*

nirasiḥ—Desireless; yata-chitta-atma—of controlled mind and body; tyakta-sarva-pari-graḥa—and a renouncer of all possessiveness and acquisition; (saḥ)—that person; na apnoti—does not incur; kilbisam—sin; kurvan (api)—although he performs; sariram karma—action for bodily sustenance; kevalam—only.

21 The enlightened soul performing actions for the maintenance of their body, keeping their body, mind and senses under control with their pure intelligence, never wanting to enjoy the fruits of their actions and without any hopes to attain material things, is free from virtue and vice. They are liberated. They are free from *karma*.

*yadrchchha-labha-santusto dvandvatito vimatsarah
samah siddhau asiddhau cha krtvapi na nibadhyate [22]*

(janah)—A person; yadrchchha-labha-santustah—satisfied with whatever is readily available; dvandva-atitah—beyond dualities such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, attraction and aversion; vimatsarah—devoid of envy; cha—and; samah—equipoised; siddhau-asiddhau—in the event of either success or failure of action; krtva api—though performing; (karma)—action; na nibadhyate—is not bound.

22 Satisfied with whatever may be got without effort, never overwhelmed by any duality like pleasure or pain, attachment or hatred, a person totally free from malevolence and evil urges is a sage, a *pundit* who remains equipoised in both success and failure. Although active in the world, they are not bound by the results of their actions.

*gata-sangasya muktasya jnanavasthita-chetasah
yajnayacharatah karma samagram praviliyate [23]*

gata-sangasya—For one who is free from attachment; muktasya—who is liberated; jnana-avasthita-chetasah—who is realised; karma acharatah—who performs action; yajna—for yajna, i.e. for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord; samagram—all; (karma)—action; praviliyate—is dissipated, i.e. it does not produce any reaction.

23 For someone who is detached, enlightened and liberated, all the results of their actions are burnt to ashes in the fire of sacrifice. All their actions are sacrifices (*yajna*) offered to Sri Vishnu.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The statement of Sri Krishna “all actions are perfectly dissipated” should not be misinterpreted to mean that the actions of a liberated soul cause future worldly consequences, or apurva, providing a benefit to other people or to a society. Rather, Lord Sri Krishna indicates that the actions offered to him by the selfless person following the path of *jnana-yoga* do not cause any subsequent reactions whatsoever. The actions of selfless saints do not cause any affect that is going to be enjoyed or suffered by others in the mundane plane of material existence.

brahmarpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahmata hutam

brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samadhina [24]

arpanam (bhavati)—The sacrificial utensils such as *sruk*, *sruva*, or spoon, ladle, etc., are; *brahma*—Brahma; (*arpyamanam*) *havir*—the oblation of ghee, etc.; (*bhavati*)—is; *brahma*—Brahma; *hutam*—offered; *brahma-agnau*—into the sacrificial fire of Brahma; *brahmata* (*havana karta*)—by the brahman offerer who is Brahma. *brahma eva*—Brahma, the Absolute; *gantavyam*—is attainable; *tena brahma-karma-samadhina*—by a person whose consciousness is absorbed in Brahma action.

24 At a fire sacrifice, the spoon, ladle and other paraphernalia, the libations of ghee, the fire, the priest who performs the sacrifice, the act of offering, the act of receiving blessings, all these are perfectly pure. All these are images of Brahman. The pure person performing *yajna* is Brahman, their pure activities are of the nature of Brahman, and by performing *yajna* they attain the plane of Brahman.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

All spiritual ideas are pictures from the material world, because matter is the dictionary of spirit, and material pictures are but the shadows of the spiritual affairs which our material eye carries back to our spiritual perception. God in His infinite goodness and kindness has established this unfailing connection between the truth and the shadow in order to impress the truth upon us. The clock is a symbol that explains time; the alphabet points to the gathered store of human knowledge; the beautiful song of a harmonium gives the idea of the eternal harmony in the spirit-world; and the realization that there is a today and a tomorrow, and a day after tomorrow, thrusts into us the ungrasped idea of eternity. Material pictures impress upon our spiritual nature the truly spiritual idea of religion.

daivam evapare yajnam yoginah paryupasate
brahmagnav apare yajnam yajnenaivopajuhvati [25]
srotadinindriyany anye samyamagnisu juhvati
sabdadin visayan anya indriyagnisu juhvati [26]

apare—Other; *yoginah*—(karma-) yogis; *paryupasate*—worship; *daivam yajnam eva*—the gods with sacrifice. *apare*—Other (jnana-) yogis; *upajuhvati*—offer; *yajnam*—the self (jivatma, as the element tvam, representing the ghee of sacrifice); *brahma-agnau*—to the fire of Brahma (or to the Supersoul, Paramatma, as the element tat, representing the sacrificial fire); *yajnena eva*—by vibrating the *pranava* mantra, Om. *anye*—Others (naistika or lifelong celibates); *juhvati*—offer; *indriyani*—the senses; *strotra-adini*—of hearing, etc.; *samyama-agnisu*—into the fires of self (mental) control. *anye*—Others (persons in sacred marriage); *juhvati*—offer; *visayan*—the sense objects; *sabda-adin*—sound, etc.; *indriya-agnisu*—into the fires of the senses.

25-26 Some *karma*-yogis perform worship by offering ghee in the burning fire of sacrifice while uttering *mantras* dedicated to Varuna, Indra and other deities empowered with natural power by Maha-Maya. Some *jnana*-yogis, vibrating Aum, offer their own individual Atma to the Highest Self, Paramatma, as if their soul were an offering of ghee that is burnt in flames in a fire sacrifice rite. Celibate sages make offerings in the internal fire of abstinence, subduing their sense organs. And householders engaged in routine duties (*sva-dharma*) offer everything they perceive with their senses such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell into a fire that transforms all attachments into ashes.

*sarvanindriya-karmani prana-karmani chapare
atma-samyama-yogagnau juhvati jnana-dipite* [27]

apare—Others (meditating mystic yogis in realisation of the pure self [tvam]); *juhvati*—offer; *sarvani*—all; *indriya-karmani*—the functions of the senses; *cha*—and; *prana-karmani*—the functions of the ten vital life-air; *atma-samyama-yoga-agnau*—into the yogic fire of self-purification; *jnana-dipite*—ignited by knowledge.

27 Yogis following Patanjali, aiming to attain oneness with Brahman by withdrawing from the world of sense perceptions (*pratyagatma*), put all their sensory awareness, detached from the functions of hearing, seeing, etc., as well as all ten vital life-currents functioning within the body, into the fire of self-purification ignited by knowledge.

*dravya-yajnas tapo-yajna yoga-yajnas tathapare
svadhyaya-jnana-yajnas cha yatayah samsita-vratatah* [28]

(*kechit*)—Some; *dravya-yajnah*—sacrifice material possessions or wealth; (*kechit*)—some; *tapah-yajnah*—perform sacrifice in the form of penance (such as Chandrayan, etc.); *tatha-apare*—and others; *yoga-yajnah*—perform sacrifice in the form of the eightfold mystic yoga practice; (*kechana*)—and again some; *svadhyaya-jnana-yajnah cha*—perform 'knowledge-sacrifice' in the form of singing and introspectively studying the Vedas. (*ete sarve*)—All these persons; *yatayah*—are diligent; *samsita-vratatah*—performers of unshakeable vows.

28 Some perform sacrifice by giving charity. Some practice penances. Some practice *astanga-yoga* the eightfold mystic *yoga* practice, whilst others seek Brahman by studying and uttering Veda *mantras*. These seekers of truth are diligent and always try to fulfill all their vows.

*apane juhvati pranam prane 'panam tathapare
pranapana-gati ruddhva pranayama-parayanah
apare niyataharah pranam pranesu juhvati [29]*

apane—Others; juhvati apane pranam—bring the ascending air into union with the descending air while inhaling (puraka). tatha—Likewise; (juhvati)—they offer; prane apanam—the descending air into the ascending air while exhaling (rechaka); (cha)—and; ruddhva—stopping; prana-apana-gati—the flow of both prana and apana while retaining the breath (kumbhaka); pranayama-parayanah (bhavanti)—they arduously practise breath-control (pranayam). apare—Others; juhvati—offer; pranam—the senses; pranesu—into the life-airs, the prana-vayu; niyata-aharah—by reducing their intake of food.

29 Others practice breath-control, *pranayama*. Inhaling, they merge *prana* their rising breath in the downward moving *apana* breath. Exhaling, they offer *apana* into the *prana*. Becoming absorbed in *pranayama* they become still, halting movement of both *prana* and *apana*. Again, there are others who offer all their sense perceptions into their breath of life, reducing their food consumption and paying attention to the burning fire in their belly.

*sarve 'py ete yajna-vido yajna-ksayita-kalmasah
yajna-sistamrta-bhujo yanti brahma sanatnam [30]*

ete sarve api—All these persons; yajna-vidah—are knowers of sacrifice. yajna-ksayitakalmasah—Purified of sin by the performance of sacrifice; yajna-sista-amrta-bhujah—they enjoy the neatarean remnants of sacrifice; yanti sanatnam—and reach the eternal; brahma—Brahma, Absolute Truth.

30 All these *yogis* know the practices of sacrifice clearly. Purifying themselves from sins by completing their vows, they taste the fruits of sacrifice in the form of worldly pleasures, wealth and mystic *yoga* powers. In the end they realize Brahman.

Srila Baladev Vidyabhusan:

Vyasa (Badarayan) states that liberated beings, the *muktas*, may have bodies or be unembodied. The real truth is this, that the liberated beings, the *muktas*, through the force of divine knowledge they have realized (*brahma-vidya*), discard all bodily connections and limitations, becoming free beings whose mere will is action. Of these *muktas*, there is a class who wish to have a body and they can assume one body or many bodies simultaneously, merely by the force of their will. And with regard to this there is the verse of the Chandogya Upanishad (7.26.2): “The knower of Truth is one, he becomes three, becomes five...”

But those who have no desire to exist in a body do not get a body and with regard to them there is the verse of Chandogya Upanishad (8.12.1): “When someone is free of the body then neither pleasure nor pain touches him.”

Then those *muktas*, who through their divine bodies always wish to carry out the will of the Supreme Brahman, manifest the Chit Shakti (internal potency) of the Lord in all their actions, and with that Chit Shakti they act simultaneously in different places. Those *muktas* always manifest the Chit Shakti and always follow the will of the Lord.

Commentary to verse 4.4.12 of Vedanta Sutra

nayam loko 'sty ayajnasya kuto 'nyah kuru-sattama [31]
(he) kuru-sattama—O Arjuna, best of the Kurus; ayam lokah (api)—even this world (or human plane of meagre pleasures); na asti—is denied; ayajnasya—a person who does not perform sacrifice. kutah (praptavyah)—How, then, will it be possible for him to attain; anyah (lokah)—the next world (or heaven)?

31 O Arjuna, a person who never performs any sacrifices cannot even attain meagre pleasures in this world. How then will they attain other worlds such as the celestial heavens ruled by gods of nature?

evam bahu-vidha yajna vitata brahmano mukhe
karma-jan viddhi tan sarvan evam jnatva vimoksyase [32]
evam—In this way; bahu-vidhah—many varieties of; yajnah—sacrifices; vitatah—have been elucidated; brahmanah mukhe—by the mouthpiece of the Vedas. (tvam)—You; viddhi—should know; tan sarvan—all those sacrifices; karma-jan—to be born of action, in thought, word, and deed. jnatva—Knowing; evam—this; vimoksyase—you will be liberated from the bondage of action.

32 Many different sacrifices are detailed in the Veda and allied scriptures. Those sacrifices all require mental, spoken and bodily effort so the origin of them all is dedicated work, *karma* – work instigated by the particular mode of thinking a person clings to. Understanding *karma* in this way you will become free from its chains.

sreyan dravyamayad yajnaj jnana-yajnah parantapa
sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapyate [33]
(he) parantapa partha—O Arjuna, subduer of the enemy; jnana-yajnah—‘knowledge-sacrifice’; sreyan—is better; yajnat—than sacrifice; dravya-mayat—of materials; (yatah)—since; sarvam—all; karma—action; akhilam—in its entirety, including its fruit; pari-samapyate—has its consummation; jnane—in knowledge.

33 O Arjuna, subduer of troublesome evildoers, out of the many types of sacrifice the sacrifice of knowledge is superior to the sacrifice of things burnt in a fire. This is because performing selfless actions

that are not motivated by mental urges leads to the realization of perfectly pure thought. Pure knowledge, *jnana*.

*tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah* [34]

tat—Such knowledge; *viddhi*—should be known; *pranipatena*—by submission, obeisances; *pariprasnena*—by relevant inquiry; *sevaya*—and by sincere service. *jnaninah*—Those learned in the scriptures; *tattva-darsinah*—endowed with divine revelation of the Supreme Absolute Truth; *upadeksyanti*—will impart; *jnanam*—knowledge; *te*—to you.

34 Know the Supreme Lord. Know Him by surrendering to Him, by questioning and by service. A seeker of truth will realize divine knowledge when they approach an enlightened *jnani* and accept them as their Guru. A self-realized *jnani* can impart knowledge to you because they know the truth.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The essential principle of Vaishnavism is that however great a scholar and intellectual giant a man may be, he will not be able to appreciate even the easiest points of Vaishnava philosophy until and unless he has entirely surrendered himself to an Acharya whose character is the embodiment of the Vaishnava philosophy. The Gita declares the Vaishnava philosophy is understandable only with unconditional surrender, honest inquiry and a serving temperament. It is only after an approach to a genuine professor of Vaishnava philosophy with these three as the fee, that they give instructions about the correct philosophical truths. These professors are never tempted by any type of worldly fee.

*yaj jnatva na punar moham evam yasyasi pandava
yena bhutany asesani draksyasi atmany atho mayi* [35]

(he) pandava—O Arjuna, son of Pandu; *jnatva*—knowing; *yat (jnanam)*—that knowledge; *na yasyasi*—you will not be subject to; *evam*—such; *moham*—illusion; *punah*—again. *yena*—By that knowledge; *draksyasi*—you will see; *asesani bhutani*—all species from highest to lowest; *atmani*—in the atma—in their spiritual nature; *(prthak upadhitvena)*—though appearing in the forms of their various material designations; *atha*—and; *(draksyasi)*—you will see them; *mayi*—in Me.

35 O Pandava, knowing this knowledge you will no longer feel bewildered. Understanding this knowledge will enable you to directly see the oneness of all living beings and, by the loss of your bewilderment, you will see that every being from the highest species to the lowest is an eternal Atma. A soul situated in a body and also situated in Me.

*api ched asi papebhyah sarvebhyah papa-krttamah
sarvam jnana-plavenaiva vrjinam santarisyasi [36]*
*api chet—Even if; asi—you are; papa-krttamah—the most sinful; sarvebhyah pa-
pebhyah—of all sinners; (tathapi)—nonetheless; santarisyasi eva—you will cross;
sarvam vrjinam—all sins; jnana-plavena—by the boat of knowledge.*

36 Even if you do apparently abominable actions like killing your relatives in war, by doing your duty you will cross *samsara* the ocean of miseries in the boat of divine knowledge.

*yathaidhamsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasat kurute 'rjuna
jnanagnih sarva-karmani bhasmasat kurute tatha [37]*
*(he) arjuna—O Arjuna, yatha—as; samiddhah—blazing; agnih—fire; kurute—ren-
ders; edhamsi—firewood; bhasmasat—to ashes; tatha—similarly; jnana-agnih—the
fire of knowledge; kurute—renders; sarva-karmani—all karma (worldly actions
and reactions in this life); bhasmasat—to ashes.*

37 As a blazing fire reduces firewood and everything else it touches to ashes, so too the fire of *jnana* burns up all *karma*.

*na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayam yoga-samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati [38]*
*iha—In this world, or, of the aforementioned practices of austerity, etc.; (kim
api) na hi vidyate—there is nothing; pavitram—(as) pure; jnanena sadrsam—as
knowledge. yoga-samsiddhah—A person successful in (niskam karma) yoga;
vindati—realises; svayam—for himself; tat—that knowledge; atmani—within the
heart; kalena—after (a long) time.*

38 In this world there is nothing so pure as *jnana*, divine knowledge. Someone who achieves perfection through *karma-yoga* realizes transcendental knowledge at the end. They discover spiritual knowledge arising spontaneously within their own heart.

*sraddhavan labhate jnanam tat-parah samyatendriyah
jnanam labdhva param santim achirenadhigachhati [39]*
*sraddhavan—The faithful (having faith in the Lord's words or the scriptures);
tat-parah—devoted; samyata-indriyah—sense-controlled person; labhate—at-
tains; jnanam—knowledge. labdhva—Having attained; jnanam—enlightenment;
achirena—quickly; adhi-gachhati—he attains; param santim—supreme peace (be-
yond the mundane).*

39 A sober person dedicated to the path of spiritual understanding subdues their senses and becomes eligible to realize *jnana*. Achieving their goal at last, they attain profound tranquility. They feel peace and see they are free from the constantly revolving wheel of action.

*ajnas chasraddadhanas cha samsayatma vinasyati
nayam loko 'sti na paro na sukham samsayatmanah [40]*

ajnah—The ignorant (like an animal); *cha*—and; *asraddadhanah*—faithless (confused by many interpretations despite scriptural knowledge); *samsaya-atma* *cha*—and doubting person (who doubts he will succeed despite having some faith); *vinasyati*—is ruined by misfortune. *samsaya-atmanah*—For the doubting person; *na asti*—there is no; *sukham*—happiness; *na ayam lokah*—either in this world; *na (cha) parah*—or the next.

40 A fool devoid of scriptural wisdom, or a person just like an ignorant animal, or someone similar who in spite of having knowledge of the scriptures has no real faith in their deeper meanings, perhaps because they are confused by conflicting doctrines, or yet again a person with weak faith who keeps wondering, “Will I succeed or not?” — none like these can ever achieve happiness. The doubting soul never attains self-satisfaction in this life or in the next. Anxiety and uncertainty vanquish any vague feelings of peace they might feel fleetingly.

*yoga-sannyasta-karmanam jnana-sanchhinna-samsayam
atmavantam na karmani nibadhnanti dhananjaya [41]*

(he) dhananjaya—O Dhananjaya; *karmani*—actions; *na nibadhnanti*—cannot bind; *yoga-sannyasta-karmanam*—one who has ceased all action in accordance with the path of sannyas, abnegation, by practising *niskam karma-yoga*, the path of selfless action; *jnana-sanchhinna-samsayam*—and overcome all his doubts by the cultivation of divine knowledge (*sambandha-jnan*, knowledge of the eternal serving relationship of the individual soul with the Lord); *atma-vantam*—and who has realised the nature of the soul.

41 O Arjuna, while following the path of selfless action step by step a faithful person gradually destroys all their own doubts. Understanding divine knowledge, *jnana*, and attaining direct realization of the *jiva-soul*, the Atma – the soul’s own purely spiritual identity, their divine self – a faithful person will never be bonded with *karma* again.

*tasmad ajnana-sambhutam hrt-stham jnanasinatmanah
chhittvainam samsayam yogam atisthottistha bharata [42]*

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; *tasmad*—therefore; *chhittva*—slashing; *ajnana-asina*—by the sword of knowledge, *sambandha-jnan*; *enam*—these; *samsayam*—doubts; *atmanah*—of yours; *hrt-stham*—in your heart; *ajnana-sambhutam*—which are born of ignorance; *atistha*—take refuge in; *yogam-niskam karma-yoga*—the yoga of selfless action; *(cha)*—and; *uttistha*—arise for battle.

42 Therefore, O Bharata, armed with the sword of transcendental knowledge slash to shreds all these doubts in your heart. These illusions born of ignorance. Take refuge in selfless duty and arise for battle.

Chapter Five

Realizing Brahman through Yoga

Brahma-jnana-yoga

arjuna uvacha

*sannyasam karmanam krsna punar yogan cha samsasi
yach chhreya etayor ekam tan me bruhi sunischitam [1]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *krsna*—O Krishna; (toam)—You; *samsasi*—speak of; *sannyasam*—renunciation; *karmanam*—of actions; *punah*—then again; *yogam cha*—application, yoga (of selfless action, *niskam karma-yoga*). *me bruhi*—Please tell me; *sunischitam*—clearly; *yat tat ekam*—which one; *etayoh*—of the two; *sreyah*—is superior.

1 Arjuna said: O Krishna, you recommend the renunciation of action *jnana-yoga* then again You say I should do *karma-yoga*, selfless action. Please tell me clearly which of the two is most beneficial for me.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*sannyasah karma-yogas cha nihsreyasa-karav ubhau
tayos tu karma-sannyasat karma-yogo visisyate [2]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *ubhau*—both; *sannyasah karma-yogah cha*—renunciation of action and the path of selfless action; *nihsreyasa-karau*—bring great benefit; *tu*—but; *tayoh*—of these two; *karma-yoga*—the path of selfless action; *visisyate*—is superior; *karma-sannyasat*—to renunciation of action.

2 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: Both renunciation of action and the path of selfless action produce the supreme result, yet the practice of selfless action, *karma-yoga*, is the better of the two.

jneyah sa nitya-sannyasi yo na dvesti na kanksati

nirdvandvo hi maha-baho sukham bandhat pramuchyate [3]

(he) *maha-baho*—O mighty-armed one; *jneyah*—it is to be known that; *yah*—one who; *na dvesti*—neither resents; *na kanksati*—nor desires; *sah*—that person; *nitya-sannyasi*—is renounced, though performing action; *hi*—because; *nirdvandvah*—one who is free from duality; *sukham*—is easily; *pramuchyate*—liberated; *bandhat*—from bondage.

3 A *karma-yogi* who neither hates nor desires the things in the world, and who tolerates dualities such as heat and cold, is a true renunciate. They are a true *sannyasi*, even when they are engaging in worldly activities. Very easily, mighty Arjuna, that *karma-yogi* attains liberation from all the bonds that bind them to the world of *samsara*.

*sankhya-yogau prthag balah pravadanti na panditah
ekam apy asthitah samyag ubhayor vindate phalam [4]*

balah—The childish, the unwise; *pravadanti*—say that; *sankhya-yogau*—the paths of renunciation and (karma-) yoga; *prthag*—are separate; (*tu*)—but; *panditah*—the learned; *na (vadanti)*—do not say this. *samyak asthitah*—A person who adopts perfectly; *ekam api*—only one; *vindate*—attains; *phalam*—the result; *ubhayor*—of both.

4 The wise do not say *jnana*-yoga and *karma*-yoga are separate paths. Only the ignorant say that. Anyone carefully following either of these two paths achieves the same result.

*yat sankhyaih prapyate sthanam tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sankhyam cha yogam cha yah pasyati sa pasyati [5]*

yat sthanam—That state which; *prapyate*—is obtained; *sankhyaih*—by renunciation (*sannyas*); *tat (sthanam)*—that state; *gamyate*—is reached; *yogair api*—by *niskam karma*-yoga, too. *yah*—One who; (*vivekena*)—by proper consideration; *ekam pasyati*—sees as one; *sankhyam cha yogam cha*—both *sannyas* and *karma*-yoga; *sah*—he; *pasyati*—sees.

5 The goal achieved by the renunciation of action is also reached by performing selfless action. By careful analysis, you should understand both paths are one and the same.

*sannyasas tu maha-baho duhkham aptum ayogatah
yoga-yukto munir brahma na chirenadhigachchhati [6]*

(he) *maha-baho*—O best of the valiant; *ayogatah*—without *niskam karma*-yoga; *sannyasah*—renunciation; (*bhavati*)—is; *duhkham aptum*—the cause of sorrow; *tu*—but; *yoga-yuktah*—one who performs *niskam karma*-yoga; *munir (san)*—being a man of knowledge; *na chirena*—very soon; *adhigachchhati*—is able to attain to; *brahma*—the Absolute.

6 Renunciation of all worldly pleasures is difficult without practicing *karma*-yoga. But a mindful *jnani* patiently performing *karma*-yoga soon attains Brahman.

*yoga-yukto visuddhatma vijitatma jitendriyah
sarva-bhutatmabhutatma kurvann api na lipyate [7]*

yoga-yuktah—Engaged in such a yoga process; *visuddha-atma*—the clean-hearted person; *vijita-atma*—of controlled mind; *jita-indriyah*—who has mastery over the senses; *na lipyate*—is not implicated; *kurvan api*—although performing action; *sarva-bhuta-atmabhuta-atma (san)*—having reached the state in which his whole being is pervaded with affection and compassion for all beings.

7 A *jnani* in full control of his intelligence, mind and senses is never tainted by anything in the world, although he lives in the world doing *karma*-yoga. He becomes the object of love for all living beings.

*naiva kinchit karomiti yukto manyeta tattva-vit
pasyan srnvan sprsan jighrann asnan gachchhan svapan svasan [8]
pralapan visrjan grhnann unmisann nimisann api
indriyani indriyarth-esu vartanta iti dharayan [9]*

yuktah tattva-vit—The realised karma-yogi; *api*—although engaged in the functions of; *pasyan*—seeing; *srnvan*—hearing; *sprsan*—touching; *jighran*—smelling; *asnan*—eating; *gachchhan*—moving; *svapan*—sleeping; *svasan*—breathing; *pralapan*—speaking; *visrjan*—evacuating; *grhnann*—grasping objects in the hands; *unmisann*—and opening; *nimisann*—and closing the eyes, or blinking; *dharayan*—understanding; *iti*—that; *indriyani*—the senses, viz., eyes, etc.; *vartante*—function; *indriya-arthesu*—in relation to their respective sense objects of form, etc.; *iti manyeta*—thus considers: (aham)—“I; na karomi—do not do; kinchit eva—anything”.

8-9 The *karma-yogi* realizes: “My senses – my eyes, ears, skin, nose and tongue – are in contact with external objects. The body’s senses are perceiving things existing outside myself, variegated things with specific forms, sounds, touch, scent, and taste.” In this way the *karma-yogi* recognizes, “I myself am pure consciousness, it is just my body that contacts the external things. My body is seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking and defecating.”

*brahmany adhaya karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah
lipyate na sa papena padma-patram ivambhasa [10]*

yah—One who; *karoti*—acts; *adhaya*—by offering; *karmani*—all actions; *brahmani*—unto the Supreme Lord; *tyaktva*—having given up; *sangam*—attachment; *sah*—he; *na lipyate*—is not affected; *papena*—by sin (or piety); *padma-patram* *iva*—as a lotus leaf; (*na lipyate*)—is not touched; *ambhasa*—by water.

10 The *karma-yogi*, free from desire, gives up all attachment to sense perceptions. And when they perform *karma* they remain unaffected by any potential sinful outcome that might result from their actions. They become like a lotus leaf which is not wet when it floats on water.

*kayena manasa buddhya kevalair indriyaih api
yoginah karma kurvanti sangam tyaktoatma-suddhaye [11]*

tyaktva—By giving up; *sangam*—attachment (to the fruits of action); *yoginah*—the karma-yogis; *karma kurvanti*—perform action; *kevalaih*—merely; *kayena*—by the body; *manasa*—by the mind; *buddhya*—by the intelligence; *api indriyaih*—and even by the senses; *atma-suddhaye*—for purification of the heart, self-purification.

11 For the sake of purification of the mind, a *karma-yogi* remaining at home and performing actions with their body, mind and intelligence gives up all attachment to the fruits of their activities. The *karma-yogi* uses their senses wisely, acting with sober detachment.

*yuktah karma-phalam tyaktva santim apnoti naisthikim
ayuktah kama-karena phale sakto nibadhyate [12]*

yuktah—A *niskam karma-yogi*, one engaged in the yoga of selfless action; *tyaktva*—giving up; *karma-phalam*—the fruits of action; *apnoti*—attains; *naisthikim*—uninterrupted; *santim*—peace, i.e. liberation; (*kintu*)—but; *ayuktah*—a *sakam karmi*, fruitive worker; *nibadhyate*—becomes bound; *saktah (san)*—being attached; *phale*—to the fruits of action; *kama-karena*—by nurturing fruitive desires.

12 The *karma-yogi* free of any material motives gives up attachment to the fruits of their actions – they attain constant peace. Ultimately, liberation too. But an ambitious *karmi*, a fruit-seeker, stays obsessed with the results of their actions. They remain implicated in *karma* because of their endeavours.

*sarva-karmani manasa sannyasyaste sukham vasi
nava-dvare pure dehi naiva kurvan na karayan [13]*

manasa—Mentally; *sannyasya*—renouncing; *sarva-karmani*—all actions; *vasi*—the sense-controlled; *dehi*—embodied being; *aste*—resides; *sukham*—happily; *nava-dvare pure*—in the city of nine gates; *na eva kurvan*—neither acting; *na karayan*—nor causing work for others.

13 Renouncing all actions, happily residing within the city of nine gates (two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, genital and anus), the sense-controlled *jiva-atma* stays free from the egotistical belief that they are the ultimate cause that instigates the events happening in the world. They may appear to do things, they may appear to engage others in doing activities, yet they are free from the egotistical idea that they are the ultimate cause of their actions. They can see a greater reality that exists beyond themselves, and know they themselves are doing nothing.

*na kartrtvam na karmani lokasya srjati prabhuh
na karma-phala-samyogam svabhavas tu pravartate [14]*

prabhuh—The Lord; *na srjati*—does not generate; *lokasya*—anyone's; *kartrtvam*—ego of considering themselves 'the doer'; *na karmani*—nor their actions; *na karma-phala-samyogam*—nor their association with the fruits of actions; *tu*—but; *svabhava*—their nature (of ignorance since time immemorial); *pravartate*—initiates these.

14 A *jiva* soul lives in a body with needs and desires made by Nature. Because a *jiva* was associating with Mother Nature in prior times, even before their first birth in the world, they carry ancient mental impressions about Nature within themselves, their *swabhava*. A *jiva* perpetuates their ancient mentality — their *swabhava*. Souls in ignorance wifully preserve their *swabhava*.

*nadatte kasyachit papam na chaiva sukrtaṁ vibhuḥ
ajnanenaavrtam jñanam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ [15]*

vibhuḥ—The self-satisfied Supreme Lord; *adatte*—accepts; *na papam*—neither the sin; *sukrtaṁ cha na eva*—nor the peity; *kasyachit*—of anyone. *jñanam*—Knowledge; (*bhavati*)—is; *avrtam*—covered; *ajnanena*—by ignorance—by the Lord's external potency (*avidya-sakti*), to fulfill the living being's desire to enjoy the material world; *tena*—thus; *jantavaḥ*—the living beings (though spiritual in constitution); *muhyanti*—are deluded, thinking the body to be the self.

15 Man's egotism and *karma* are not God's creation but man's. Souls absorbed in material life are self-aware beings whose innate wisdom is overshadowed by ignorance arising from their *swabhava*. They allow themselves to be misled by ignorance-based intuition, by *prakṛita* knowledge produced by nature, Maha-Maya. A soul in ignorance living in nature grasps mundane knowledge. They gather thoughts and suppositions that come to them, faithfully believing the ideas they collect and store inside themselves are realistic and reliable. They tend to be foolish and consequently they get reborn as foolish animals. Materialistic beings are self-deluded, always wanting to live a happy life within nature. They keep repeatedly reincarnating and evolving.

*jñanena tu tad ajñanam yesam nasitam atmanah
tesam adityavaj jñanam prakasayati tat param [16]*

tu—But; *yesam*—of those for whom; *tad ajñanam*—that ignorance; *nasitam*—has been destroyed; *atmanah jñanena*—by self-knowledge, by the Lord's superior potency; *tad jñanam*—that knowledge; *tesam*—of those persons; *prakasayati*—reveals; *param*—the Supreme Reality; *adityavat*—like the sun that dispels darkness.

16 *Jñana*, knowledge, is of two types. Mundane (*prakṛita*) and divine (*apṛakṛita*). Mundane knowledge is concerned with material nature, it is knowledge about the physical features of material things. Divine knowledge is ontological knowledge, and when ontological knowledge awakens in someone their mundane knowledge is superseded — their resolute spiritual intelligence awakens like a mighty risen sun, revealing the ontological truth of every thing they perceive.

*tad-buddhayas tad-atmanas tan-nisthas tat-parayanah
gachchhanty apunar-avrttim jñana-nirbhuta-kalmasah [17]*

jñana-nirbhuta-kalmasah—Persons whose ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge; *tad-buddhayah*—who think constantly of the Supreme Lord; *tad-atmanah*—who meditate on Him alone; *tad-nisthaḥ*—who abide in Him always; *tad-parayanah*—and who are devoted to hearing and singing His glories; (*santah*)—being so engaged; *gachchhanti*—they attain; *apunar-avrttim*—liberation.

17 With their resolute intelligence fully illuminated by the truths they realize, with their own inner self perfectly visible to them, clearly seen within the all-pervasive Paramatma, the *jnani* makes Paramatma their goal and soon they attain liberation. All their sins are extinguished by wisdom – and the *jnani* transcends material existence.

*vidya-vinaya-sampanne brahmane gavi hastini
suni chaiva svapake cha panditah sama-darsinah [18]*

sama-darsinah eva—Those who see with equanimity, who see Brahma, transcendence; *vidya-vinaya-sampanne*—in a learned and humble; *brahmane*—brahman; *gavi*—a cow; *hastini*—an elephant; *suni cha*—and a dog; *svapake cha*—or a chandal (dog-eater or outcast); (*kathyate*)—(such seers) are to be known as; *panditah*—truly learned.

18 A *jnani* who sees their own divine nature abandons prejudices. They see only the one Brahman everywhere, seeing Brahman above and beyond all beings, and in all beings. A humble brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, an outcaste dog eater – only the ultimate reality is seen in all That. Therefore they are called a *pundit*, a seer of true wisdom.

Srimad Bhagavat Purana (11.28.19):

Gold remains gold both before and after ornaments are made of it. It only gets different names such as ring or necklace. Similarly, the Reality, the Cause and the very substance of the Whole of creation, is the same both before and after worldly objects receive their various names and forms.

*ihaiva tair jitah sargo yesam samye sthitam manah
nirdosam hi samam brahma tasmad brahmani te sthitah [19]*

yesam—For those whose; *manah*—mind; *sthitam*—is situated; *samye*—equipoised in Brahma; *sargah*—the cycle of birth and death; *jitah*—is conquered; *taih*—by them; *eva iha*—while living within this world. *brahma samam hi*—Possessing spiritual equanimity; *nirdosam*—and being faultless (free from attachment and hatred); *tasmad*—thus; *te*—they; *brahmani sthitah*—are situated in Brahma.

19 Those whose minds are completely absorbed in Paramatma the Higher Self conquer this world while remaining in it. By their spiritual equilibrium they become free from all feelings of attraction and revulsion. Although they appear to be in the natural world they are firmly situated in eternal transcendence.

*na prahrsyet priyam prapya nodvijet prapya chapriyam
sthira-buddhir asammudho brahma-vid brahmani sthitah [20]*

brahmani sthitah—Fully situated in Brahma; *sthira-buddhih*—endowed with steady intelligence; *asammudhah*—devoid of the delusion of considering one's body and its attachments as 'me' and 'mine'; *brahma-vit*—one in knowledge of Brahma; *na prahrsyet*—is neither elated; *priyam prapya*—by obtaining something desirable; *na cha udvijet*—nor dejected; *apriyam prapya*—by obtaining something undesirable.

20 Living in Brahman the transcendental truth, endowed with pure intelligence and free from the belief that this body and its associated things are 'me' and 'mine', the knower of the Brahman is not elated when they experience something desirable or dejected because of anything unpleasant.

bahya-sparsesv asaktatma vindaty atmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktatma sukham aksayam asnute [21]

asakta-atma—The person with mind detached; *bahya-sparsesu*—from external (sense-) enjoyment; (*adau*)—first; *vindati*—tastes; (*tat*) *sukham*—that happiness; *yat atmani* (*anubhuyamane*)—which is experienced in self-realisation; (*tatah*)—then; *brahma-yoga-yukta-atma*—absorbing himself in meditation on the Absolute; *sah*—such a person; *asnute*—enjoys; *aksayam*—inexhaustible; *sukham*—bliss.

21 The knower of Brahman, with their mind detached from sensual pleasures, initially attains the happiness of self-realization. Thereafter, in the yoga trance they become perfectly united with Paramatma the Higher Self. They attain inexhaustible joy.

Sri Baladev Vidyabhusan:

After first realizing their own Atma a person then realizes Paramatma. A person unattached to things perceived by the senses realizes their divine nature and experiences bliss, then afterwards they become absorbed in Paramatma.

ye hi samsparsaja bhoga duhkha-yonaya eva te
ady-antavantah kaunteya na tesu ramate budhah [22]

(*he*) *kaunteya*—O Arjuna; *ye bhogah*—those pleasures; *samsparsa-jah*—born of the senses contacting their objects; *te duhkha-yonayah eva*—are the origin of misery; *hi-as*; *adi-antavantah*—they begin and end. (*atah*)—Therefore; *budhah*—the wise person; *na ramate*—does not delight; *tesu*—in them.

22 O Arjuna, the pleasures that arise from contact of the senses with external objects are merely causes of anxiety. Those fleeting sensations come and go, they are ephemeral. A judicious person remains unattached to material pleasures.

saknotihaiva yah sodhum prak sarira-vimoksanat
kama-krodhodbhavam vegam sa yuktah sa sukhi narah [23]

yah—One who; *saknoti*—is able (by the yoga of selfless action); *sodhum*—to check; *kama-krodha-udbhavam vegam*—the impulses of desire and anger; *iha eva*—in this life; *prak*—before; *sarira-vimoksanat*—leaving the body; *sah narah*—that person; *yuktah*—is a yogi; *sah*—he; *sukhi*—is happy.

23 Know this, that when someone living in a physical body practices *yoga* they need to remain mindful. They must constantly check their urges of desire and anger. The *yogi* must stop desire and anger at the root, at the moment they arise. Then a *yogi* enters into perfect union with their own inner Atma, attaining perfect *yoga*. They alone understand true happiness.

yo 'ntah-sukho 'ntar-aramas tathantar-jyotir eva yah
sa yogi brahma-nirvanam brahma-bhuto 'dhigachchhati [24]
yah—One who; *antah-sukhah*—experiences the joy of the self within; *antah-aramah*—who delights in the self within; *tatha yah*—and who; *eva*—in this way; *antah-jyotih*—sees the illumination within; *sah yogi*—such a (niskam karma-) yogi (follower of the yoga of selfless action); *brahma-bhutam*—attaining the transcendental state; *adhigachchhati*—achieves; *brahma-nirvanam*—liberation in Brahma; in the personal conception, he reaches the Supersoul, Paramatma.

24 A *yogi* engaged in selfless action first realizes their own Atma. Realizing spiritual bliss internally they enjoy great happiness. First comes direct experience of their own spiritual nature and identity, then comes their direct experience of Paramatma.

labhante brahma-nirvanam rsayah ksina-kalmasah
chhinna-dvaidha yatatmanah sarva-bhuta-hite-ratah [25]
ksina-kalmasah—Sinless; *yata-atmanah*—self-controlled; *rsayah*—sages; *chinna-dvaidhah*—with doubts destroyed; *sarva-bhuta-hite-ratah*—dedicated to the welfare of all; *labhante*—attain; *brahma-nirvanam*—liberation from the mundane plane.

25 Free from sin and doubt, always doing whatever must be done for the welfare of all beings, the seers of truth attain liberation in Brahman.

kama-krodha-vimuktanam yatinam yata-chetasam
abhitah brahma-nirvanam vartate viditatmanam [26]
yatinam—Of the sannyasis; *yata-chetasam*—who have controlled their thoughts (conquered the subtle body); *vidita-atmanam*—who are knowers of the element *tvam*, the soul; *kama-krodha-vimuktanam*—and free from desire and anger; *brahma-nirvanam*—liberation from matter; *vartate*—occurs; *abhitah*—either way, whether they live or die.

26 Saints who renounce worldly life, who are free from desire and anger, and who have experienced direct knowledge of their own

Atma, those souls attain liberation unconditionally. They are liberated in this life and after death. Their liberation occurs when their mentally-produced ignorance dies. The entire body of bad and mundane ideas a soul in ignorance stores inside themselves will die, it expires.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

Every object is endowed with the two components of an intrinsic form (swarup) and a characteristic function (pravritti). The form of the individual soul is consciousness. The function, the natural inclination of a conscious soul, is to give love and to receive love. The Supreme Person alone is the proper object of love, yet, in the materially-conditioned state of the *jiva-soul*, the love of the soul is offered to material objects. It has been explained in the Bhagavad-Gita 2.24: “The soul is indivisible and it cannot be burned, moistened or dried up; it is eternal, present everywhere in a body, and always remains the same.” However, when the *jiva-soul* undergoes its bondage by Maya the soul’s love becomes almost perverted, due to various propensities of the soul. The seductive phenomenon known as “mind” produced by nature is willingly embraced by the soul. This “mind” then begins to dominate the un-awakened consciousness of the soul. The mind provides all kinds of good and bad ideas, along with many hopes and dreams, and nightmares. The dormant, self-illuminated knowledge within the soul is eclipsed, and the soul gets covered over by a thinking mind, a subtle body of ideas formed by Maya. Sense perceptions appearing within the material mind can charm the soul, and the soul then considers those perceptions to be real knowledge about true things, real knowledge about reality. When material objects come in close proximity to the material body and senses the mind possesses, the mind grasps and stores those new perceptions of external objects. This is known as the retentive memory of the mind. Those stored images provide the substance for imagination. Depending upon whatever the acquired images contain, a kingdom of knowledge is created internally. The cognition of a *jiva-soul* bound by the bonds of Maya is stuck in this type of perverted and unwholesome condition.

Sri Tattva-Sutra commentary 16

*sparsan krtva bahir bahyams chaksus chaivantare bhruvoh
pranapanau samau krtva nasabhyantara-charinau [27]
yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir moksa-parayanah
vigatechha-bhaya-krodho yah sada mukta eva sah [28]*

yah—That person who; *bahih krtva*—expelling; *bahyan sparsan*—external sense objects of sound, etc.; (*manah pravistan*)—which enter the mind; *cha eva (krtva)*—and concentrating; *chaksuh*—the eyes; *antare*—between; *bhruvoh*—the eyebrows; *krtva samau*—stabilising; *prana-apanau*—inhalation and exhalation; *na-sa-abhyantara-charinau*—flowing through the nostrils; (*yah*)—that person who; *yata-indriya-manah-buddhih*—is a controller of the senses, mind, and intelligence; *moksa-parayanah*—dedicated to liberation; *vigata-ichchha-bhaya-krodhah*—free from desire, fear, and anger; *munih*—a contemplative seeker of the self; *sah*—he; *sada*—is always; *mukta eva*—actually liberated.

27–28 Expelling all thoughts of external sense objects from their mind – all perceptions of sound, touch, form, taste and smell – fixing the eyesight at a point midway between the eyebrows while constantly maintaining internal equilibrium, suspending inhalation and exhalation while subjugating the senses, mind and intelligence, a selfless saint dedicates himself to liberation. Having overcome desire, fear and anger, a sincere seeker of the secrets of the soul becomes liberated even before the death of their body.

bhoktaram yajna-tapasam sarva-loka-mahesvaram

suhrdam sarva-bhutanam jnatva mam santim rchchhati [29]

(jivah)–The living being; rchchhati–attains; santim–the joy of his original divine identity; jnatva–by knowing; mam–Me; bhoktaram–as the maintainer, or worshipping objective; yajna-tapasam–of the karmis’ sacrifices and the jnanis’ austerities; sarva-loka-maha-isvaram–the worshipping Supreme Lord of all planes—Lord Narayan; suhrdam sarva-bhutanam–and the benefactor of all living beings by mercifully teaching pure devotion to Me, through My devotees, since I am the adorable friend of the devotees—Lord Krishna.

29 I am the enjoyer of the results of sacrifice performed by a person seeking material fruits, as well as the results of austerity performed by a liberation-seeker, I am the only adorable object of them both. I am Narayana, the indwelling observer of all states of existence. I am the Supreme Lord awarding liberation, I am the internal witness. I am the well-wisher Who loves everyone and I am Krishna the true friend of my devotees. A soul who knows this also discovers their own true identity.

Chapter Six

Mystic Yoga

Astanga-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

anasritah karma-phalam karyam karma karoti yah

sa sannyasi cha yogi cha na niragnir na chakriyah [1]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *yah*—That person who; *karoti*—performs; *karyam*—compulsory; *karma*—scripturally enjoined actions; *anasritah*—without expectation; *karma-phalam*—of the fruits of action; *sah cha*—he is; *sannyasi*—a sannyasi, one who has given up all for the Lord; *yogi cha*—and he is a yogi, one in union with the Lord. *na niragnih*—A sannyasi is not one who merely renounces the fire sacrifice (agnihotra yajna) and other prescribed duties; *na cha akriyah*—nor is a yogi one who merely renounces physical activities.

1 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: Arjuna, if a monk on the path of *jnana-yoga* trying to attain Atma realization stops doing his ordained duties then his false renunciation is wrong. He is not a real *sannyasi*, he is not a true *yogi*. No-one can become a *sannyasi* merely by stopping doing their sacred rituals and duties, or by stopping attending fire ceremonies. No-one can become a *yogi* merely by being physically inactive.

yam sannyasam iti prahur yogam tam viddhi pandava

na hy asannyasta-sankalpo yogi bhavati kaschana [2]

(he) *pandavah*—O Arjuna; *yam*—that which; (sudhiyah)—the learned; *prahuh*—call; *sannyasam iti*—sannyas, complete renunciation; *viddhi*—you should know; *tam (eva)* *yogam*—as yoga; *hi*—since; *asannyasta-sankalpah*—without renunciation of fruitive attachment (the basis of *niskam karma-yoga*); *na kaschana*—no one; *bhavati*—can be; *yogi*—a yogi.

2 O Arjuna, the purpose of *sannyasa* and the purpose of *astanga-yoga* are the same. One who wants to fulfill their earthly desires and hasn't restrained their mental urges cannot be regarded as a *sannyasi* or *astanga-yogi*.

arurukso muner yogam karma karanam uchyate

yogarudhasya tasyaiva samah karanam uchyate [3]

muneh—For the yoga practitioner; *aruruksoh*—desirous of ascending; *yogam*—to steady yoga meditation; (*tad arohe*)—in the ascent of yoga; *karma*—action; *uchyate*—is said; *karanam*—to be the means. *tasya eva yoga-arudhasya*—For that person accomplished in yoga, that is, when he has achieved meditation; *samah*—renunciation of all action; *uchyate*—is described; *karanam*—as the means.

3 Effort, action alone, is the cause of advancement for a *sannyasi* seeking to attain *yoga*. Then for a *yogi*, a *jnani* who has achieved steady meditation, stopping doing any *karma* at all is the cause that enables them to maintain their *yoga* trance.

*yada hi nendriyarthesu na karmasv anusajjate
sarva-sankalpa-sannyasi yogarudhas tadochyate [4]*

yada hi—When; (*yogi*)—the *yoga* practitioner; *na anusajjate*—does not become attached; *indriya-arthesu*—to the objects of the senses—sound, touch, form, taste, and smell; *na (anusajjate) karmasu (cha)*—and does not become attached to action in pursuit of their enjoyment; *sarva-sankalpa-sannyasi (cha bhavati)*—and renounces all thoughts of enjoyment; *tada*—then; *uchyate yoga-arudhah*—he is said to have attained to *yoga*.

4 When a *yogi* has no attachment to any enjoyable material objects comprised of sounds, touch, form, taste and smell, when a *yogi* no longer makes an effort to enjoy those things, having completely renounced all intentions of that nature, only then do they attain *yoga*.

*uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam avasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur atmaiva ripur atmanah [5]*

atmanam—The living being; *uddharet*—must be delivered from the bondage of the material world; *atmana*—by the (detached) mind; *atmanam*—and the living being; *na avasadayet*—must not be made to fall down into the bondage of the material world; (*atmana*)—by the mind (enchanted by sense objects); *hi*—since; *atma eva*—this very mind; *bandhuh*—is the friend; *atmanah*—of the living being; *atma eva*—and this very mind; *ripuh*—is the enemy; *atmanah*—of the living being.

5 A soul fallen in the mire of material existence must save themselves by themselves. They must stop themselves from pulling themselves down. The mind is easily charmed by alluring objects – the mind is sometimes someone’s friend but it can be their enemy too.

*bandhur atmatmanas tasya yenaivatmatmana jitah
anatmanas tu satrutve vartetatmaiva satruvat [6]*

yena atmana—For one by whom; *atma*—the mind; *jitah*—has been subjugated; *tasya atmanah*—that person’s; *atma eva*—very mind; *bandhuh*—is a friend; *tu*—but; *anatmanah*—for a person of uncontrolled mind; *atma eva*—that very mind; *varteta*—is engaged; *satrutve*—in disservice; *satruvat*—like an enemy.

6 For one who has conquered their own mind their mind is a friend. For someone unable to control it, one’s own mind becomes an enemy that engages in their disservice constantly.

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj:

You are your own best friend and your own worst enemy. You cannot conceive how much bad and how much good you can do for yourself. All power is in your hand. Try to play properly and you must get the result. The football is always going to the foot of someone who can play properly, and the others running after the football can't get it. So try to search for Sri Krishna properly, sincerely. You will get a good result, and your life will be extremely benefitted.

*jitatmanah prasantasya param atma samahitah
sitosna-sukha-duhkhesu tatha manapamanayoh [7]*

sita-usna-sukha-duhkhesu—In cold and heat, happiness and unhappiness; tatha mana-apamanayoh—and in honour and dishonour; atma—the mind; prasantasya—of the peaceful (without attraction and aversion); jitatmanah—yogi who has conquered the mind; (bhavet)—is; param samahitah—in perfect samadhi.

7 One who has conquered their mind in all conditions of heat and cold, happiness and distress, honour and dishonour, one who aims to be free from attraction and aversion, that person will diligently strive to enter into the eternal yoga trance of *samadhi*.

*jnana-vijnana-trptatma kutastho vijitendriyah
yukta ity uchyate yogi sama-lostrasma-kanchanah [8]*

yogi—The yogi; jnana-vijnana-trpta-atma—satisfied in his heart by scriptural knowledge as well as realisation; kuta-sthah—situated in the one unchanging spiritual nature; vijita-indriyah—sense-controlled; sama-lostra-asma-kanchanah—and of equal vision for earth, stone, and gold; uchyate—is said; yuktah iti—to have attained yoga.

8 One who is satisfied due to their *jnana*, their wise understanding learned from the enlightening scriptures, and due to their *vijnana*, their direct personal realizations of Brahman, that enlightened *jnani* stays in divine consciousness permanently. They have full control of their senses and they see a lump of earth, a rock or gold as things of equal worth. That person is a true *yogi*.

*suhrn-mitrar-y-udasina-madhyastha-dvesya-bandhusu
sadhusv api cha papesu sama-buddhir visisyate [9]*

sama-buddhih—One of equipoised intelligence; suhrt-mitra-ari-udasina-madhyastha-dvesya-bandhusu—towards a well-wisher, a friend, an enemy, an indifferent person, a mediator, a hateful person, a relative; sadhusu—a saintly person; papesu cha api—and a sinner, too; visisyate—such a yogi is well-qualified.

9 And an even higher type of sage is someone full of compassion for all living beings. The higher vision sees a friend or enemy as the same, seeing the Atma in everyone. Filled with compassionate kindness, the divine

seer regards both a mediator who tries to stop quarrels and someone who prefers to be indifferent as the same. They see both of them with thoughts full of love. A family member or a saint or sinner, these are all seen to be the same by someone with equipoised intelligence, for the Atma alone is seen in everyone. A pious person, and a person who ought to be detested because of the harm they have done, and intend to do in future, only the Atma is seen in either of them.

*yogi yunjita satatam atmanam rahasi sthitah
ekaki yata-chittatma nirasir aparigraha [10]*

yogi—The practising yogi; *sthitah*—remaining; *ekaki*—alone; *rahasi*—in a solitary place; *yata-chitta-atma*—controlling mind and body; *nirasir*—desireless; *aparigraha*—without enjoyable objects or acquisition; *yunjita atmanam*—must concentrate his mind; *satatam*—constantly.

10 A person starting *yoga* practice should live alone in a solitary place. Controlling the mind and body, free from desire and sensual urges, one should fix one's mind in meditation, whole-heartedly intending to realize the trance of *yoga*.

*suchau dese pratisthapyā sthiram asanam atmanah
naty-uchchhritam nati-nicham chelajina-kusottaram [11]
tatraikagram manah krtva yata-chittendriya-kriyah
upavisyasane yunjyad yogam atma-visuddhaye [12]*

pratisthapyā—Establishing; *atmanah*—his; *asanam*—seat; *chela-ajina-kusa-ut-taram*—of *Kusa* grass, deerskin, and cloth; *suchau dese*—in a clean place; *sthiram*—which is firm; *na ati-uchchhritam*—neither too high; *na ati-nicham*—nor too low; *upavisya*—sitting; *tatra asane*—on that seat; *yata-chitta-indriya-kriyah*—subjugating all mental and sensual activity; *krtva*—making; *manah*—the mind; *eka-agram*—one-pointed; *yunjyat*—he should practise; *yogam*—samadhi; *atma-visuddhaye*—for self-purification, to attain spiritual realisation.

11–12 At a pure and clean place, not too high and not too low, one should establish a secure seat on the ground, a platform made from straw of the *kusha* plant, covered with a deer-skin and with cloth. Then, sitting on the seat, subjugating all mental and sensual activity and bringing the mind's attention to one point, the *yogi* should practice meditation and enter into trance, endeavouring to purify their heart from all kinds of desires.

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur:

By becoming free from mental disturbances the *jiva-soul's* consciousness or *antah-karana* becomes pure and self-aware. This makes the *antah-karana* suitable for direct realization of Brahman. (The *antah-karana* is the 'heart' of a *jiva-atma*; it is the internal substance of a *jiva* comprised of the spiritual heart, mind, intelligence and ego)

*samam kaya-siro-grivam dharayann achalam sthirah
sampreksya nasikagram svam disas chanavalokayan [13]
prasantatma vigata-bhir brahmachari-vrate sthitah
manah samyamya mach-chitto yukta asita mat-parah [14]*

dharayan—Holding; kaya-sirah-grivam—the body, head, and neck; samam—straight; achalam—still; sthirah—and poised; sampreksya—gazing at; svam nasi-ka—his nose; agram—at the top, between the eyes (centering the concentration); cha anavalokayan—not looking; disah—in all directions; brahmachari-vrate-sthi-tah—remaining fixed in spirituality (or celibacy); prasanta-atma—with a peace-ful heart; vigata-bhih—and fearless; manah samyamya—subjugating the mind; yuktah—the yogi; mat-parah—devoted to Me; asita—should remain; mat-chittah—absorbed in thought of Me.

13–14 Soberly keeping the torso, head and neck upright, poised, the *yogi* should fix their gaze on the tip of their nose without casting a glance in any other direction. Tranquil, fearless and fixed in the vow of celibacy, the *yogi* should meditate on Me in their heart making Me their goal in life. In this way, the *yogi* should practice *yoga*.

Chandogya Upanishad 8.1.1:

The teacher says:

Within this living body called Brahmapura,
the city of the Spirit, there is a palace-temple.
And in the palace, a lotus of the heart.

Within the white lotus there is a tiny space
and radiant Spirit fills this space.
That Spirit should be found, should be known.

*yunjann evam sadatmanam yogi niyata-manasah
santim nirvana-paramam mat-samstham adhigachchhati [15]*

evam—In this manner; sada—constantly; yunjan atmanam—engaging the mind in yogic meditation; yogi—the yogi; niyata-manasah—of mind withdrawn from hankering for material enjoyment; adhigachchhati—attains to; santim—the peace; nirvana-paramam—of emancipation by the destruction of material existence; mat-samstham—(the peace) which abides in Me (in My non-differentiated Brahma effulgence [Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur.]).

15 Concentrating the mind on *yoga* constantly, absorbing oneself in the *yoga* process every day, the *yogi* attains the happiness of *yoga-siddhis* – supernatural powers gained by practicing *yoga*. These mystic powers and the happiness they bring a *siddha* (*yogi*) are granted by Me, but they are inferior types of happiness to the happiness enjoyed in the state of liberation, *brahma-nirvana*.

Srimad Bhagavata Purana 11.15.4-9:

Sri Krishna said:

There are eighteen types of mystic perfections or siddhis. Eight are primary, given by Me. Ten other siddhis are powers of nature produced by the material mode of goodness. Of the eight, anima-siddhi allows someone to make their body very small, mahima allows one to become enormously big, and laghima allows one to become weightless. Amongst the siddhis granted by Nature's power of goodness there is the kamavayasita siddhi through which someone can obtain anything from anywhere in the universe, and the power to be free from hunger, thirst and other bodily disturbances, and the power to hear and see things far away. Nature also gives a master of siddhis the power to know anything in the past, present and future, and to know the minds of others.

*naty-asnatas tu yogo 'sti na chaikantam anasnatah
na chati-svapna-silasya jagrato naiva charjuna [16]*

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; yogah—yoga, samadhi; na asti—is not; ati-asnatah tu—for the overeater; na cha—nor; ekantam anasnatah—for the undereater; na cha—nor; ati-svapna-silasya—he who oversleeps; na cha—nor; eva jagratah—for one who remains awake excessively.

16 O Arjuna, attaining *yoga* is impossible for anyone who overeats, under eats, oversleeps or under sleeps.

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-chestasya karmasu
yukta-svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkha-ha [17]*

yukta-ahara-viharasya—For the person whose eating and recreation are regulated; yukta-chestasya-karmasu—whose effort in works is regulated; yukta-svapna-avabodhasya—and whose sleeping and waking hours are in proper measure; yogah—yoga; bhavati—is; duhka-ha—a dispeller of suffering.

17 For a person who eats, relaxes and exerts themselves in a regulated way, keeping regular hours in proper measure, the practice of *yoga* gradually dispels all feelings of suffering.

*yada viniyatam chittam atmany evavatisthate
nihsprah sarva-kamebhyo yukta ity ucyate tada [18]*

yada—When; viniyatam—the disciplined; chittam—heart; avatisthate—dwells; atmani eva—in the soul alone; tada—then; nihsprah—that person detached; sarva-kamebhyah—from all desires; uchyate—is described; yuktah iti—as actually in yoga.

18 After checking any mental tendency towards worldliness, a *yogi* situates their mind unwaveringly in the transcendental experience of their own nature, the Atma. Free from mundane desires, they become situated in *yoga* and fixed in the purely spiritual Atma.

yatha dipo nivata-stho nengate sopama smrta
yogino yata-chittasya yunjato yogam atmanah [19]
yatha—As; *dipah*—a lamp-flame; *nivata-sthah*—in a windless place; *na ingate*—does not waver; *sa*—such; *upama*—an analogy; *smrta*—is cited; *yoginah*—of the yogi; *atmanah*—the soul-centred; *yogam*—yoga; *yunjatah*—practitioner; *yata-chittasya*—of unwavering one-pointed mind.

19 A flaming lamp in a windless place never wavers. Similarly, the mind of a *yogi* absorbed in the experience of the Atma never changes.

yatroparamate chittam niruddham yoga-sevaya
yatra chaivatmanatmanam pasyann atmani tusyati [20]
yatra—That (*samadhi*) within which; *chittam*—the mind; *niruddham*—disciplined; *yoga-sevaya*—by yoga practice; *uparamate*—is tranquil (relieved from mundane association); *cha*—and; *yatra*—within which; *pasyann*—having observed; *atmanam*—the Supersoul, Paramatma; *atmana*—by the pure self of the same nature as the Supersoul; *tusyati*—one is satisfied;

20 By the practices of *yoga* the mind of a *siddha* (a liberated *yogi*) becomes wholly absorbed in deep meditation, feeling free from worldly attachments. The result of this practice is that the self enjoys self-delight, feeling joyfully liberated in the astounding realization of the true nature of oneself, the *jiva-atma*. Ultimately, the *siddha* also realizes the Higher Self too, Paramatma.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

The system of philosophy propounded by Patanjali is known as *astanga-yoga*. He teaches that someone can attain bliss or *kaivalya* when their mind becomes completely free from entanglement with any worldly endeavours (*artha*, *kama* and *dharma*). *Kaivalya* is a unique state of spiritual existence unconcerned with all physical and mental activities. A state whereby a *jiva*, an individual *atma*, becomes joyfully united with Paramatma, with God, who is limitless bliss. But Patanjali's annotators, misunderstanding him, maintain a different viewpoint. They say doctrines about bliss are unreasonable because if bliss exists then there must be an enjoyer of bliss, and thus the doctrine about *kaivalya* pre-supposes a philosophy that is a kind of dualism. However, this is not what Patanjali thinks. He says the *kaivalya* or final beatitude of the self is not in the total annihilation of the self itself and its functions, as when a drop of water dissolves and vanishes in an ocean of formless existence, but instead the self's attainment of complete release from the trammels of *Maya*. Liberation from *Maya* awakens the natural functioning of the liberated self, which is known as "Chit-Shakti." The perversion of the natural functions of the soul takes place when a soul maintains an enjoying mood and becomes attached to *Maya*, illusion. A soul in illusion likes material enjoyment but when their illusions are removed the spiritual functioning of the soul automatically awakens.

Patanjali holds this view and not its opposite. Ananda, bliss, awakens when the soul is free from the influence of Maya. Bliss is the ultimate goal of *astanga-yoga*, and in this regard it is tantamount to *bhakti-yoga*.

*sukham atyantikam yat tad buddhi-grahyam atindriyam
vetti yatra na chaivayam sthitas chalati tattvatah [21]*

atmani eva—only in Him; (cha)—and; yatra—by which; ayam—this yogi; vetti tat—experiences that; atyantikam—constant; sukham—bliss; ati-indriyam—transcendental to the senses; yat—which is; buddhi-grahyam—known by spiritual enlightenment; cha—and; (yatra) sthitaḥ (san)—being situated within which; na eva chalati—one never deviates; tattvataḥ—from reality;

21 The *siddha* enjoys a thrill of tremendous joy transcending human reasoning, a state understandable by pure intelligence. He becomes tranquil, well-established there, and does not budge from there.

*yam labdhva chaparam labham manyate nadhikam tatah
yasmin sthito na duhkkena gurunapi vichalyate [22]*

(cha)—and; yam labdhva—gaining which; na manyate—one does not consider; aparam labham—any other attainment; adhikam—greater; tataḥ—than that; cha—and; yasmin sthitaḥ (san)—being situated within which; na vichalyate—one is not disturbed; gurunā duhkkena api—even by intense suffering;

22 He does not consider that there is any other bliss superior to what he has realized in *samadhi* (trance). Secure, firmly fixed in bliss, he is not disturbed by any of the tribulations of the world.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

There is brahma samadhi and also prakriti samadhi, two types of samadhi. There is either samadhi in the mass of impersonal consciousness called Brahman, or prakriti samadhi in viraja, which is the state attained by the Buddhists when they experience dissolution of the mental system. Between them there is a slight difference but both brahma samadhi and prakriti samadhi are something like a spiritual zero or a cessation of all movement. It is a static condition, samadhi.

*tam vidyat duhkha-samyoga-viyogam yoga-samjnitam
sa nischayena yuktavyo yogo nirvinna-chetasa [23]*

vidyat—know; tam—that; duhkha-samyoga-viyogam—state within which all association with unhappiness is severed; yoga-samjnitam—to be defined as yoga. yuktavyaḥ—One should practise; saḥ yogaḥ—this yoga; nischayena—with perseverance; anirvinna-chetasa—and a heart that is never discouraged.

23 The *siddha* enjoys the bliss of *samadhi*, feeling free from misery and physical pleasure. He remains resolute and persevering.

Chandogya Upanishad 3.13.7:

The light that shines above heaven, above all the worlds, above everything, even above the highest worlds not excelled by any other worlds, that light is the same light which is within man.

sankalpa-prabhavan kamams tyaktva sarvan asesatah
manasaivendriya-gramam viniyamya samantatah [24]

(yoktavyah)—Such yoga must be practised; tyaktva—giving up; sarvan kaman—all desires; sankalpa-prabhavan—born of the thoughts; asesatah—completely (including all impressions); manasa eva—and by the mind (with the vision of the futility of mundane enjoyment); viniyamya—withdrawing; indriya-gramam—the group of senses; samantatah—from all material objects.

24 Utterly abandoning all mental desires and images, in full awareness of the futility of seeking worldly goals, one must withdraw one's senses from material objects and diligently engage in yoga.

sanaish sanair uparamed buddhya dhrti-grhitaya
atma-samstham manah krtva na kinchid api chintayet [25]

buddhya—By means of the intelligence; dhrti-grhitaya—controlled by the yogic practice of dharana; manah atma-samstham krtva—completely steadying the mind within the self; sanaish sanair—and gradually; uparamet—as the mind becomes tranquil; na chintayet—one should not think; kinchit api—of anything else.

25 With the help of intelligence controlled by *dharana* (that limb of the *astanga-yoga* system in which the intellect is brought to a state of intense concentration), one should steady the ever-active mind then, by gradual practice, withdrawing the mind from external objects, a *yogi* should enter the trance of *samadhi* and think of nothing other than the soul, not even for a moment.

yato yato nischalati manas chanchalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamyaitad atmany eva vasam nayet [26]

yatah yatah—Whatever objects; chanchalam—the fickle; asthiram—unsteady; manah—mind; nischalati—pursues; etat—this mind; niyamyaitad—should be withdrawn; tatas tato—from those objects; vasam nayet—and should be subjugated; atmani eva—within the self alone.

26 Practicing self control, the naturally unsteady mind must be carefully withdrawn from whatever it pursues.

prasanta-manasam hy enam yoginam sukham uttamam

upaiti santa-rajasam brahma-bhutam akalmasam [27]

uttamam sukham—The joy of self-realisation; upaiti—comes; enam yoginam hi—to such a yogi; santa-rajasam—who is free from the action of the mode of passion; prasanta-manasam—of pacified heart; akalmasam—free from the defects of attachment, fear, and anger; brahma-bhutam—and situated in the spiritual nature.

27 Devoid of passion and internal agitation, peaceful-hearted, free from the blemishes of attachment, fear and anger, and always enjoying the spiritual bliss of the Atma, a *siddha* becomes blessed with joy upon realizing the divine nature of their own self.

yunjann evam sadatmanam yogi vigata-kalmasah

sukhena brahma-samsparasam atyantam sukham asnute [28]

sarva-bhuta-stham atmanam sarva-bhutani chatmani

iksate yoga-yuktatma sarvatra sama-darsanah [29]

evam—In this way; sada yunjan—having constantly experienced by yoga; atmanam—his own internal nature; vigata-kalmasah—the clean-hearted; yogi—yogi; sukhena—easily; asnute—attains; atyantam sukham—boundless, profound ecstasy; brahma-samsparasam—by contact with the divine; realisation of the Supersoul. yoga-yukta-atma—The yogi who is united with Brahma, the Absolute, who realises himself as qualitatively identical with Brahma; sarvatra sama-darsanah—and is a seer of the same spirituality everywhere; iksate—sees; atmanam—the Supersoul; sarva-bhuta-stham—situated in all beings; cha—and; sarva-bhutani—all beings; (sthitah)—situated; atmani—in the Supersoul.

28–29 In this way, after constant meditation upon one's own real nature, the *siddha* at last attains an even higher bliss, the indescribable ecstasy felt through realization of Paramatma, the Universal Mind of God, the Higher Self. One's own soul becomes united with the infinite consciousness, and thus that master of *yoga* sees Paramatma within every living being. One sees the one Supreme Soul present within everyone, and that everyone is existing within the One Being.

Kathopanishad:

There are two selves who dwell deep within the heart, deep inside the innermost place. One, the individual self, experiences the effects of their *karma*. The other, the Lord, the Higher Self, though hidden within the heart, has His Abode in the uttermost beyond. The knowers of Brahman describe these two, the Higher Self called Paramatma and the finite individual self called *jivatma*, as light and its shadow.

— Kathopanishad 1.3.1

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvan cha mayi pasyati
tasyaham na pranasyami sa cha me na pranasyati [30]*

yah—For one who; pasyati—sees; mam—Me; sarvatra—everywhere, in all elements; cha—and; pasyati—sees; sarvam—everything; mayi—in Me; aham—I; na—am never; pranasyami—unseen, lost; tasya—to him; sah cha—and he; na—is never; pranasyati—unseen, lost; me—to Me—he never fails to be conscious of Me.

30 Someone who sees Me in everything sees the entire creation is existing in Me alone. I am never invisible to them, and they are never unseen by Me. They never fail to think of Me since they see I am all-in-all.

*sarva-bhuta-sthitam yo mam bhajaty ekatvam asthitah
sarvatha vartamano 'pi sa yogi mayi vartate [31]*

yah—That yogi who; asthitah—taking shelter; mam—in Me; ekatvam—in My nondifferent form; sarva-bhuta-sthitam—situated in the heart of every being (as the Supersoul, My four-armed form measuring one prades, the distance between the thumb and forefinger); bhajati (mam)—worships Me with devotion (based on hearing, chanting, and remembering); sah yogi—such a yogi; vartate—abides; mayi (eva)—in Me alone; varta-manah api—although present; sarvatha—in all circumstances (whether engaged in the execution of scripturally prescribed duties or not).

31 I am the all-pervading Higher Self and manifesting Myself everywhere I am separately situated within the heart of each living being as the all-seeing Paramatma. Realizing Me, Shyam-Sundar Krishna, as non-different from the Higher Self, a *siddha* surrenders to Me, worshiping Me with love and devotion. Engaging in worship, beginning My devotional service by first hearing and learning about Me, then by remembering Me and chanting my Name, the master of *yoga* dwells in Me eternally.

*atmaupamyena sarvatra samam pasyati yo 'rjuna
sukham va yadi va duhkham sa yogi paramo matah [32]*

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; yah—one who; atma-aupamyena—in comparison to himself; pasyati—sees; sukham va yadi va duhkham—the happiness or unhappiness; sarvatra—of all living beings; samam—equal (to his own); sah yogi—such a yogi; matah—in My opinion; paramah—is the best.

32 I consider that amongst all the masters of *yoga* the highest *yogi* is that person who sees the happiness or unhappiness of all other living beings as their own actual happiness. They are equal to all, and regard the joy and sorrow of others as their own.

*arjuna uvacha
yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah samyena madhusudana
etasyaham na pasyami chanchalatvat sthitim sthiram [33]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *madhusudana*—O Madhusudan; *ayam*—this; *yogah*—yoga; *yah proktah*—that has been described; *tvaya*—by You; *samyena*—as equanimity; *aham*—I; *na pasyami*—cannot conceive; *etasya*—its; *sthiram*—stable; *sthitim*—state; *chanchalatvat*—due to the fickle nature; (manasah)—of the mind.

33 Arjuna said: O Madhusudan, due to the rambling nature of my mind I cannot maintain this state of constant equilibrium, this state of *yoga* You have described.

*chanchalam hi manah krsna pramathi balavad drdham
tasyaham nigraham manye vayor iva suduskaram* [34]

(he) *krsna*—O Krishna; *hi*—for; *manah*—the mind; *chanchalam*—is naturally fickle; *pramathi*—turbulent—disturbing the intelligence, body, and senses; *balavat*—powerful—uncontrollable by even the intelligence; *drdham*—and obstinate. (atah)—Therefore; *aham*—I; *manye*—consider; *nigraham*—the control; *tasya*—of the mind; *suduskaram*—more difficult; *vayoh iva*—than (controlling) the wind.

34 O Krishna, the mind is unsteady by nature. It disturbs my judgement and agitates my senses. It is unconquerable and extremely obstinate. Thus, for me, attempting to control my mind by the practices of *astanga-yoga* seems next to impossible. I would fail in my attempt to reach an almost unattainable goal. It is as if I were trying to control all the winds that move in the sky merely by my breath control alone.

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
asamsayam maha-baho mano durnigraham chalam
abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena cha grhyate* [35]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) *maha-baho*—O heroic Arjuna; *asamsayam*—undoubtedly; *manah*—the mind; *chalam*—is fickle; *durnigraham*—and extremely difficult to control; *tu*—but; (he) *kaunteya*—O son of Kunti; *grhyate*—it is controlled; *abhyasena*—by, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, practice (of meditation on the Supreme Lord); *cha*—and; *vairagyena*—by detachment.

35 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: O courageous Arjuna, undoubtedly the mind is fickle and difficult to control however it can be subjugated by repeated practice.

*asamyatatmana yogo dusprapa iti me matih
vasyatmana tu yatata sakyo 'vaptum upayatah* [36]

yogah—Yoga; *dusprapah*—is difficult to attain; *asamyata-atmana*—by a person of uncontrolled mind; *iti*—this is; *me*—My; *matih*—opinion; *tu*—but; *yatata*—one who strives; *vasya-atmana*—to control the mind; *upayatah*—by the appropriate method of arduous practice (*sadhana*); *avaptum sakyah*—can attain to *yoga*.

36 In My estimation, yes the *yoga* system for controlling the mind is very hard for those whose mind is unbridled. But those who diligently restrain their mind while constantly engaging in the authentic practice of *yoga* can ultimately succeed in their practice of *yoga*.

arjuna uvacha

ayatih sraddhayopeto yogach chalita-manasah

aprapya yoga-samsiddhim kam gatim krsna gachchhati [37]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *krsna*—O Krishna; *kam gatim gachchhati*—what is the fate of; *sraddhaya upetah*—a person who engages in yoga practice due to his faith in yoga scriptures; *ayatih*—yet is not diligent; *yogat chali-ta-manasah*—and whose mind deviates from yoga (due to a lack of practice and abnegation); *aprapya*—without achieving; *yoga-samsiddhim*—success in yoga?

37 Arjuna said: O Krishna, a man of mediocre ability may start yoga practice due to faith in the scriptures or in sages. But lacking skill and knowledge of the proper practices of yoga, and lacking the willpower to engage in severe austerity, he may deviate from his practices because of weaknesses. It seems an ordinary man will almost certainly be unsuccessful. What is his destination, then?

kachchin nobhaya-vibhrastas chhinnabhram iva nasyati

apratistho maha-baho vimudho brahmanah pathi [38]

etan me samsayam krsna chhettum arhasy asesatah

tvad-anyaḥ samsayasya chhetta na hy upapadyate [39]

kachchit na—is it not that; (*sah*)—such a person; *vimudhah*—bewildered; *brahmanah pathi*—on the path of attaining the Absolute; *apratisthah*—shelterless; *ubhaya-vibhrastah*—and deviated from the paths of both karma and yoga; *nasyati*—is lost; *iva*—like; *chhinna-abhram*—a scattered cloud? (he) *krsna*—O Krishna; (*tvam*)—You; *arhasi*—are able; *asesatah chhettum*—to completely slash; *etat samsayam*—this doubt; *me*—of mine. *tvat anyah*—Other than You; *chhetta*—a destroyer; *asya samsayasya*—of this doubt; *na hi upapadyate*—is not to be found.

38–39 O Krishna, if someone deviates from the proper procedures of yoga, becoming shelterless and fallen from the paths of *karma-yoga* and *astanga-yoga*, does that person vanish like a cloud shredded apart into fragments? O Krishna! Only You can dispel this doubt of mine. Please be kind and slash this growing doubt at the root.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

partha naiveha namutra vinasas tasya vidyate

na hi kalyana-krt kaschid durgatim tata gachchhati [40]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) *partha*—O son of Kunti; *na vidyate*—there is no; *tasya vinasah*—loss for him, he is not denied the happiness of the heavenly plane; *iha eva*—in this world; *na (vidyate)*—and there is no; (*ta-sya vinasah*)—loss for him, he is not denied the chance of the fortune to see the Supersoul; *amutra*—in the next life, i.e. in the supramundane plane; *hi*—since; (he) *tata*—O dear one; *kaschit*—any; *kalyana-krt*—person engaged in virtuous actions; *na gachchhati durgatim*—does not suffer an ill fate.

40 The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, the unsuccessful yogi is never ruined, not in this life or in the next. He is not deprived of the plea-

tures of heaven when he dies, nor is he denied a chance to directly realize the all-pervading Higher Self. This is so, O dear one, because any person trying to do virtuous actions is never destroyed or abandoned.

*prapya punya-krtam lokan usitva sasvatih samah
suchinam srimatam gehe yoga-bhrasto 'bhijayate [41]*

prapya—Attaining to; *lokan*—the planes; *punya-krtam*—of the pious; *yoga-bhrastah*—the person fallen from (comparatively short) yoga practice; *usitva*—residing; (*tatra*)—there; *sasvatih samah*—for many years; *abhijayate*—takes birth; *gehe*—in the home; *srimatam*—of noble, prosperous persons; *suchinam*—given to pure and honest practices.

41 After residing for many years in a heavenly existence, in worlds attained by people who perform grand fire sacrifices like the Asva-medha rite, the unsuccessful *yogi* finally attains the supreme goal.

*athava yoginam eva kule bhavati dhimatam
etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yad idrsam [42]*

athava eva—Otherwise (after relatively longer yoga practice); *bhavati*—he is born; *kule*—in a lineage; *dhimatam*—of teachers of yoga; *yoginam*—dedicated to yoga practice. *hi*—Certainly; *yad idrsam*—such; *janma*—a birth; *etat*—as this; *durlabhataram*—is more rarely attained; *loke*—in this world.

42 Further, if a person falls from an attempt at *yoga* after a considerably long period of practice they will be reborn in the family or lineage of *yoga* teachers absorbed in determined practice. Know that such a birth is very rarely attained.

*tatra tam buddhi-samyogam labhate paurva-daihkam
yatate cha tato bhuyah samsiddhau kuru-nandana [43]*

(he) *kuru-nandana*—O Arjuna, son of Kuru; *tatra*—in one of these situations; (*sah*)—he; *labhate*—attains; *tam buddhi-samyogam*—that consciousness of the Supersoul; *paurva-daihkam*—of his previous life. *tatah cha*—Thereby; *yatate*—he strives; *bhuyah*—again; *samsiddhau*—for spiritual success—to attain the *darsan* or transcendental vision of the Supersoul.

43 O son of the Kurus, in one of these births just mentioned, a regenerate *yogi* revives their longing for *yoga*. They become inspired by vague memories of practices performed in former lifetimes and, inspired by their own inner Atma that tends to adore Paramatma, the *yogi* once again endeavours for perfection.

*purvabhyasena tenaiva hriyate hy avaso 'pi sah
jijnasur api yogasya sabda-brahmativartate [44]*

hi—Since; *avasah api*—despite himself; *sah eva*—he; *hriyate*—is carried; *tena purva-abhyasena*—by his practice of the previous life. *jijnasuh api*—As a seeker; *yo-*

gasya—of yoga; ativartate—he surpasses; sabda-brahma—(the fruitive rituals of) the Vedas.

44 Although waylaid due to some obstacle, the *yogi* again becomes attracted to *yoga* by dint of the practices he did in a prior life. Although he may be a learner striving for perfection he quickly surpasses others who recently took to the path of action (*karma*) taught in the Veda, achieving a far superior fruit than they do.

*prayatnad yatamanas tu yogi samsuddha-kilbisah
aneka-janma-samsiddhas tato yati param gatim [45]*

yogi tu—The yogi; yatamanah—striving harder; prayatnat—than the previous attempt; samsuddha-kilbisah—his consciousness cleansed of all worldly attachment; aneka-janma-samsiddhah—gains the perfection of many lifetimes’ endeavours; tatah—and thereby; yati—gains; param gatim—liberation in the form of both self-realisation and Supersoul-realisation.

45 With a more concerted effort than previously, the regenerate *yogi* at last purifies his consciousness. Rejecting all mental images of things that decay and all types of worldly desires, the *yogi* at last achieves the ultimate fruit of many lifetimes of *yoga* practice and they reach the supreme goal.

*tapasvibhyo ’dhiko yogi jnanibhyo ’pi mato ’dhikah
karmibhyas chadhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhavarjuna [46]*

yogi—The yogi; adhikah—is superior; tapasvibhyah—to the performer of severe austerities (such as Chandrayan); adhikah api—and is also superior; jnanibhyah—to the jnani, the person of knowledge. yogi—The yogi; adhikah cha—is also superior; karmibhyah—to the karmi, person of action; (iti me)—this is My; matah—consideration. tasmad—Therefore; (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; (tvam)—you; bhava—be; yogi—a yogi.

46 A *yogi* who realizes Paramatma in this way is far superior to an ascetic who completes many, many vows. Superior, too, to a wise sage following the path of *jnana-yoga*, or a *karmi* working for fruit. This is My conclusion. Therefore be a *yogi* Arjuna.

*yoginam api sarvesam mad-gatenantar-atmana
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah [47]*

sarvesam yoginam api—Of all types of yogis on the paths of karma, jnan, tapasya, astanga-yoga, bhakti, etc.; yah—one who; sraddhavan—with firm faith in the holy scriptures which corroborate the superexcellence of devotion for Me; antah-atmana—and with heart; mat-gatena—fully dedicated to Me; bhajate mam—renders service to Me by engaging in the devotional practices based on hearing and chanting My glories; sah—such a devotee; yuktatamah—is foremost. (iti)—This is; me—My; matah—opinion.

47 Amongst all kinds of *yogis*, the most elevated of all is the devotee with full faith in the authoritative scriptures of devotion, a devotee who loves Me with all their heart. A *siddha* who is always hearing and singing My Names and rendering service to Me. This is My conclusion.

Srila Sanatan Goswami:

Sri Adi Shankara said, *mukta api lilaya vigraham krtva bhagavantam bhajanti*: “Even liberated beings accept new bodies as their pastime to worship the Supreme Lord.” This idea is also consistent with statements of the Mahapuranas and other scriptures. For example, the Bhagavata Purana (6.14.5) states: *muktanam api siddhanam narayana-parayanah su-durlabhah prasantatma kotisv api mahamune* “O great sage, among many millions of souls who are liberated and perfect in their understanding of liberation, just one may be a devotee of Lord Narayana, or Krishna. These devotees, who are perfectly peaceful, are extremely rare.”

If, upon attaining liberation, a person were to merge as one with Brahman, losing individual identity, who then would remain to take on a new body and engage in pastimes? Or, what liberated soul would engage in *bhakti* as a devotee of Lord Narayana if they had earlier fully merged with Vishnu, dissolving or extinguishing their entire existence? Having no individual “being” apart from being Brahman would disallow the liberated *atma* from doing this action of manifesting a body. Nor can we explain away the cited statements by saying they refer to persons who are *jivan-mukta*, who have earned liberation but still live in material bodies. Such persons already have bodies and therefore need not assume another body for pastimes.

The statement therefore means that souls absorbed in formless Brahman, souls with no features, will re-emerge and manifest bodies.

The Bhagavata verse cited above states that some liberated souls worship Narayana. The Karttika-mahatmya section of the Padma Purana similarly tells of an advanced sage in a human body who merged into the Supreme Lord then later obtained a form similar in appearance to that of Lord Narayana. Similarly, in a discourse about fasting on Nrisimha-caturdasi, the Brihan-nrisimha Purana relates how a fallen brahmana and a prostitute merged into the Supreme and then again took birth as Pahlada Maharaja and his wife. Many histories like these serve as evidence that the individual *jiva* soul continues its individual existence after attaining liberation.

– Brihad-Bhagavatamritam 2.2.186

Chapter Seven

Relative and Absolute Knowledge

Jnana-vijnana-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*mayy asakta-manah partha yogam yunjan mad-asrayah
asamsayam samagram mam yatha jnasyasi tach chhrnu [1]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) partha—O Arjuna; srnu tat—hear; yatha—how; asakta-manah—with mind attached; mayi—to Me, the Supreme Lord; yunjan yogam—linking your consciousness with Me; mat-asrayah—taking refuge in Me alone (without any attempts of karma, etc.); asamsayam—without doubt; jnasyasi—you will be able to know; mam—Me; samagram—in full—along with My abode, My opulences, and My associates.

1 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: Hear how you can know Me, free from any doubt, by the practice of *yoga* performed in full consciousness of Me, with your mind attached to Me.

*jnanam te 'ham sa-vijnanam idam vaksyamy asesatah
yaj jnatva neha bhuyo 'nyaj jnatavyam avasisyate [2]*

aham—I; vaksyami—shall describe; asesatah—completely; te—to you; idam jnanam—knowledge of My absolute power; sa-vijnanam—with knowledge of My sweetness; jnatva—knowing; yat—which; bhuyah—again; anyat—any other; (tava) jnatavyam—thing to be known by you; na avasisyate—will not remain; iha—on this supreme path.

2 Listen, as I declare this knowledge of My majestic splendour and opulences. Knowing this you will understand there is nothing further to be searched for, nothing more substantial to be known.

*manusyanam sahasresu kaschid yatati siddhaye
yatatam api siddhanam kaschin mam vetti tattvatah [3]*

manusyanam sahasresu—Of thousands of men; kaschit—a rare one; yatati—endeavours; siddhaye—for self-realisation and Supersoul-realisation; yatatam siddhanam api—and of thousands who have attained such realisation; kaschit—a rare one; tattvatah—truly; vetti—knows; mam—Me, Syamasundar.

3 Out of countless souls, only some have reached the human form of existence. Out of many thousands of human beings only a few seek to know the soul and Paramatma. Out of many thousands of liberated *siddha* souls who directly realize their own self and Paramatma, only a few know Me, Shyam-Sundar Krishna.

bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva cha

ahankara itiham me bhinna prakrtir astadha [4]

bhumih—Earth; apah—water; analah—fire; vayuh—air; kham—ether; manah—mind; buddhih—intelligence; ahankarah eva cha—and ego; iti—thus; iham—this; prakrtih—nature, maya-sakti, illusory potency; me—of Mine; bhinna—is divided; asta-dha—eightfold.

4 My supernatural power Prakriti produces the living world. Prakriti manifests in eight elemental forms: earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intelligence and the illusion of reality called the ego. This is My inferior power called Maha-Maya, or Nature. Nature evolves and forms different kinds of material bodies. Diverse varieties of mortal bodies with many failings and imperfections.

apareyam itas tv anyam prakrtim viddhi me param

jiva-bhutam maha-baho yayedam dharyate jagat [5]

iyam—this external nature, external potency; apara—is inferior; tu—but; param—superior; itah—to this; viddhi—you should know; anyam—another; prakrtim—nature, the marginal potency; me—of Mine; jiva-bhutam—in the form of the individual souls; yaya—the conscious potency by which; idam jagat—this world; dharyate—is adopted for enjoyment through fruitive actions.

5 Distinct from Maya there is another energy belonging to Me. A divine reality comprising the energy of all *jiva* souls. This superior power Jiva-Prakriti is the life-force sustaining the universe.

etat yonini bhutani sarvani upadharaya

aham krtsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayas tatha [6]

upadharaya—Understand; iti—that; sarvani bhutani—all living species, moving and stationary; etat yonini—are manifest from these two types of prakrti, or natures, as ksetra and ksetrajna (vide 13.12). aham prabhavah—I am the source of manifestation; tatha pralayah—and dissolution; krtsnasya—of the entire; jagatah—universe.

6 All the sentient and insentient material worlds, including the bodies that move and the stationary bodies, all of that embodies My two powers Prakriti and Jiva-Prakriti. The *kshetra* and the *kshetra-jna*. Mother Nature constantly transforms, My power Nature produces transformations and makes bodies that grow and enact actions such as drinking and breathing — and a *jiva* becomes an embodied self when a *jiva* soul enters a body and begins knowing the experiences of one of the bodies generated by Nature. I alone am the ultimate cause of the whole of Nature's material creation, and the cause of its dissolution also.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

Sage Veda-Vyasa has explained Goddess ‘Chandika’ is the creator of the world in the Markandeya Purana. Certain Vaishnavas are of the view that Chandika is the inferior Potency (अपरा शक्ति) of the Lord whereas Srimati Radhika is the Transcendental Potency (पराशक्ति). But, the establishment of the unification of the Divine Potency can be seen in the holy book ‘Narada Pancharatra’ which is recognized by all the Vaishnava schools. Goddess Chandika says in adoration of the Supreme Lord:

“Either in the name of Lakshmi, Durga or in any other name, the single Divine Potency of the Lord itself is ascertained to be His Power.”

- Sri Tattva-Sutra commentary 4

mattah parataram nanyat kinchid asti dhananjaya

mayi sarvam idam protam sutre mani-gana iva [7]

(he) dhananjaya—O Dhananjaya, conqueror of riches; na anyat kinchit—nothing else; asti—is; parataram—superior; mattah—to Me. idam sarvam—This whole world; protam—is threaded; mayi—in Me; iva—like; mani-ganah—gems; sutre—strung on a thread.

7 O Arjuna, all the worlds in the universe exist within Me. They are interwoven by Me, as with pearls strung together on the thread of a necklace.

raso 'ham apsu kaunteya prabhasmi sasi-suryayoh

pranavah sarva-vedesu sabdah khe paurusam nrsu [8]

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; aham asmi—I am present; rasah—by My power as the essential taste; apsu—of water. (aham asmi)—I am present; prabha—by My power of radiance; sasi-suryayoh—in the moon and sun. (aham asmi)—I am present; sarva-vedesu—in all the Vedas; pranavah—as the origin of the Vedas, Omkar. (aham asmi)—I am present; sabdah—as the element of sound; khe—in the ether. (aham asmi)—I am present; paurusam—as masculinity; nrsu—in men.

8 O son of Kunti, as the primordial experience of taste, I exist as the flavour of water. As the power of illumination I am found in the sun and moon. I am present in the Veda as the syllable Aum (Om), the original *mantra*. I am experienced as sound in the sky — the invisible medium communicating holy revelation. And I am present in men as maleness, the seed-giving potency fertilizing nature.

punyo gandhah prthivyan cha tejas chasmi vibhavasau

jivanam sarva-bhutesu tapas chasmi tapasvisu [9]

bijam mam sarva-bhutanam viddhi partha sanatanam

buddhir buddhimatam asmi tejas tejasvinam aham [10]

(*aham*)—I; *asmi*—am present; *punyah gandhah*—as fragrance; *prthivyam cha*—in the earth; *tejah vibhavasau cha*—as the radiance and heat in fire; *asmi*—(I) am present; *jivanam*—as the life-span; *sarva-bhutesu*—of all beings; *cha*—and; *tapah*—the power to endure duality, etc.; *tapasvisu*—in the performers of austerities. (he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *viddhi*—know; *mam*—Me; *sanatanam bijam*—as the eternal cause, known as *pradhan*; *sarva-bhutanam*—of all life-forms. *aham asmi*—I am present; *buddhih*—as the intelligence; *buddhi-matam*—of the intelligent; *tejah*—and as the prowess; *tejasvinam*—of the bold.

9–10 I dwell in the pure fragrance of the earth and the radiance of fire. In animals I am the *prana*, the life-force in them. In ascetics, I am the enduring strength that empowers them to surpass dualities such as cold and heat. And of the valiant I am the virtue prowess itself. I am the eternal, original cause of all bodies called *pradhana*, the original seed of all natural transformations. Know Me as the original Cause that produces all life. Of the intelligent, of those who see wonderful insights, I am present within them as their intelligence personified.

balam balavatam chaham kama-raga-vivarjitam
dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamo 'smi bharatarsabha [11]
ye chaiva sattvika bhava rajasas tamasas cha ye
matta eveti tan viddhi na tv aham tesu te mayi [12]

(he) *bharatarsabha*—O best of the Bharatas; *aham asmi*—I am present; *bala-vatam*—for the strong; *balam*—the strength of *sattvika* qualities, goodness; *kama-raga-vivarjitam*—without selfishness and attachment; *cha*—and; (aham asmi)—I am present; *bhutesu*—in the living beings; *kamah*—as the desire to procreate; *dharmaviruddhah*—without crossing the universal principles of religion. *ye ye bhavah eva*—Whatever exists; *sattvikah*—of the nature of goodness; *rajasah cha*—and of the nature of passion; *tamasah cha*—and of the nature of ignorance; *viddhi*—know; *tan (sarvam)*—all these; *iti*—as; *mattah eva*—manifest from Me alone. *aham na (varte)*—I do not reside; *tesu*—within them; *tu*—but; *te (vartante)* *mayi*—they are in Me.

11–12 O Arjuna, I am present as that type of strength that is devoid of selfish intentions and attachments. Amongst all species of life, I am present in them as the fertile act of procreation. You should know that everything in creation is a transformation produced by the three modes of nature, everything is born of Me alone, but nevertheless I am not seen in any of that. Subordinate to Me, all of Maya's creations are exhibitions of My power.

tribhir gunamayair bhavair ebhiih sarvam idam jagat
mohitam nabhijanati mam ebhyah param avyayam [13]

idam—This; *sarvam*—whole; *jagat*—living world; *mohitam*—is deluded; *ebhiih bhavaih tribhih gunamayaih*—by this manifestation of the three modes of material nature. (*atah*)—Therefore; *na abhijanati*—no one knows; *mam*—Me, Krishna; *ebhyah param*—who am transcendental to these modes; *avyayam*—and immutable.

13 The entire world of mortal living beings is totally deluded. This ephemeral creation manifested by the three modes of nature displaying the qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance. Understand Arjuna, that no-one in the world knows Me absolutely, since I exist beyond the whole of Maya's creation. I am immutable and eternal and I transcend all material states of transformation.

daivi hy esa gunamayī mama maya duratyaya

mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te [14]

esa—This; daivi—supramundane (alluring); maya—external potency; mama—of Mine; guna—mayi—composed of the three modes of material nature; hi—certainly; duratyaya—is difficult to cross. (tathapi)—However; ye—those who; prapadyante—take shelter; mam eva—in Me alone; te—they; taranti—are able to cross; etam—this almost insurmountable; mayam—maya, illusion.

14 The power of the three *gunas* is overwhelming and practically insurmountable, this supernatural 'tri-modal' energy embodied in full in Goddess Maya the Mother of Nature. But souls who surrender to Me can attain liberation, they can escape from all of the enchanting fantasies ignorant souls are clinging to, in the worlds created by My Maya.

Markandeya Purana (91.8):

Salutations to you, O Devi Maya, Goddess Narayani, who abides as intelligence within the heart of all beings, giving each living being their own views, their rewards, and final liberation.

na mam duskr̥tino mudhah prapadyante naradhamah

mayayapahr̥ta-jnana asuram-bhavam-asritah [15]

duskr̥tinah—These four kinds of wrongdoers or unfortunate persons; na prapadyante—do not surrender; mam—to Me; mudhah—(1) the karmis, or fruitive workers; nara-adhamah—(2) fallen persons, or those who take the path of devotion but later reject it, considering it inadequate or worthless; apahr̥ta-jnanah—(3) those whose knowledge is covered; mayaya—by maya, illusion; asuram-bhavam-asritah—and (4) the demoniac.

15 Four types of evildoers never surrender to Me: the fruit seeking workers who want to remain as animals, shallow and degraded people who study the highest path but later reject it, souls who think the *avatar* forms of the Lord are mere living beings like themselves, and those who are demons by nature. The demons like to 'dismember' the form of God with 'arrows' of skepticism and argument, behaving like brutes such as Jarasandha and the others who always attack Me.

chatur-vidha bhajante mam janah sukrino 'rjuna

arto jijnasur arthartha jnani cha bhatarasbha [16]

(he) bhatarasbha—O great scion of Bharat; (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; artah—one suffering from disease or other afflictions; jijnasuh—one seeking scriptural knowledge or knowledge of the soul; artha-artha—one desiring earthly or heavenly happiness; cha and; jnani—the purified knower of the soul; (iti) chatuh-vidhah janah—these four kinds of persons; sukrinah (santah)—being fortunate—influenced by devotion for Me; bhajante mam—worship Me (though their motives may be mixed with action or knowledge).

16 O Arjuna, four types of people worship Me: those who are afflicted by suffering, the seekers of worldly and other-worldly enjoyment, the seekers of knowledge, and the sage who is a pure-hearted seer of the soul. After attaining sufficient merit all of these souls become devotees engaged in My service.

Tridandi Swami B.H. Bon:

Four classes of devotees resort to devotion but the Jnana-bhaktas, having more steadfast attachment to the conscious self, realize the Lord as the sumum bonum of all sentient beings. These jivas attain true knowledge of their pure self only after many births and spiritual practices. With this awakening of the qualitative aspect of their real nature, they understand themselves to be distinct from earthly entities. But at this stage they are prone to identify themselves to the extreme with the Neuter-God, Brahman. This is due to the qualitative affinities between themselves and Brahman. This causes them to disregard the Lord's Avatar Forms, the transcendental Manifestations of the Spiritual Form of the Supreme Lord, the He-God. But when they are established for a while upon the plane of transcendental knowledge they realize divine diversity, distinct from gross or subtle mundane variegatedness. Thus, they become attached to the Lord and find shelter in Him. They think, "These phenomena are not disassociated from the Lord, rather they result from the Chit Potency of Vasudeva, the He-God." They directly see that the Universe has multifarious contact with all-pervading Vasudeva. A Jnani-bhakta sees Vasudeva in all things and everything in all-pervading Vasudeva. Such a devotee is rare.

tesam jnani nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir visisyate

priyo hi jnanino 'ty-artham aham sa cha mama priyah [17]

tesam—Among them; jnani—the self-realised person; eka-bhaktih—My pure devotee; nitya-yuktah—whose consciousness is completely absorbed in Me; visisyate—is the best. hi—For; aham—I, Syamasundar; ati-artham—am very; priyah—dear; jnaninah—to that enlightened soul; sah cha priyah—and he, too, is dear; mama—to Me.

17 Amongst these four types of devotees the *jnani* is the best. My form of Shyam-Sundar Krishna is very dear to the exalted sage and they are very dear to Me too. I am omniscient, I am eternal bliss,

and when I come into the world openly revealing My identity the wise *jnani* recognizes Me as the Supreme Person glorified in hymns of the Veda. I live amongst humankind, revealing Myself as the quintessence of human beauty, ever youthful, forever adolescent, self-fulgent like the sun, with a luminous complexion glowing beyond all human comprehension.

*udarah sarva evaite jnani tv atmaiva me matam
asthitah sa hi yuktatma mam evanuttamam gatim [18]*

eva—Certainly; *sarva*—all; *ete*—these persons are; *udarah*—noble, unselfish souls dear to Me; *tu*—but; *jnani*—the spiritually self-realised soul; *atma eva*—is as dear to Me as My own self. (*iti*)—This is; *me*—My; *matam*—opinion; *hi*—since; *yukta-atma eva* (*san*)—having fully dedicated his heart unto Me; *sah*—that *jnani*; *eva asthitah*—has fully determined; *mam*—Me, Syamasundar; *anuttamam*—as the supreme; *gatim*—goal.

18 All the godly souls are dear to Me. But because of their insights the pure-hearted *jnani* is someone inseparable from Me. He is, therefore, very dear to Me, this is My opinion. The *jnani* offers Me their own heart, understanding I am the supreme goal of life.

*bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate
vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatma sudurlabhah [19]*

ante—After; *bahunam*—many; *janmanam*—births; *jnanavan*—the enlightened person (by the fortune of *sadhu-sanga*, devotional association); *iti*—thus realising; *sarvam*—everything, the entire world of moving and stationary beings; *vasudevah*—is of the nature of Vasudev, Sri Krishna; *prapadyate*—he surrenders; *mam*—unto Me. *sah*—Such; *mahatma*—a great soul; *su-durlabhah*—is very rare.

19 After many, many births, a wise *jnani* at last has the vision to know that Vasudeva, Vishnu, pervades everything. The *jnani* sees that everything is part of Vasudeva, and they surrender their entire existence unto Me, the Supreme Person. They are blessed to see Me directly — but such great souls are extremely rare.

*kamais tais tair hrta-jnanah prapadyante 'nya-devatah
tam tam niyamam asthaya prakrtya niyatah svaya [20]*

hrta-jnanah—Persons whose intelligence is misled; *taih taih kamaih*—by particular worldly desires based on likes and dislikes; *niyatah* (*santah*)—being governed; *svaya prakrtya*—by their own natures; *prapadyante*—worship; *anya-devatah*—other godly personalities—the gods—the sun-god, etc.; *asthaya*—after adopting; *tam tam*—the corresponding; *niyamam*—rituals of fasting, etc.

20 Souls in the state of ignorance feel charmed by the many, many lusty desires that shroud their intelligence, weaving a dark veil. Willingly, they surrender to the mystifying veiled beauty of Goddess

Maya, and to gods they envision in nature. Souls in ignorance honour the powers of nature, according to their own nature, enslaved by ignorance and instincts. They follow rules, they perform penances, they practice fasting and complete rituals.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The world ever moves on using our bodies and minds as with everything else as its passive tools. In this matter we have no other option but to obey Nature. We are being driven forward and backward by the iron laws of Nature.

*yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktah sraddhayarchitum ichchhati
tasya tasyachalam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham [21]*

yam yam—According to whichever; *tanum*—god, representing a form of Me; *yah yah*—a particular; *bhaktah*—devotee; *ichchhati*—desires; *architum sraddhaya*—to worship with faith; *aham*—I, as the Supersoul dwelling within his heart; *eva*—certainly; *vidadhami*—ordain; *achalam*—firm; *sraddham*—faith; *tasya tasya*—in that particular devotee; *tam*—for that form.

21 Whatever god a devotee chooses to worship faithfully, I make the devotee's faith strong for that deity of their choice. Every god represents Me (partially).

*sa taya sraddhaya yuktas tasyaradhanam ihate
labhate cha tatah kaman mayaiva vihitam hi tan [22]*

yuktah (san)—Being linked; *taya sraddhaya*—with that firm faith; *sah*—that devotee; *ihate*—performs; *aradhanam*—worship; *tasyah*—of that god's deity; *cha*—and; *hi*—actually; *vihitam*—arranged; *maya eva*—by Me alone, as the Supersoul of the god; *labhate*—(the devotee) attains; *tan kaman*—his desired results; *tatah*—from that deity.

22 A devotee of a deity feels a specific type of faith and goes on worshipping their god until they gain their hoped for rewards. This is enacted by My sanction alone, since I am Paramatma the Higher Self situated within the heart of the devotee, and within their revered deity too.

*antavat tu phalam tesam tad bhavaty alpa-medhasam
devan deva-yajo yanti mad-bhakta yanti mam api [23]*

tu—But; *tat phalam*—that fruit; *tesam alpa-medhasam*—of those unwise worshippers of minor gods; *bhavati*—is; *antavat*—temporary. *deva-yajah*—The worshippers of the gods; *yanti*—reach; *devan*—the respective gods; *mat-bhaktah api*—and My devotees; *yanti*—reach; *mam*—Me.

23 But the fruit obtained by worshippers of worldly gods is transient. They reach the worlds of their dreams, the abodes of their tutelary gods, but My devotees obtain Me.

*avyaktam vyaktim apannam manyante mam abuddhayah
param bhavam ajananto mamaavyayam anuttamam [24]*

ajanantah—Not knowing; mama—My; avyayam—eternal; anuttamam—superexcellent; param—transcendental; bhavam—nature—form, birth, qualities, activities, and Pastimes, etc.; abuddhayah—unwise persons; manyante—think; mam—of Me; avyaktam—as the impersonal or formless Brahma; apannam—which has accepted; vyaktim—birth in Vasudev’s cell as an ordinary human being.

24 My nature, form, qualities and pastimes are all divine but unintelligent people, unable to know this reality, think of Me as a man.

*naham prakasah sarvasya yoga-maya-samavrtah
mudho 'yam nabhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam [25]*

aham—I; na (bhavami)—am not; prakasah—manifest; sarvasya—to all; yoga-maya-samavrtah—being concealed by My yogamaya potency; (atah)—therefore; ayam—these; mudhah lokah—foolish persons; na abhijanati—cannot know; mam—Me, Syamasundar, the son of Vasudev; ajam—birthless; avyayam—and immutable.

25 By My own sweet will, remaining concealed by My illusory power Maha-Maya, I am not knowable by anyone and everyone. No foolish people can ever really know Me as I really am, as Vasudeva.

*vedaham samatitani vartamanani charjuna
bhavisyani cha bhutani mam tu veda na kaschana [26]*

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; aham—I; veda—know; samatitani—all past; vartamanani—present; bhavisyani cha—and future; bhutani—mobile and immobile beings; tu—but; kaschana—anyone (either in this world or beyond it); na cha veda—cannot know; mam—Me (due to their knowledge being covered by maya and yogamaya, My external illusory potency and the internal potency of My will).

26 O Arjuna, I alone know everything and everyone existing in the past, present and future. No-one knows Me in full, as I am.

*ichchha-dvesa-samutthena dvandva-mohena bharata
sarva-bhutani sammoham sarge yanti parantapa [27]*

(he) bharata (he) parantapa—O Arjuna, chastiser of the enemy; sarge—at the manifestation of the universe; sarva-bhutani—all beings; yanti—become; sammoham—deluded; dvandva-mohena—by the illusion of duality; ichchha-dvesa-samutthena—arising from likes and dislikes.

27 O Arjuna, chastiser of criminals, when a soul misuses their freedom, consciously engaging in unhappy activities in a state of ignorance, forgetting their genuine self and the omnipresent Lord, the soul enters into a world of duality and unhappiness. The self-forgetful soul becomes conditioned by opposites like pleasure and pain, love and hatred. Frightened, because chaos and almost endless miseries

keep tormenting them, confused, because of the bewildering greatness of the universal creation, the diverse manifestations of Maya, the soul never remembers their own innate, divine qualities.

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur:

When do the jiva-souls become bewildered by Maya? The jivas all become bewildered at the beginning of the creation of this universe. How? Desire awakens for objects that seem pleasing to the senses, as well as hatred for anything that hinders the enjoyment of pleasures. Old desires are awakened by ancient karmas, giving rise to the illusion of duality. Fresh concerns arise, concerns about hot and cold, about respect and disrespect, about happiness and distress, and about woman and man. A person thinks, “I feel happy because I am being respected,” or “I am sad, since I am disrespected,” or “He is my husband.” This kind of thinking based on dualities gives rise to bewilderment (sammohan), leading to extreme material attachment.

*yesam tv anta-gatam papam jananam punya-karmanam
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta bhajante mam drdha-vratah [28]*

tu—But; jananam—persons; punya-karmanam—who are performers of virtuous deeds; yesam—whose; papam—sins; anta-gatam—have been eradicated (by the fortune of association with My pure devotee); te—all such persons; dvandva-moha-nirmuktah—free from the illusion of duality; drdha-vratah—and fixed in consciousness of Me; bhajante—worship, serve; mam—Me.

28 But souls who perform virtuous deeds, who have had the opportunity to associate with a pure devotee of Mine, gradually become purified of all sins. Free from all of their delusions born of duality, firmly established in continuous engagement in My service, they enter the life of pure devotion. The joyful state of transcendental existence.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

Knowing Krishna and His Name to be identical truth
one will embrace the Holy Name whole-heartedly;
and thus, one who is initiated into chanting the Holy Name
should be respected as a member of the devotee family.

And one who serves Krishna by constant worship of the Name
cherished in their heart, forever residing at Sri Vrndavan Dham,
know them to be an intermediate devotee.

Make obeisance at their feet,

keeping them as a faithful friend.
 And one who, by internal service to the Name,
 knows their own divine identity, and who sees Krishna
 only Krishna everywhere, in every form, and in every entity,
 seeing nothing separate from Krishna in the entire creation
 — this one who sees all souls equally,
 seeing how everyone is serving Krishna's will
 — know this saint is a true devotee, and venerable.
 A most honoured, a most cherished devotee.
 Serve this devotee in your thoughts, words, and deeds.
 Serve this devotee, and attain your heart's fulfilment.
 With reverence, inquiry, service, serve them in all respects,
 and entreat them, that by their grace, by the unlimited mercy
 of such a great soul, we can reach Lord Krishna's feet.

*jara-marana-moksaya mam asritya yatanti ye
 te brahma tad viduh krtsnam adhyatmam karma chakhilam [29]*
*ye—Those who; yatanti—strive; jara-marana-moksaya—for freedom from disease
 and death; asritya—taking shelter, placing their trust and devotion; mam—in
 Me; te—they; viduh—know; tat brahma—that Brahma; adhyatmam—the individu-
 al soul; krtsnam—in full; cha—and; akhilam—all; karma—the action by which the
 souls are bound to worldly existence.*

29 Striving for release from *samsara*, release from the misery of repeated birth and death, the enlightened *yogis* take shelter of Me and engage in My devotional service. They directly realize divine knowledge of Brahman and of their own individual self (*adhy-atma*). Those sincere seekers of the truth gain freedom from the effects of all their *karma*, the ultimate cause that keeps imprisoned souls locked in endless chains of cause and effect.

*sadhibhutadhidaivam mam sadhiyajnan cha ye viduh
 prayana-kale 'pi cha mam te vidur yukta-chetasah [30]*
*cha—And; ye—those who; viduh—know; mam—Me; sa-adhibhuta-adhidaivam—in
 relation to the worldly plane and to the celestial plane; sa-adhiyajnam cha—and
 in relation to sacrifice; te—those persons; yukta-chetasah—of consciousness ab-
 sorbed in Me; viduh—know; mam—Me; prayana-kale api—even at the time of
 death.*

30 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: The self-realized *siddhas* stay conscious of Me continuously, knowing I am the Supreme Lord governing the phenomenal universe (*adhi-bhuta*). They know I am the universal governance (*adhi-daiva*), the Lord governing all the gods, the deities who personify different types of faith and intelligence. Arjuna I am the God of the gods. I am present in the hearts of all the gods and those who know I am the Lord, the Supreme Person adored through all forms of sacrifice (*adhi-yajnah*), can realize Me directly, even at the time of death.

Katha Upanishad 2.2.13:

Amongst all of the eternal, conscious beings
One is an all-pervading eternal being.
Amongst all of the eternal, conscious beings
One is an all-pervading all-aware being.
That infinite Supreme Being maintains all the others
and fulfils all their desires according to their merits.
Only saintly souls who see the Supreme Being
within and outside themselves attain perfect peace.

Chapter Eight

Devotion influenced by Mystic Yoga

Yoga-misra-bhakti-yoga

arjuna uvacha

*kim tad-brahma kim adhyatmam kim karma purusottama
adhibhutan cha kim proktam adhidaivam kim uchyate [1]*

*adhiyajnah katham ko 'tra dehe 'smin madhusudana
prayana-kale cha katham jneyo 'si niyatatmabhih [2]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) purusottama—O Purusottam, Supreme Person; kim—what is; tat—that; brahma—Brahma? adhyatmam kim—What is adhyatma, the soul? karma kim—What is karma, action? cha—And; kim proktam—what is; adhibhutam—adhibhuta, the worldly plane? kim (cha) uchyate—and what is; adhidaivam—adhidaiva, the celestial plane? (he) madhusudana—O Madhusudan; atra dehe—within the body; kah adhiyajnah—who or what is Adhiyajna, the agent of sacrifice? katham—How; (sthitah)—is He present; asmin (dehe)—in this body? katham cha—And how; (tvam) jneyah asi—are You to be known; prayana-kale—at the time of death; niyata-atmabhih—by persons of controlled mind?

1–2 Arjuna asked: O Purushottama, O Supreme Self, what is Brahman (*brahma*) and the self (*adhy-atma*)? What is *karma* and phenomenal existence (*adhi-bhuta*)? What is the universal governance, the guiding intelligence overseeing the living beings (*adhi-daiva*)? Who is the Lord of sacrifice (*adhi-yajnah*) and how is He situated within this physical body, existing within everyone as the Higher Self? Then please tell me how do saints know You at the time of death, when their bodies are convulsed by the pangs of death?

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*aksaram paramam brahma svabhavo 'dhyatmam uchyate
bhuta-bhavodbhava-karo visargah karma-samjnitah [3]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: brahma—Brahma; uchyate—means; aksaram paramam—the imperishable Absolute. adhyatmam—The individual soul; (uchyate)—refers to; svabhava—the pure spiritual nature. karma—Action; samjnitah—means; visargah—the creative force (or offerings to a god); bhuta-bhava-udbhava-karah—which manifests the bodies of the human and other species of life through the agency of gross and subtle material elements.

3 The Supreme Lord said: Spirit is the underlying foundation of the whole of existence. That Spiritual Being known as Brahman exists everywhere, it is the origin and final destination of all of existence. Brahman is the indestructible Reality transcending phenomenal existence, the invisible Unity pervading all things in existence. *Adhy-at-*

ma, the spiritual self of a *jiva* soul, is the transcendental identity of each being. The word *karma* indicates acts of sacrifice done as a means of attaining an end. Thus, the worship of a god or other acts of sacrifice become a means furthering the desires of a living being — a means of achieving an aim, such as attaining a human body in the next life, or a god's body.

adhibhutam ksaro bhavah purusas chadhidaivatam

adhiyajno 'ham evatra dehe deha-bhrtam vara [4]

(he) *deha-bhrtam vara*—O best of embodied beings, Arjuna; *adhibhutam*—worldly existence; *ksarah*—is the perishable; *bhavah*—existence. *adhidaivatam*—Celestial existence; *purusah*—is the collective universal form, in which are contained the gods, headed by the solar gods; *cha*—and; *aham eva*—I, indeed; *atra dehe*—within this body; *adhiyajnah*—am the Lord of sacrifice in the form of the Super-soul, the sanctioner and rewarder of the (sacrificial etc.) actions of the living beings.

4 O great soul, Arjuna, perishable objects such as the material body are termed phenomenal things (*adhi-bhuta*). The 'universal governance' is the Universal Mind, the all-pervasive consciousness encompassing and governing all the gods (*adhi-daiva*). And I alone am the Lord of sacrifice (*adhi-yajnah*), Paramatma, present within the bodies of all beings. I am the Universal Mind, the Self, the conscience Who proposes the acts of sacrifice a *jiva* soul does, and their gifting of charity, and penances. I am also He Who rewards all their efforts.

anta-kale cha mam eva smaran muktoa kalevaram

yah prayati sa mad-bhavam yati nasy atra samsayah [5]

anta-kale cha—At the time of death; *yah*—one who; *smaran*—thinks; *mam eva*—only of Me; *muktoa*—when leaving; *kalevaram*—the body; *prayati*—departing this world; *sah*—he; *yati*—attains to; *mat-bhavam*—My nature. *na asti*—There is no; *samsayah*—doubt; *atra*—in this respect.

5 Anyone who thinks of Me surely attains Me. Even by thinking of Me momentarily at the time of death when they are departing from the mortal world. Of this there can be no doubt.

yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram

tam tam evaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah [6]

tasmat sarvesu kalesu mam anusmara yudhya cha

mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mam evaisyasy asamsayah [7]

(he) *kaunteya*—O son of Kunti; (yah)—one who; *tyajati*—leaves; *kalevaram*—the body; *smaran*—remembering; *yam yam va api*—whatever; *bhavam*—object; *ante*—at the time of death; *eti*—he attains; *tam tam eva*—to that very object; *tat-bhava-bhavitah*—having absorbed his mind in thought of it; *sada*—constantly. *tasmat*—Therefore; *anusmara*—remember; *mam*—Me; *sarvesu kalesu*—at all times; *cha*—and; *yudhya*—fight, execute your natural duty. *arpita-manah-buddhih*—Of-

fering mind and intelligence; mayi—unto Me; eva—certainly; esyasi—you will reach; mam—Me. asamsayah—There is no doubt; (atra)—in this.

6–7 Whatever object a person meditates on at the time of death is attained when they leave their dead body, due to their absorption in the object. Therefore, remember Me at all times and perform your natural duty by engaging in the battle. Dedicate your mind and intelligence to Me and you will attain My shelter by fulfilling your duty. Of this there is no doubt.

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj:

If at the time of dying I remember a dog, then I shall go into the womb of a dog. Such danger is there.

*abhyasa-yoga-yuktena chetasa nanya-gamina
paramam purusam divyam yati parthanuchintayan [8]*
(he) partha—O son of Prtha; anuchintayan—thinking at every moment; divyam—of the effulgent; paramam purusam—Supreme Person; na anya-gamina chetasa—by an undeviating mind; abhyasa-yoga-yuktena—engaged in yoga practice; (yogi)—the yogi; yati—reaches; (tam eva)—that Supreme Person.

8 O Partha, with an undeviating mind intensely engaged in meditation, constantly thinking of the effulgent Supreme Person, the true yogi certainly reaches the Supreme Lord.

Rig Veda Samhita, mantra 10.7.90.16:

*vedaham etam purusham mahantam adityavarnam tamas astu pare sarvani
rupani vicitrya dheerah namani kritvabhivadan yadaste*

I know Him, the mighty Person. The Supreme Soul of the universe, the Higher Self existing within everyone. The inner Guide, the conscience within everyone. The One giving each thing its substance and shape, and name. The One maintaining all this. Radiant as the sun, He exists beyond darkness.

*kavim puranam anusasitaram
anor aniyamsam anusmared yah
sarvasya dhataram achintya-rupam
aditya-varnam tamasah parastat [9]
prayana-kale manasachalena
bhaktya yukto yoga-balena chaiva
bhruvor madhye pranam avesya samyak
sa tam param purusam upaiti divyam [10]*

yah—One who; *prayana-kale*—at the time of death; *achalena manasa*—with an unflickering mind; *yoga-balena*—by strength of yoga practice; *bhaktia yukta*—being constantly engaged in *smaranam*, devotional remembrance; *sanyak aoesya cha*—and fully concentrating; *pranam*—the life-force; *bhruvoh madhye*—between the eyebrows; *anusmaret*—meditates on; (*param purusam*)—the Supreme Person; *kavim*—the all-knowing; *puranam*—beginningless; *anusasitaram*—merciful teacher of devotion unto Himself; *anoh aniyamsam*—who is more subtle than the atom; *sarvasya dhataram*—(yet) the support of all existence; *achintya-rupam*—and of *aprakṛta* or *supramundane* form—medium-sized—of human feature; *aditya-varnam*—possessing a radiant form, which, like the sun, illuminates both Himself and others; *tamasah parastat*—and is transcendental to material nature; *eva*—certainly; *sah*—that person; *upaiti*—reaches; *tam*—that; *divyam*—effulgent; *param*—Supreme; *purusam*—Person.

9–10 He, the Supreme Person, is all-knowing, beginningless. He is the teacher Who teaches kindness, love and devotion. Although He is more subtle than an atom He is also enormous, since He is the abode the universe exists within. His form is supernatural, indeterminate. Like the sun, His nature is illuminating, all-illuminating. He completely transcends illusion and any soul who remembers the Supreme Person at the time of death, anyone who focuses their mind upon Him, fixing their breath of life between their eyes at the *ajna-chakra*, the seat of intuition — they reach the light of Brahman, the Supreme Person.

*yad aksaram veda-vido vadanti visanti yad yatayo vita-ragah yad ichchhanto
brahmacharyam charanti tat te padam sangraheṇa pravaksye* [11]

sangraheṇa—Along with the method of attaining it; (*aham*)—I; *pravaksye*—shall describe; *te*—to you; *tat padam*—that objective; *yat*—which; *veda-vidah*—the learned knowers of the Vedas; *vadanti*—call; *aksaram*—the imperishable, *Omkar*, denoting Brahman; *yat*—which; *vita-ragah*—the desireless; *yatayah*—ascetics; *visanti*—enter; *ichchhantah*—and aspiring to reach; *yat*—which; (*brahmacharinah*)—the *brahmacharis*, celibate seekers of the Absolute; *charanti*—maintain; *brahmacharyam*—the vow of celibacy.

11 Along with this method of approaching the Supreme Being, listen as I describe that attainable Absolute itself. That reality is signified by the syllable Aum. According to the learned professors of the lore of the Veda, the sound Aum is the form of the Absolute Being. Making an offering of one's own conscious self as if it were a liquid drop of ghee, a drop of fuel fueling the sacred Fire, offering their soul into the Fire of the omniscient Word of God, the syllable Aum, the sages approach That, accepting a vow of celibacy, with a desire to reach That.

*sarva-dvarani samyamya mano hr̥di nirudhya cha
murdhny adhayatmanah pranam asthito yoga-dharanam* [12]
*om ity ekaksaram brahma vyaharan mam anusmaran
yah prayati tyajan deham sa yati paramam gatim* [13]

samyanya—Controlling; *sarva-dvarani*—all the gateways of the senses—stopping them from accepting the objects of the senses; *nirudhya*—steading; *manah*—the mind; *hrdi*—within the heart; *adhaya cha*—and establishing; *pranam*—the vital life-air; *murdhni*—between the eyebrows; *asthitah*—remaining; *yoga-dharanam*—in samadhi through the practice of dharana, yogic concentration; *atmanah*—on the spiritual self; *vyaharan*—and uttering; *om iti*—thus, Om; *eka-aksaram*—the monosyllable; *brahma*—sound vibration of Brahma; *anusmaran mam*—in full remembrance of Me; *sah yah*—he who; *deham tyajan*—leaving the body; *prayati*—thus departs; *yati*—attains; *paramam gatim*—the supreme goal—the spiritual plane or *salokya-mukti*.

12–13 Restricting all their senses (eyes, ears, nostrils etc.) from contact with external objects, holding the mind steady within the heart, establishing the vital life-air between the eyebrows, maintaining a trance of *yoga* centred in the self, the observant meditator should keep vibrating this monosyllable Aum, this sound representation of Brahman the Absolute. Anyone continuously remembering Aum as Me at the time they leave their mortal frame will attain My spiritual abode.

*ananya-chetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah
tasyaham sulabhah partha nitya-yuktasya yoginah* [14]

(he) *partha*—O Partha; *yah*—one who; *ananya-chetah*—one-pointedly (without the practices of karma, jnan, etc., or without desiring their objectives of heaven, liberation, etc.); *satatam*—in all circumstances; *nityasah*—always; *smarati*—remembers; *mam*—Me; *tasya yoginah*—for such a person in a relationship of *dasya*, *sakhya*, etc.; *nitya-yuktasya*—who constantly aspires for My divine association; *aham*—I; *sulabhah*—am easily reached.

14 O Partha, My devotees remember Me constantly. They abandon all plans to engage in non-spiritual pursuits, and all intentions to exploit or renounce things, as well as any longing to attain heaven or liberation. Remaining indifferent to superstitions, false beliefs and considerations about the sanctity or inauspiciousness of certain times, places and circumstances, they constantly aspire to enter into a relationship with Me as My servant, friend, parent or consort. For a devotee of Mine, I am attainable.

*mam upetya punar janma duhkhalayam asasvatam
napnuvanti mahatmanah samsiddhim paramam gatah* [15]

mahatmanah—The great souls; *gatah*—who have attained; *paramam samsiddhim*—the highest perfection, My association in My Pastimes; *upetya*—having reached; *mam*—Me; *na apnuvanti*—do not take; *punah*—again; *janma*—a birth; *asasvatam*—of impermanence; *duhkhalayam*—which is the abode of suffering.

15 My devotees, entering into My divine pastimes after having reached Me, never again suffer rebirth in a mortal body, for the mortal body is a city of pain, a dwelling-place of agony.

*abrahma-bhuvanal lokah punar avartino 'rjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate* [16]

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; abrahma-bhuvanat—from Brahmaloṇa, the highest plane in the universe, downwards; lokah—all planes or their residents; punah avartinah—by nature repeatedly return; tu—but; (he) kaunteya—O son of Kuntī; mam upetya—reaching Me, attaining My shelter; na vidyate—there is no; punah janma—rebirth.

16 From the highest mortal worlds that exist down to the very lowest states where conscious beings feel constant pains, never a moment of joy, all the worlds have suffering. They are all places of misery for rebirth and death happen there repeatedly. But those who attain My spiritual abode never suffer rebirth, O Arjuna.

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmano viduh
ratrim yuga-sahasrantam te 'ho-ratra-vido janah* [17]

te janah (ye)—Those who; viduh—know; brahmanah—Lord Brahma's; ahah—day; yat—which; sahasra-yuga-paryantam—comprises the duration of one thousand chatur-yugas; ratrim—and (his) night; yuga-sahasra-antam—of the duration of one thousand chatur-yugas; ahah-ratra-vidah—are knowers of day and night.

17 A day of the creator Hiranyagarbha Brahma lasts a duration of one thousand *chatur-yugas* and his night is of the same duration, an enormous span of time. But the lifetime of all of humankind is only a flicker that glows for a brief moment in the vastness of time. People see their world as something substantial but their world will vanish. The whole solar system of their concrete understanding dissolves and vanishes when it reaches its final end.

*avyaktad vyaktayah sarvah prabhavanty ahar-agame
ratry-agame praliyante tatraiva vyakta-samjnake* [18]

ahah-agame—With the coming of (Lord Brahma's) day; sarvah vyaktayah—universal progeny with their bodies, senses, enjoyable objects, and abodes; prabhavanti—are born; avyaktat—of Lord Brahma in his waking state; (punah)—and again; ratri-agame—with the coming of night; praliyante—they are absorbed; tatra eva—within Lord Brahma; avyakta-samjnake—who is known as avyakta, 'the unmanifest.'

18 With the coming of day, all Brahma's progeny and the enjoyable things they experience become manifest in physical forms. All of it is a work of Brahma, a pattern Brahma initiates when he rises from slumber. Then again at nightfall all his work dissolves within that same Lord Brahma who is known as 'unmanifest' or unborn.

*bhuta-gramah sa evayam bhutva bhutva praliyate
ratry-agame 'vasah partha prabhavaty ahar-agame* [19]

(he) partha—O Partha; avasah (san)—helplessly; being subject to the law of karma; ayam sah eva bhuta-gramah—the multitude of beings; bhutva bhutva—be-

ing repeatedly born; ahah-agame—with the coming of the day of Lord Brahma; praliyate—disappear; ratri-agame—at nightfall; prabhavati—and are born; (punah ahah-agame)—with a new day.

19 O Partha, multitudes of life-forms subject to the law of *karma* are manifest at the dawn of a day of Hiranyagarbha Brahma, then dissolved at nightfall. Again and again they are reborn, together with all of their materialistic dreams, at the dawn of each new day.

*paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo 'vyaktō 'vyaktat sanātanaḥ
yā sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu nasyatsu nā vinasyati [20]*

tu—But; parah—beyond, superior; tasmāt avyaktat—to this unmanifest Hira-nyagarbha ('born within the golden egg, the universe'), Lord Brahma; (asti)—is; anyah—another; avyaktah—unmanifest, imperceptible, transcendental; sana-tanaḥ—beginningless; bhavaḥ—existence; saḥ yāḥ—He who; nā vinasyati—is not destroyed; sarveṣu bhūteṣu nasyatsu—when all beings are destroyed.

20 But superior to the unmanifest state of Brahma's night there is another state of being that is eternal and imperceptible by the physical senses of anyone. Although all life-forms up to Hiranyagarbha Brahma are annihilated, that transcendental Being remains unaffected.

*avyaktō 'ksara ity uktas tam ahuḥ paramam gatim
yam prapya nā nivartante tad dhama paramam mama [21]*

(saḥ)—He; uktah iti—is said to be; avyaktah aksarah (cha)—the Unmanifest and the Invincible. (vedantah)—The Upanisads; ahuḥ—proclaim; tam—Him; para-mam gatim—the supreme destination; yam prapya—reaching whom; (jīvaḥ)—the living beings; nā nivartate—do not return. (viddhi)—Know; tat—that as; mama—My; paramam dhama—supreme abode.

21 Eternal Brahman the Ultimate Reality is unmanifest, it is uncreated. Having reached that transcendental state of existence, a liberated *jīva*-soul is never again reborn in any created world. You should know that this divine destination is My Eternal Home.

Sripad Bhakti Pradip Tirtha Maharaj:

Arjuna, you may say, "O Lord! The ultimate goal of all spiritual practices is to reach the nirguna state, becoming free from all affects of the three gunas (goodness, passion and ignorance), and merging with Absolute Brahman. How is it possible for a jnani who merges into formless, impersonal Brahman to re-emerge and attain pure loving devotion to You in Your transcendental, blissful abode?"

Listen then, O Arjuna! I am the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, always residing in the land of love, My eternal abode. The first impression of My spiritual abode is realization of the great Brahman, the self-effulgent glow of My body. The jnani attains this first boundary, the formless state of impersonal Brahman, by the process of jnana-yoga. But before they came to attain the nirguna state,

in their earlier life they were obsessed by the theory of impersonal Brahman — then that obsession vanishes at the approach of pure devotion which can awaken in a really spiritual soul. Sages like Sanaka, Vamadeva and others of the impersonal school, attaining this first boundary, came to realize the doctrine of impersonalism is untenable, and afterwards they drank the nectar of pure devotion and progressed beyond the first boundary, gaining entry into the land of love. Unfortunately, however, those who hanker after salvation endlessly cannot remain established in the nirguna state for long, and they remain deprived of the taste of pure bhakti.

*purusah sa parah partha bhaktya labhyas tv ananyaya
yasyantahsthani bhutani yena sarvam idam tatam [22]*

(he) partha—O Partha; (aham)—I; sah parah purusah—the Supreme Person; antah—within; yasya—whom; bhutani—all beings; sthani—are situated; yena—and by whom; idam—this; sarvam—whole universe; tatam—is pervaded; labhyah (bhavami)—am attainable; ananyaya bhaktya tu—only by exclusive devotion.

22 O Partha, I am the Supreme Person within Whom all beings are situated, and by Whom this whole universe is pervaded. I can only be attained by exclusive devotion, by love of God devoid of any touch of exploitation, renunciation, mystic *yoga* and other empiric or theoretical methods of spiritual attainment.

*yatra kale tv anavrttim avrttin chaiva yoginah
prayata yanti tam kalam vaksyami bharatarsabha [23]*

(he) bharatarsabha—O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas; (aham)—I; vaksyami—shall now describe; tam kalam eva—that moment; yatra kale tu—when; prayatah—death occurs; yoginah—the yogis; yanti—attain; anavrttim—liberation; avrttim cha—or rebirth.

23 O Arjuna, now I shall describe two paths to you, determined by time calculation, on which the *yogis* or fruitive workers who traverse them attain either liberation or rebirth.

*agnir jyotir ahah suklah san-masa uttarayanam
tatra prayata gachchhanti brahma brahma-vido janah [24]*

(yatra)—The path on which; agnih jyotih—the deities of fire and light; ahah—the deity of day; suklah—the deity of the waxing moon; uttarayanam sat-masah—and the deity of the sun's six-monthly northern ascent; (avasthitah)—preside; brahma-vidah janah—the knowers of Brahman; prayatah—going, i.e. leaving the body; tatra—on that path; gachchhanti—attain; brahma—Brahman.

24 The followers of the path of knowledge (following the path of *jnana yoga*), who know the Absolute, attain Brahman the Absolute Being by dying during the daytime, at a time illuminated by fire,

the sun, within the bright-moon fortnight, and during the sun's six-month northern transit through the zodiac.

*dhumo ratriś tathā kṛsnāḥ saṁ-masā dakṣiṇāyaṇam
tatra candra-masam jyotiṛ yogi prapya nivartate* [25]

(yatra)—The path on which; dhumā—the deity of smoke; rātriḥ—the deity of night; kṛsnāḥ—the deity of the waning moon; tathā sat-masāḥ dakṣiṇāyaṇam—and the deity of the sun's six-monthly southern ascent; (avasthitaḥ)—preside; yogi—the (karma-) yogi; (prayataḥ)—who goes; tatra—on that path; prapya—reaching; candra-masam jyotiḥ—Svarga-loka, heaven; nivartate—returns—undergoes rebirth.

25 If someone dies during the darkness of night, within the fortnight of the dark moon, or during the sun's six-month southern transit, the *karma-yogi* on the path of action attains heavenly worlds, but subsequently they are forced to experience rebirth in a human form at some time in the future.

*sukla-kṛśṇe gatiḥ yā ete jagataḥ sasvate mātē
ekāya yaty anavṛttim anyāyavartate punaḥ* [26]

ete—These; gatiḥ sukla-kṛśṇe—two paths, bright and dark; jagataḥ—of the world (where persons are apt to follow the paths of jñāna and karma); mātē—are considered; sasvate hi—perpetual. ekāya—By one; anavṛttim—liberation; yati—is attained; anyāya—by the other; punaḥ avartate—one returns, is reborn.

26 These two paths of the souls practicing the methods of renunciation (*jñāna*) and exploitation (*karma*) are known as the bright and dark paths. If a person dies due to their *karma* during either of those periods they follow the corresponding path. By the bright path a soul attains liberation and never returns to *samsara*, and by following the dark path one will eventually take rebirth in an earthly world.

*naitē śrīti parthā jñānaḥ yogi muhyati kaśchana
tasmāt sarveṣu kalesu yoga-yukto bhavarjuna* [27]

(he) parthā—O Partha (Arjuna); jñānaḥ—knowing; ete—this; śrīti—pair of paths; kaśchana yogi—any (bhakti-) yogi (one engaged in the devotional service of the Lord); na muhyati—is not deluded. tasmāt—Therefore; (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; sarveṣu kalesu—always; bhavaḥ—be; yoga-yuktah—engaged in yoga.

27 O Partha, learning about the paths of brightness and darkness, a devotee, a *bhakti-yogi*, is never disturbed (because a devotee does not follow either of these paths). Therefore, O Arjuna, always engage in exclusive devotion, *ananya bhakti-yoga*, which is transcendental to both these paths.

*vedesu yajñesu tapahsu cāivā
dānesu yat punya-phalam pradīpam*

*atyeti tat sarvam idam veditva
yogi param sthanam upaiti chadyam [28]*

viditva—Knowing; idam—this—My supremacy and the supremacy of My devotion; yogi—the yogi, the devoted soul; atyeti—transcends; tat sarvam punya-phalam—all those fruits of piety; vedesu—achieved by chanting the Vedas; yajnesu—performing sacrifice; tapahsu—performing austerity; danesu eva cha—and performing charity; yat—which; pradistam—have been mentioned in the scriptures; cha—and; upaiti—attains; param—the supreme; adyam—original; sthanam—place.

28 Coming to know about My greatness and the excellence of the path of devotion that leads to Me, the devoted soul avoids all other paths. They do not want to taste any fruits achieved by piety, or by studying and reciting the Vedas. Nor do they try to gain anything for themselves by performing sacrifice, practicing austerity, or donating gifts in charity. They only seek to reach My supreme abode, the eternal Reality.

Sri Chaitanyadev:

Chanting the holy name of Krishna cleanses the mirror of the heart and extinguishes the fire of misery in the forest of birth and death. As the evening lotus blooms in the moon's cooling rays, the heart begins to blossom in the nectar of the name. And at last the soul awakens to its real inner treasure — a life of love with Krishna. Again and again tasting nectar, the soul dives and surfaces in the ever-increasing ocean of ecstatic joy. All phases of the self of which we may conceive are fully satisfied and purified, and at last conquered by the all-auspicious influence of the holy name of Krishna.

Chapter 9

The Hidden Treasure of Devotion

Ananya-bhakti-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

idam tu te guhyatamam pravaksyamy anasuyave

jnanam vijñāna-sahitam yaj jñatva moksyase 'subhat [1]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (aham) pravaksyami—I now tell; te—you; anasuyave—who are without envy; idam—this; guhyatamam—most hidden; jnanam—knowledge of pure devotion for Me (singing My glories which expands into unlimited services); vijñāna-sahitam tu—up to direct realisation of Me; jñatva—knowing; yat—which; (tvam)—you; moksyase—will be liberated; asubhat—from inauspiciousness, or, from all that is opposed to devotion.

1 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: You are my devotee and you are free from the tendency to find faults in My teachings, so I shall reveal this most secret truth to you, knowledge about *bhakti* — pure love and devotion. My devotees love to remember and say My Holy Names, gradually becoming inspired by wisdom revealed to them by Bhakti-Devi, the Goddess of Devotion. Bhakti uplifts My devotees, giving them spiritual knowledge and insights, and thus the devotees eagerly perform their acts of devotion. Yet even while She is revealing My real identity to them Bhakti is also attracting Me to them! Understand this secret, and you will find you are freed from the unwholesomeness of the world, freed from all disturbances arising from ignorance, passions and ill-conceived goodness.

raja-vidya raja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam

pratyaksavagamam dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam [2]

(viddhi)—Know; idam—this; raja-vidya—as the king of knowledge; raja-guhyam—the most secret of secrets; uttamam—supreme; pavitram—pure; pratyaksa-avagamam—attained by direct realisation; dharmyam—the perfection of religion; kartum susukham—very easy to practise; avyayam (cha)—and imperishable.

2 Know that this knowledge is perfect knowledge. The paramount insight amidst all the peaks of hidden truths. The ruling principle superior to all others. This knowledge, this wisdom of *bhakti*, reveals Me as I am, as the transcendental Deity conceived in the heart in a human-like form. My Deity Form exists beyond the experience of the senses yet this vision granted by Yoga-Maya the Goddess of Devotion is a form of knowledge realized by a purified heart and senses. A

knowledge directly realized by a pure mind willingly following the radiant footprints of ancient sages found on the pathways of *bhakti*. This knowledge is the fulfillment of religion, and it is happily attained. This is knowledge far apart from knowledge about ephemeral existence.

*asraddadhanah purusa dharmasyasya parantapa
aprapya mam nivartante mrtyu-samsara-vartmani [3]*

(he) *parantapa*—O conqueror of the enemy; *purusah*—persons; *asraddadhanah*—lacking faith; *asya dharmasya*—in this pure life of devotion for Me; *aprapya*—unable to reach; *mam*—Me; *nivartante*—ever revolve; *mrtyu-samsara-vartmani*—on the path of death in the material world.

3 O conqueror of enemies, those who have no faith in *bhakti* cannot attain Me. They keep wandering in a deathly existence.

*maya tatam idam sarvām jagad avyakta-murtina
mat-sthani sarva-bhutani na chaham tesv avasthitah [4]
na cha mat-sthani bhutani pasya me yogam aisvaram
bhuta-bhrn na cha bhuta-stho mamatma bhuta-bhavanah [5]*

idam—This; *sarvām jagat*—whole world; *tatam*—is pervaded; *maya*—by Me; *avyakta-murtina*—by My unmanifest form. *sarva-bhutani*—All beings; *mat-sthani*—are situated in Me, the infinite; *aham cha*—but I; *na avasthitah*—am not situated; *tesu*—in them. *bhutani na cha mat-sthani*—Yet all beings are not situated in Me. *pasya*—Behold; *me*—My; *aisvaram yogam*—supreme mystical power. *mama*—My; *atma*—self; *bhuta-bhrt*—is the mainstay; *bhuta-bhavanah cha*—and origin of all beings; (*kintu*)—yet; *na bhuta-sthah*—is not in them.

4–5 In an invisible way, I pervade the universe. Everyone and everything is situated in Me. But know this too, that I cannot be seen through any form of limited vision. Behold My Divine Form that is simultaneously one with, and different from, the entire universe. Behold that I am the creator of the universe and the substance of all creation, but that I exist in a state beyond every limited thing.

*yathakasa-sthito nityam vayuh sarvatra-go mahan
tatha sarvani bhutani mat-sthanity upadharaya [6]*

upadharaya—Conceive; *iti*—in this way; *yatha*—as; *mahan*—the mighty; *vayuh*—air or wind; *sarvatra-gah*—going everywhere; *nityam*—always; *akasa-sthitah*—rests in the sky; *tatha*—similarly; *sarvani bhutani*—all beings; *mat-sthani*—rest in Me.

6 Air is forceful and it travels everywhere, even while existing invisibly in empty spaces. Air is not attached to space nor does space get attached to air. Know that the living beings are situated in Me in that way.

*sarva-bhutani kaunteya prakrtim yanti mamikam
kalpa-ksaye punas tani kalpadau visrjamy aham [7]*
(he) kaunteya—O Kaunteya; kalpa-ksaye—at the millenium’s end; sarva-bhu-
tani—all beings; yanti—merge; mamikam prakrtim—in My trimodal material
nature. kalpa-adau—With a new day of Brahma; aham—I; visrjami—manifest;
tani—their; punah—again.

7 When a universe is destroyed, masses of lifeless bodies get an-
nihilated, merging into My Power. Then at the beginning of a new
kalpa and the creation of another universe through the agency of My
Power, Maha-Maya, with Brahma acting as an instrument, I create
new worlds full of life populated by different species of living beings.

*prakrtim svam avastabhya visrjami punah punah
bhuta-gramam imam krtsnam avasam prakrter vasat [8]*
avastabhya—Controlling; svam prakrtim—My trimodal nature; (aham)—I;
punah punah—repeatedly; visrjami—manifest; imam—this; krtsnam—entire; bhu-
ta-gramam—multitude of beings; avasam—who are helplessly; prakrteh vasat—
controlled by their natures acquired through their previous actions.

8 By My Power called prakriti, Maya, I create life forms appropriate
for the souls waiting to be reborn in material existence. The unembod-
ied spirits that are retaining different kinds of material tendencies. I
provide for the souls to get reborn in suitable forms and, becoming
reborn, the souls feel enlivened. They are glad to have a new chance
to fulfill the desires they wanted to fulfill in a bygone kalpa.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The derivative meaning of the word ‘maya’ is that which is measurable.
Bhagavan is the Lord of Maya and He cannot be measured. Where there is
an attempt to measure God, there is Maya, and God is not there. ‘ma’ means
not; ‘ya’ means what, or what is true or real. Maya therefore means ‘not what
is true.’ Maya is not like the Satan in the Christian theology, a separate entity
from God, an altogether other entity. In the Gita (7.4) God has said, “Earth,
water, fire, air, sky, the mind, intelligence and egotism, these constitute My
potency Maya.” This potency Maya has been stupefying the jiva-souls that are
apathetic towards God since before the beginning of time.

*na cha mam tani karmani nibadhnanti dhananjaya
udasinavad asinam asaktam tesu karmasu [9]*
(he) dhananjaya—O Dhananjaya; tani karmani—those actions of manifestation,
sustenance, and withdrawal; na nibadhnanti—cannot bind; mam—Me; asak-
tam—who am detached; udasinavat asinam cha—remaining as neutral; tesu kar-
masu—in those actions.

9 O conqueror of wealth Arjuna, I am unseen and unattached to the actions of creation and destruction, and am I not implicated by *karma* when I create, maintain and annihilate material worlds.

mayadhyaksena prakrtih suyate sa-characharam

hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivartate [10]

(he) *kaunteya*—O Arjuna; *maya adhyaksena*—ordained by Me; *prakrtih*—My *maya* potency; *suyate*—produces; (*jagat*)—the universe; *sa-chara-acharam*—with moving and stationary beings. *anena hetuna*—By this cause; *jagat*—the universe; *viparivartate*—is repeatedly manifest.

10 O Arjuna, under My direction Nature gives birth to this egg-shaped universe containing moving and stationary beings. And since every creation is subject to destruction, universes are created again and again.

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj:

The scriptures explain that there are 400,000 types of human species, *catur-laksani manusah* (Padma Purana). We can agree that it is possible for some of these types of human species to come about according to the ideas given in Darwin's theory, but we can never agree that all humans came about in that way. The Vedic scriptures explain that creation begins with the appearance of Brahma, and Brahma engineers the rest of the universal creation under the order of the Supreme Lord.

avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam

param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta-mahesvaram [11]

ajanantah—Not knowing; *param*—the transcendental; *bhavam*—nature, reality; *mama asritam manusim tanum*—of My form of human features; *mudhah*—ignorant persons; *avajananti*—considering Me a mere mortal, blaspheme; *mam*—Me; *bhuta-maha-isvaram*—the Supreme Lord of all beings.

11 Unable to comprehend that My divine form with human-like features is a Transcendental Form, many ignorant human beings mock Me, the Supreme Lord, considering Me to be a living being like themselves.

moghasa mogha-karmano mogha-jnana vichetasah

raksasim asurin chaiva prakrtim mohinim sritah [12]

(te)—They; (*bhavanti*)—remain; *mogha-asah*—with vain hopes; *mogha-karmanah*—vain actions; *mogha-jnanah*—vain knowledge; (*cha*)—and; *vichetasah*—vain thoughts; *sritah*—adopting; *raksasim*—the ignorant; *asurin cha*—and passionate, demoniac; *prakrtim eva*—nature; *mohinim*—causing their delusion, their downfall.

12 Those fools full of frustrated hopes, useless endeavours and fruitless knowledge are bereft of pure conscience. They evolve their nature, guided by desires arising from their passions and ignorance. They remain prone to endless kinds of illusion.

*mahatmanas tu mam partha daivim prakrtim asritah
bhajanty ananya-manaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam [13]*

tu—But; (he) partha—O son of Prtha, Arjuna; asritah—taking refuge in; daivim prakrtim—the godly nature; maha-atmanah—the great-hearted, the devoted souls; jnatva—knowing; mam—Me; bhuta-adim—as the origin of all that be; (cha)—and; avyayam—imperishable; bhajanti—worship, adore; (mam)—Me; ananya-manasah—whole-heartedly.

13 But, O Partha, great souls who take refuge in their divine nature render devotional service to Me with love in their hearts. They adore Me, Krishna, with human features. They know Me as the original Cause, the Origin of all beings.

*satatam kirtayanto mam yatantas cha drdha-vratah
namasyantas cha mam bhaktya nitya-yukta upasate [14]*

satatam—At all times, in all places and circumstances; mam kirtayantah—singing the glories of My divine Name, form, etc.; yatantah—striving to learn spiritual truths of My transcendental nature, personality, etc.; drdha-vratah cha—and unfailingly following the devotional observances such as Ekadasi and regular chanting of the Holy Name; namasyantah cha—offering obeisances unto Me and following all the practices of devotion; (te)—they; upasate—worship; mam—Me; bhaktya—with devotion; nitya-yuktah—earnestly aspiring for their eternal relationship with Me.

14 Disregarding the purity or impurity of times, places or circumstances, the devotees stay absorbed in singing and narrating the glories of My holy name, form, qualities and pastimes. They are always careful in their efforts to understand My nature, personality and activities, and strictly follow the vows they undertake. Following all the practices of devotion properly, the devoted souls worship Me with all their efforts, constantly practicing *bhakti-yoga* with a hope for union with Me.

*jnana-yajnena chapy anye yajanto mam upasate
ekatvena prthaktvena bahudha visvato-mukham [15]*

api cha—Also; jnana-yajnena—by performing the ‘knowledge-sacrifice’; anye—others, self-worshippers; yajantah—who offer oblations; mam upasate—worship Me; ekatvena—conscious of oneness; (anye cha)—and others, external form-worshippers; (mam upasate)—worship Me; prthaktvena—Visnu, but in the form of gods, conscious of differentiation; (anye cha)—and yet others; (mam upasate)—worship Me; bahudha—in many ways; visvatah-mukham—as the cosmic or universal form.

15 Worshipers on the path of knowledge (*jnana*) also worship Me in different ways. Some meditate on their oneness with Me, some meditate on the oneness of the worldly gods with Me, and some meditate on My oneness with the universal creation.

*aham kratuh aham yajnah svadhaham aham ausadham
mantra 'ham aham evajyam aham agnir aham hutam [16]*

aham kratuh—I am the fire sacrifices Agnistoma, Atyagnostoma, Uktha, Sodasi, Atiratra, Aptoryama and Vajapeya, collectively known as Jyotistoma; aham yajnah—I am the five types of sacrifices to godly deities such as the Visvadevas and others according to the smṛiti scriptures; aham svadha—I am the obsequial oblation offered to the ancestors; aham ausadham—I am the food; aham mantrah—I am the sacred incantation; aham ahyam—I am the ghee (clarified butter) and other sacrificial ingredients; aham agnih—I am the fire; aham hutam eva—I am the act of offering.

16 I am the Vedic sacrifices such as the Agnistoma ritual, I am the five holy sacrifices enjoined in the *smṛiti* scriptures, I am the oblations offered to the ancestors, the autumn harvest and the *mantra* that gets remembered. I am the sacrificial ingredients such as ghee, I am the sacred fire and I alone am the act of putting an offering into the blazing flames at a sacrificial alter.

*pitaham asya jagato mata dhata pitamahah
vedyam pavitram omkara rk sama yajur eva cha [17]*

aham pita—I am the father; asya jagatah—of this universe; mata—the mother; dhata—the ordainer of the living beings' fruits of actions; pitamahah—the grandfather; vedyam—the object of all knowledge; pavitram omkara—the purifying pranava monosyllable; rk—the Rg-veda; sama—Sama-veda; yajuh eva cha—and Yajur-veda.

17 I am the father of this universe, the mother, the bestower of the fruits of all actions. The most ancient ancestor and the goal of all spiritual quests. I am the purifying agent Aum. The Rīg, Sāman and Yajur Veda hymns. Indeed I am all of these.

*gatih bharta prabhuh saksi nivasah saranam suhrt
prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam bijam avyayam [18]*

gatih—I am the fruit of action; bharta—the maintainer; prabhuh—the Lord; saksi—the witness; nivasah—the refuge; saranam—the guardian; suhrt—the true friend; prabhavah—the universal manifestation; pralayah—withdrawal; sthanam—and sustenance; nidhanam—the reservoir; avyayam bijam—the imperishable seed.

18 I am everyone's goal. Everyone's maintainer and controller. I am the witness of everything auspicious and inauspicious, I am the refuge, the protector, the unconditional well-wisher. I am the original seed of existence itself, the eternal Supreme Being that existed before creation.

*tapamy aham aham varsam nigrhnamy utsrjami cha
amrtan chaiva mrtyus cha sad asach chaham arjuna [19]*

cha—And; (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; aham tapami—I give heat; aham utsrjami—I bring forth; varsam—rain; nigrhnamy cha—and I withdraw it. aham eva amrtam—I am immortality; mrtyuh cha—and death; sat—truth; asat cha—and untruth.

19 O Arjuna, as the sun, I bestow heat in the summer. Then during the rainy season I send rain. Sometimes withholding the rain, indeed withholding life and death, final liberation too is something controlled by Me.

*trai-vidya mam soma-pah puta-papa
yajnair istva svar-gatim prarthayante
te punyam asadya surendra-lokam
asnanti divyan divi deva-bhogan [20]*

trai-vidyah—Performers of the fruitive rituals of the Rg-, Yajur- and Sama-vedas; soma-pah—who take the remnants of soma-rasa, a beverage made from the soma plant, dear to the gods; puta-papah—and are purified of sin; istva—having worshipped; mam—Me; yajnaih—by sacrifice, but indirectly through the gods; prarthayante—pray; svar-gatim—to attain the heavenly plane, the abode of the gods. asadya—Reaching; punyam—in reward for their piety; sura-indra-lokam—the plane of Indra, heaven; te asnanti—they enjoy; divyan—the exalted; deva-bhogan—happiness of the gods; divi—in heaven.

20 People who perform fruitive ritualistic sacrifices proscribed in the three Vedas worship Indra and various gods. In reality, they worship Me alone but in an indirect way. They drink the sacrificial nectar, the *soma* beverage, they purify themselves of sin, and they pray to attain a heavenly state of existence. As a result of their piety they reach heaven and experience the countless pleasures enjoyed by the gods.

*te tam bhuktvā svarga-lokam visalam ksine punye martya-lokam visanti evam
trayi-dharmam anuprapanna gatagatam kama-kama labhante [21]*

bhuktvā—After enjoying; tam—that; visalam—vast; svarga-lokam—heavenly plane; punye ksine—with the exhaustion of their piety; te—they; visanti—enter; martya-lokam—the human plane. evam—In this way; kama-kamah—those desiring enjoyment; anuprapannah—given to; trayi-dharmam—the worship prescribed in three of the Vedas; labhante—attain; gata-agatam—coming and going in this world.

21 After enjoying heavenly delights their merit is ultimately exhausted and they take rebirth in states of mortal existence. In this way they come and go, these passionate people following the Veda and observing all the proper rules of worship of the gods of nature. They

keep getting born and they keep dying in material existence, over and over and over again.

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj:

Sri Krishna says, “After enjoying great, heavenly happiness the residents of heaven again enter the human plane of existence.”

We are moving in such a way throughout the mundane world, the brahman-da. But Krishna is searching for us: “Where is that soul who misused his freedom?” He sees everything, but He does not interfere. The only reason He does not interfere is that He wants that each one will willingly serve Him. When someone crosses over illusion and enters the transcendental world, particularly the super-service section which is under the guidance of madhura-rasa, Krishna embraces that devotee, “Oh, after so long I am seeing you. I know service to Me is your life’s goal, and now after so long you have come to your home. I have been always wondering when you will come.” Such is Krishna’s nature.

ananyas chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate

tesam nityabhiyuktanam yoga-ksemam vahamy aham [22]

aham—I; vahami—bear; yoga-ksemam—the responsibility of providing and protecting the necessities; tesam—of those; nitya-abhiyuktanam—who are exclusively devoted to Me; ye janah—and who; ananyah—exclusively; mam chintyantah—always think of Me; pari-upasate—and worship Me in all respects, every relationship.

22 I personally assume the whole responsibility for protecting the needs of My devotees who stay constantly absorbed in Me alone, worshipping Me exclusively.

*ye 'py anya-devata-bhakta yajante sraddhayanvitah
te 'pi mam eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-purvakam [23]
aham hi sarva-yajnanam bhokta cha prabhur eva cha
na tu mam abhijananti tattvenatas chyavanti te [24]*

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; ye—those persons who; anya-devata-bhaktah api—although devotees of ‘other gods’; yajante—worship the gods; sraddhaya-anvitah—with faith; te api—they too; yajanti—worship; mam eva—Me; avidhi-purvakam—but not in a way appropriate to attaining Me. aham hi—I alone am; bhokta eva cha—the enjoyer; prabhuh cha—and the rewarder; sarva-yajnanam—of all sacrifices; tu—but; na abhijananti—being ignorant; mam—of Me; tattvena—in truth; te—they; atah—therefore; chyavanti—fall to take birth; (punah)—again.

23–24 O Arjuna, those who faithfully worship the gods with devotion also worship Me, but improperly, since I alone am the ultimate enjoyer of all forms of sacrifice. I am the bestower of all the rewards the worshipers enjoy, but they do not know Me! Thus, they undergo birth, death, disease and old age again and again.

*yanti deva-vrata devan pitrn yanti pitr-vratah
bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti mad-yajino 'pi mam [25]*

deva-vratah—The worshippers of godly beings; *yanti-reach*; *devan*—the gods; *pitr-vratah*—the ancestral worshippers; *yanti-reach*; *pitrn*—their ancestors; *bhuta-ijyah*—the spirit worshippers; *yanti-reach*; *bhutani*—the spirits; *mat-yajinah*—My worshippers; *yanti-reach*; *mam api*—Me.

25 The worshipers of gods reach the abodes of gods they worship. Ancestor worshipers go to the realm of their forefathers. The worshipers of ghosts go to the ghostly realm, but those who worship Me attain Me.

*patram pusyam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayachchhati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam asnami prayatatmanah [26]*

yah—For one who; *bhaktya*—with devotion; *prayachchhati*—offers; *me*—Me; *patram*—a leaf; *pusyam*—a flower; *phalam*—fruit; *toyam*—water; *aham*—I; *asnami*—partake of that—I affectionately accept; *tat*—that; *bhakti-upahrtam*—devotional offering; *(tasya)*—of that person; *prayata-atmanah*—of clean heart.

26 If someone offers Me a leaf, a flower, fruit or water with love and devotion, I accept that offering. A devotee's heart is purified by the love they have for Me. With affection, I accept their offering, I reciprocate with them in a mood of love.

*yat karosi yad asnasi yaj juhosi dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva mad-arpanam [27]*

(he) kaunteya—O Arjuna, son of Kunti; *yat (tvam) karosi*—whatever you do, general or scripturally prescribed actions; *yat asnasi*—whatever you eat; *yat juhosi*—whatever you offer in sacrifice; *yat dadasi*—whatever you give in charity; *yat tapasyasi*—and whichever austerity you perform or vow you keep; *tat kurusva*—do that; *mat-arpanam*—as an offering unto Me.

27 O Arjuna, whatever actions you take, whether worldly or religious, whatever you eat and whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you donate in charity and any vow you make or keep, in all that you do, do that as an offering to Me.

*subhasubha-phalair evam moksyase karma-bandhanaih
sannyasa-yoga-yuktatma vimukto mam upaisyasi [28]*

(karma-kurvan)—Acting; *evam*—in this way; *moksyase*—you will be liberated; *karma-bandhanaih*—from bondage to action; *subha-asubha-phalaih*—and its auspicious or inauspicious results. *sannyasa-yoga-yukta-atma*—With mind linked to Me by renouncing the fruits of your actions; *vimuktah (san)*—being perfectly liberated; *mam upaisyasi*—you will reach Me.

28 Although you engage in worldly duties you will be liberated from the bondage of auspicious and inauspicious results. Being indif-

ferent to the fruits of every action you do, you will be glorified even by the liberated souls, and you will come directly to Me.

*samo'ham sarva bhuteshu na me dveso'sti na priyah
ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya mayi te teshu chaapi aham [29]*

aham samah—I am equal; sarva-bhutesu—to all beings; na asti—there is neither; dvesyah—an enemy; priyah (cha) na—nor a friend; me—for Me; tu—but; ye bhajanti—whoever serves; mam—Me; bhaktya—with love; (yatha)—as; te—they; (asaktah)—are attached; mayi—to Me; aham api cha—I, too; (tatha asaktih)—am similarly attached; tesu—to them.

29 I am equally disposed to all souls, therefore no one is My enemy or friend. Yet those who render devotional service to Me with love and affection are tied to Me by the link of their affection. I too am bound to them similarly, by the tie of loving affection.

* NOTE:

The Lord personally cares for His devotees, but He remains aloof from those who have no genuine love for God. Refer to Bhagavad-gita 4.14.

*api chet suduracharo bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah [30]*

api—Even; chet—if; suduracharah—a person of sinful practices; bhajate—serves; mam—Me; ananya-bhak—with exclusive devotion (giving up all other endeavours such as karma and jnan); eva—certainly; sah mantavyah—he should be regarded; sadhuh—as a saintly person; hi—because; sah samyak vyavasitah—his resolve is perfect.

30 Any person exclusively engaged in My devotional service, anyone who totally avoids all contact with exploitation or renunciation, even a person of extremely degraded practices, that devotee of Mine is venerable and a true saint. All of My exclusive devotees reach Me and remain in the transcendental plane of existence.

*ksipram bhavati dharmatma sasvat-chhantim nigachchhati
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati [31]*

[1] (sah)—He (who dedicates himself to Me); ksipram—swiftly; bhavati—becomes; dharma-atma—a person of virtuous practices; nigachchhati—and attains; sasvat—constant; santim—peace, relief from obstacles. (he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; pratijanihi—declare; (iti)—thus; me—My; bhaktah—devotee; na pranasyati—is never vanquished.

[2] (he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; pratijanihi—promise and declare it; (iti)—that; me bhaktah—My devotee; na pranasyati—is never vanquished. (sah)—That person

who proclaims this; kṣipram—swiftly; bhavati—becomes; dharma-atma—virtuous, religious; nigachchhati—and attains; sasvat—constant; santim—peace, joy.

31 Even a degraded person exclusively devoted to Me soon becomes adorned with virtues and attains eternal tranquility. O Arjuna, declare it, proclaim it! My devotee is never vanquished!

or

31 O Arjuna, promise to everyone that My exclusively devoted servants will never come to ruin. Whoever expresses this teaching to others, whoever this deeply respectful person who adores My devotees may be, that soul swiftly become virtuous and attains My divine grace.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The second interpretation of this verse was revealed to Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur in a dream. Once, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was chanting the Lord's names and wandering in the sky at his sweet will. Suddenly he found he was near Yamalaya where Yama the lord of death holds court, judging the sinners. He also found Brahma there, with Narada, Shiva and others engaged in discussing the meaning of two verses spoken by Sri Kṛṣṇa in Bhagavad-gita (9.30-31). The gods could not discern the proper meaning of those verses.

The *ananya-bhak* exclusive devotee (9.30) has transcended piety and sinfulness. He is exclusively engaged in the Lord's devotion, as defined by the Lord in His own words, '*sarvadharmā parityajya...*' (18.66). How then, after already surpassing all types of duties and surrendering to the Lord, how is it possible that an exclusive devotee will be seen to be a 'dutiful' man again? A 'pious man'? This is an anomaly.

Yamaraja, Brahma, Narada, etc. were discussing this point and they could not arrive at a solution. How can someone become "righteous in the near future" when he has already abandoned all his duties, either righteous or unrighteous. Someone who has abandoned all worldly duties in order to surrender to the Supreme Lord exclusively. Finding no solution, the gods sent for Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur who they noticed moving in the sky, chanting Sri Kṛṣṇa's name. "He is a pure devotee with deep knowledge of the scriptures, so let him come and explain these verses of Bhagavad-gita."

And so, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was invited and went there, and gave the meaning: Despite his outer practices that seem objectionable, the exclusive devotee is to be accepted as a genuine saint. The proper conclusion is that whoever can realize this, whoever declares that an exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa is perfectly saintly regardless of his outer practices, that person giving respect to Kṛṣṇa's devotee will soon become virtuous and religious also. That person's conduct too will soon become pure.

*mam hi partha vyapasritya ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras te 'pi yanti param gatim [32]*

(he) partha—O Arjuna; ye api—even those who; syuh—may be considered ; pa-pa-yonayah—low-born persons; striyah—women; vaisyah—merchants; tatha sudrah—and labourers; vyapasritya hi—if they take full shelter; mam—in Me; te api yanti—they, too, attain; param gatim—the supreme destination.

32 O Partha! Those who have taken birth in degraded lineages, as well as women, merchants and labourers – anyone at all without any restriction – can attain the supreme goal by taking refuge in Me.

*kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarsayas tatha
anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam [33]*

kim punah—Not to mention that; bhaktah (santah)—having become devoted to Me; punya—the pure; brahmanah—brahmins; tatha—and; rajarsayah—saintly kings; (param gatim yanti)—will surely attain the supreme destination. prapya—(Therefore) having achieved; imam—this; anityam—temporary; asukham—miserable; lokam—human body; bhajasva—serve; mam—Me.

33 How then would there be any doubt whether *brahmins* and *kshatriyas* will attain the supreme destination after taking to the path of *bhakti*? Engage in My devotional service since you have received this temporary human birth after wandering aimlessly in many prior births.

*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi yuktvaivam atmanam mat-parayanah [34]*

bhava—Be; mat-manah—always conscious of Me; mat-bhaktah—My devoted servitor; mat-yaji (cha)—and My worshipper. namaskuru—Offer obeisances; mam—to Me. evam—In this way; yuktva atmanam—having dedicated yourself to Me; mat-parayanah—taking refuge in Me; esyasi—you will reach; mam eva—Me.

34 Give Me your heart. Be dedicated to My devotional service, *bhakti*. Be absorbed in My worship and offer prostrate obeisances to Me alone. In this way, with your mind and body dedicated to My service, taking refuge in Me, you will most certainly reach Me.

Chapter 10

The Divine Glories of the Lord

Vibhuti-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

bhuya eva maha-baho srnu me paramam vachah

yat te 'ham priyamanaya vaksyami hita-kamyaya [1]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) maha-baho—O mighty-armed Arjuna; srnu—hear; bhuyah eva—once again; me—My; paramam—supreme; vachah—word; yat—since; aham—I; vaksyami—will speak; te priyamanaya—to you, who are very dear to Me; hita-kamyaya—desiring your welfare.

1 Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: O heroic Arjuna listen again to My teachings. Desiring your welfare, for you are very dear to Me, I shall reveal the undying truth to you.

na me viduh sura-ganah prabhavam na maharsayah

aham adir hi devanam maharsinan cha sarvasah [2]

na—Neither; *sura-ganah*—the gods; *na*—nor; *maha-rsayah*—the great sages; *viduh*—understand; *me*—My; *prabhavam*—transcendental birth; *hi*—because; *sarvasah*—in all respects; *aham adir*—I am the origin; *devanam*—of the gods; *maha-rsinam cha*—and of the great sages, too.

2 Neither the gods nor the Veda-Rishis, the sages who first envisioned the sacred Veda, none of these really know how I descend from My Abode and reveal Myself to souls in the universe, for I am the eternal Supreme Being existing before all the gods and sages arose from *samdhi* at the dawn of time.

yo mam ajam anadin cha vetti loka-mahesvaram

asammudhah sa martyesu sarva-papaih pramuchyate [3]

yah—One who; *vetti*—knows; *mam*—Me, the son of Devaki; *ajam*—as the birthless; *anadin*—the beginningless; *loka-maha-isvaram cha*—and the Supreme Lord of all beings; *sah*—he; *asammudhah*—undeluded; *martyesu*—among men; *pramuchyate*—is liberated; *sarva-papaih*—from all sins or obstacles to devotion.

3 Amongst seers, they alone are free from all misconceived thinking, they who recognize Me to be the beginningless Supreme Being. They who realize that I descend from above and reveal Myself as Vasudeva the son of Devaki.

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur:

The question may be raised. “Do the gods and sages know the facts about the birth of Your body, which is *para-brahma*, beyond the bounds of time and space?” Sri Krishna answers, saying this verse beginning with *yo mam*: “Only someone who knows Me to be beginningless knows Me in truth.”

*buddhir jnanam asammohah ksama satyam damah samah
sukham duhkham bhavo 'bhavo bhayan chabhayam eva cha [4]
ahimsa samata tustis tapo danam yaso 'yasah
bhavanti bhava bhutanam matta eva prthag-vidhah [5]*

(ete)—All these; *prthag-vidhah*—various qualities; *bhutanam*—of the living beings; *bhavanti*—are born; *mattah eva*—of Me alone; *buddhih*—ability to determine subtle meanings; *jnanam*—ability to discriminate between spirit and matter; *asammohah*—freedom from delusion; *ksama*—tolerance; *satyam*—truthfulness; *damah*—control of the external senses; *samah*—control of the internal senses; *sukham*—happiness; *duhkham*—unhappiness; *bhavah*—birth; *abhavah*—death; *bhayam cha*—fear; *abhayam eva cha*—and fearlessness; *ahimsa*—nonviolence; *samata*—equanimity, seeing the happiness and unhappiness of all beings as one's own; *tustih*—satisfaction; *tapah*—austerity as directed in the Vedas; *danam*—charity; *yasah*—fame; *ayasah (cha)*—and infamy.

4–5 Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forbearance, truthfulness, mental control, sense control, happiness, unhappiness, birth, death, fear, courage, nonviolence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame, and infamy — all these powers of living beings are born of Me alone.

*maharsayah sapta purve chatvaro manavas tatha
mad-bhava manasa jata yesam loka imah prajah [6]*

(ete) *mat-bhavah*—All these personalities, empowered by Me; *manasah jatah*—are born of My mind, which is manifest as *Hiranyagarbha*, Lord Brahma; *sapta maharsayah*—the seven great sages—*Marichi*, *Atri*, *Angira*, *Pulastya*, *Pulaha*, *Kratu*, and *Vasistha*; *purve*—and their predecessors; *chatvarah*—the four sages *Sanaka*, *Sanandana*, *Sanat Kumar*, and *Sanatan*, all known as *brahmarsis*; *tatha manavah*—and the fourteen Manus headed by *Svayambhuva*. *imah prajah loka*—Mankind—*brahman*, etc., and all progeny; *yesam*—descends from these patriarchs.

6 The seven great sages headed by *Marichi*, and before them the four Rishis headed by *Sanaka*, as well as the fourteen Manus or progenitors headed by *Svayambhuva* — all of these are empowered by Me and born of Brahma who is a manifestation of My mind. Mankind and all their progeny descend from those patriarchs.

*etam vibhutim yogan cha mama yo vetti tattvatah
so 'vikalpena yogena yujyate natra samsayah [7]*

yah—One who; vetti—knows; tattvatah—in truth; etam—this; vibhutam—supremacy; cha—and; yogam—(bhakti-) yoga; mama—of Mine; sah—such a person; yujyate—is linked; avikalpena—by undeviating; yogena—knowledge of essential truth. atra—In this matter; na samsayah (asti)—there is no doubt.

7 One who knows My supremacy and serves Me with unwavering devotion attains realization of this reality. Of this there is no doubt.

*aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate
iti matva bhajante mam budha bhava-samanvitah [8]*

aham prabhavaḥ—I am the Supreme Absolute Truth, Svayam Bhagavan or the original Supreme Lord, the cause; sarvasya—of all causes, including Brahma, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. sarvam—All activity in the universe of matter and spirit, and the Vedas and allied scriptures; pravartate—arise; mattah—from Me. matva—Realising; iti—this deep truth; budhah—persons of fine theistic intelligence; bhava-samanvitah—in their divine relationship of servitude, friendship, etc.; bhajante—worship, adore; mam—Me.

8 I am Krishna, the Sweet Absolute, the origin of all. The entire universe of material and transcendental play, activity and purpose, as well as the Veda and allied scriptures that instruct humankind, all of this comes from Me alone. The souls who realize this hidden treasure, the devoted souls endowed with pure theistic understanding, surpass material existence and adore Me forever, embracing the path of divine love, *raga-marg*.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

Verses 8–11 are the four principal verses of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*. The ontological substance of the book is contained within these four essential verses beginning, “*aham sarvasya prabhavo*: everything evolves from Me.”

Lord Krishna indicates, “I am *swayam bhagavan*, the Supreme Lord Himself. I am the origin not only of Brahma and Paramatma, but the origin also of Vishnu the Master of all powers Who commands the respect of everyone (Lord Narayan of Vaikuntha).

*mach-chitta mad-gata-prana bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantas cha mam nityam tusyanti cha ramanti cha [9]*

mat-gata-pranaḥ—Those who have dedicated their lives to Me; mat-chittah—who always think of Me; mam kathayantah cha—and talk about Me; bodhayantah parasparam (santah)—enlightening one another with the nectar of their devotional realisations; nityam—are ever; tusyanti cha—satisfied; ramanti cha—and ecstatic.

9 The surrendered souls talk about Me, enlightening one another with their nectarean, devotional realizations. They always think about Me, feeling ecstatic in their own personal nature.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The Supreme Lord Krishna is speaking about His pure devotees. “I am in the heart of their hearts, in their every thought. Their entire energy, their whole life, is dedicated to My satisfaction.” The devotees speak with one another about Me, experiencing mutual enlightenment; they always love to talk about Me with whoever they meet, wanting nothing else. At every time and place, I am the only subject of their discussions. They find very much satisfaction in this (*tusyanti cha*). Up to the divine relationship of parenthood (*vatsalya rasa*) there is this feeling of satisfaction. Furthermore, *ramanti cha*: “Just as a wife enjoys an amorous relationship with her husband, the devotees similarly feel such ecstasy in My intimate company when discussing Me.” This thought has also been mentioned previously by the Acharyas.

*tesam satata-yuktanam bhajatam priti-purvakam
dadami buddhi-yogam tam yena mam upayanti te [10]*

tesam priti-purvakam bhajatam—To those loving devotees; satata-yuktanam—who are always engaged in My service; (aham)—I; dadami—give; tam—that; buddhi-yogam—inspiration; yena—by which; te—they; upayanti—can come; mam—to Me.

10 To those devotees who are always lovingly engaged in My service, I give the divine inspiration by which they can come to Me.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The Lord says, “The highest group of My servitors (whose devotion was described in the previous verse by the word *ramanti*) are those who are constantly engaged (*satata-yukta*) in My service in consorhood (*madhura-rasa*) with heartfelt love (*bhajatam priti-purvakam*).”

Astonishingly, He then says He will give them further inspiration or guidance “by which they can come to Him” (*yena mam upayanti te*)!

When already in this, and the previous verse, the devotee’s service to the Lord has been described as eternal, the statement presented in this verse, that He will give them further inspiration “by which they can come to Him” may appear to be incongruent or superfluous. Therefore, in the expression *mam upayanti te* (they will come to Me) the Lord may be seen to be expressing a new revelation or meaning. The word *upayanti* may be defined as *parakiya-bhavana*, the highest form of devotion in the mood of divine consorhood, *madhura-rasa*.

*tesam evanukampartham aham ajnana-jam tamah
nasayamy atma-bhava-stho jnana-dipena bhasvata [11]*

*anukampa-artham—Out of compassion; tesam eva—for them; aham—I; at-
ma-bhava-sthah—appearing within their hearts; nasayami—destroy; bhasva-
ta jnana-dipena—with the shining lamp of knowledge; tamah—the darkness;
ajnana-jam—born of ignorance.*

11 Out of compassion for them, I, situated within the hearts of all living beings, dispel the darkness of ignorance with the radiance of knowledge.

or

11 Being conquered by the love of those devotees who in their pure, loving devotion become afflicted by the all-devouring darkness of separation from Me, born of their intense love for Me, I illuminate their hearts with My presence, revealing Myself as Krishna the Lord of the Heart, destroying their darkness and their pains of separation.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

Of the two translations given above, the first is the most general interpretation of this verse. But here in Sri Gita, the Lord is saying, “*tesam evanukampartham.*”— Being conquered by the love of the pure devotees, I cannot tolerate the pain of separation from them so I at once come running to satisfy them, revealing Myself to them with special light, special consciousness. ‘I have returned to you — see Me now.’ With powerful brilliance I show them My presence when they are very much in need of Me. I come to relieve their pain of separation.

arjuna uvacha

*param brahma param dhama pavitram paramam bhavan
purusam sasvatam divyam adi-devam ajam vibhum [12]*

ahus tvam rsayah sarve devarsir naradas tatha

asito devalo vyasah svayan chaiva bravisi me [13]

*arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (aham manye)—I accept; bhavan—Your grace;
param brahma—as the Supreme Brahma, directly the Supreme Lord; param
dhama—the supreme Syamasundar form, the supreme refuge; paramam—the
supreme; pavitram—sanctifier, saviour. sarve—All; rsayah—the sages; deva-rsih
naradah—Narad Muni, the saint among the gods; asitah—Asita; devalah—De-
vala; tatha vyasah—and the great sage Vyas; ahuh—call; tvam—You; sasvatam
purusam—the eternal personality; divyam—the self-manifest; adi-devam—the
original Lord; ajam—the birthless; vibhum—the all-pervading Lord, the foun-
tain-head of all opulences; cha svayam eva—and You, Yourself; bravisi me—are
now declaring this to me.*

12–13 Arjuna said: O Lord, You are Param-Brahma the Absolute, the perfectly pure Supreme Being. You maintain the whole of nature inside Yourself, sheltering and protecting the entire universal creation. Your Form is divine, You are the eternal Supreme Being, the beginningless self-manifest Supreme Lord. You are the Cause of all existence — everything emanates from Your Divine Play. The saints and holy sages including Deva-Rishi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa confirm this truth and now You are personally revealing this to me.

*sarvam etad rtam manye yan mam vadasi kesava
na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur deva na danavah* [14]

(he) kesava—O Kesava; (aham) manye—I accept; rtam—as factual; sarvam etat—all; yat vadasi—You have told; mam—me. (he) bhagavan—O Lord; hi—indeed; na devah na danavah—neither the gods nor the demons; viduh—know; te—Your; vyaktim—personality in full.

14 O Keshava, I accept all You have said. O Lord, neither the gods nor the demons know You as you really are.

*svayam evatmanatmanam vettha tvam purusottama
bhuta-bhavana bhutesa deva-deva jagat-pate* [15]

(he) purusottama—O Supreme Person; (he) bhuta-bhavana—O universal father; (he) bhuta-isa—O Lord of all beings; (he) deva-deva—O God of the gods; (he) jagat-pate—O Jagannath, Lord of the universe; eva—only; tvam—You; svayam—Yourself; vettha—know; atmanam—Yourself; atmana—by Yourself—by Your own potency.

15 O Supreme Person, O universal father, Lord of all beings, God of gods, Lord of the universe, only You know Yourself by Your own limitless consciousness.

*vaktum arhasy asesena divya hy atma-vibhutayah
yabhir vibhutibhir lokan imams tvam vyapya tisthasi* [16]

hi (tvam) vaktum arhasi—You may kindly describe; asesena—elaborately; (tah)—those; divyah—divine; atma-vibhutayah—personal opulences; yabhih vibhutibhih—by which opulences; tvam—You; tisthasi—are present; vyapya—pervading; iman lokan—all these worlds.

16 Please describe Your powers by which You pervade all the worlds.

*katham vidyam aham yogims tvam sada parichintayan
kesu kesu cha bhavesu chintyo 'si bhagavan maya* [17]

(he) yogin—O Lord of yogamaya, Lord of divine potency; (he) bhagavan—O Supreme Lord; katham—how can; aham—I; sada—be constantly; parichintayan—absorbed in thought; tvam—of You; vidyam—know; (tvam)—You; cha—and; kesu kesu bhavesu—in which forms; asi—are; (tvam)—You; chintyah—to be thought of; maya—by me?

17 O Lord with omnipotent powers, how can I be constantly absorbed in thoughts of You? How can I know You, and in which powerful forms should I think of You?

*vistarenatmano yogam vibhutin cha janardana
bhuyah kathaya trptir hi srnvato nasti me 'mrtam [18]*

(he) janardana—O Janardan; kathaya—please describe; bhuyah—again; vistarena—in detail; atmanah yogam—the process of devotional union with You (bhakti-yoga); vibhutin cha—and Your opulences; hi—since; srnvatah—hearing; amrtam—Your ambrosial words; me—my; trptih—satiation; na asti—does not occur.

18 O Janardan, please describe in detail once again Your powerful forms, and the path of devotion that leads to You. I never tire of hearing Your sweet words.

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
hanta te kathayisyami divya hy atma-vibhutayah
pradhanyatah kuru-srestha nasty anto vistarasya me [19]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: hanta kuru-srestha—O best of the Kurus; kathayisyami—I will tell; te—you; pradhanyatah—the principal; divyah—transcendental; atma-vibhutayah—personal opulences, manifest by My divine potency; hi—since; na asti—there is no; antah—end; vistarasya me—to the expanse of My glories.

19 The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, best of the Kurus, My majestic powers are unlimited so I shall only speak of My primary majesties, manifest in this world by My divine potency.

*aham atma gudakesa sarva-bhutasaya-sthitah
aham adis cha madhyam cha bhutanam anta eva cha [20]
adityanam aham visnur jyotisam ravir amsuman
marichir marutam asmi naksatranam aham sasi [21]*

(he) gudakesa—O Arjuna; aham atma—I am the Supersoul; sarva-bhuta-asaya-sthitah—situated within the heart of all beings; cha eva—and; aham adih—I am the beginning; madhyam cha—middle; antah cha—and end; bhutanam—of all beings. adityanam—Of the twelve Adityas; aham asmi visnuh—I am the Aditya known as Visnu. jyotisam—Of the luminaries; aham (asmi)—I am; amsuman—the blazing; ravih—sun; marutam—Of the Vayu gods; marichih—(I am) the Vayu known as Marichi; naksatranam—and of the stars; sasi—(I am) the moon.

20–21 O conqueror of sleep, think of me as the Higher Self within the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, middle and end of everything. Of the solar deities called Adityas, I am Vishnu. Of luminaries I am the radiant sun. Of the Vayus I am Marichi and amongst the revolving constellations I am the ever-changing moon.

*vedanam sama-vedo 'smi devanam asmi vasavah
indriyanam manas chasmi bhutanam asmi chetana [22]*

*vedanam—Of the Vedas; (aham) asmi—I am; sama-vedah—the Sama-veda. deva-
nam—Of the gods; (aham) asmi—I am; vasavah—Indra. indriyanam—Of the sens-
es; (aham) asmi—I am; manah—the mind; cha—and; (aham) asmi—I am; chetana—
the life; bhutanam—of all that lives.*

22 Of the Vedas, I am Sama-veda. Of gods I am Indra. Of senses I am the mind, and I am the self-aware life-force that energizes all that lives.

rudranam sankaras chasmi vitteso yaksa-raksasam

vasunam pavakas chasmi meruh sikharinam aham [23]

*rudranam—Of the eleven Rudras; aham asmi—I am; sankarah—Siva; cha—and;
yaksa-raksasam—of the Yaksas and Raksasas; (aham) asmi—I am; vitta-isah—
Kubera. vasunam—Of the eight Vasus; pavakah—(I am) Agni; cha—and; sikhari-
nam—of the mountains; meruh—(I am) Sumeru.*

23 Of the eleven Rudras I am Shankara, and of the Yakshas and Raksasas I am Kubera. Of the eight Vasus I am Agni and of mountains I am Meru.

purodhasan cha mukhyam mam viddhi partha brhaspatim

senaninam aham skandah sarasam asmi sagarah [24]

*(he) partha—O Partha; viddhi—know; mam—Me; brhaspatim—as Brhaspati;
mukhyam purodhasam—the chief among priests engaged in sacrifice. senani-
nam—Of generals; aham asmi—I am; skandah—Kartikeya; cha—and; sarasam—
among reservoirs; sagarah—(I am) the ocean.*

25 Amongst the priests who perform fire ceremonies I am Brihaspati, amongst generals I am Kartikeya the son of Shiva. Amongst water reservoirs, the ocean.

*maharsinam bhrigur aham giram asmy ekam aksaram
yajnanam japa-yajno 'smi sthavaranam himalayah [25]*

*maha-rsinam—Of great sages; aham asmi—I am; bhrigu—Bhrigu. giram—Of
sound vibrations; (aham) asmi—I am; ekam aksaram—the pranava monosylla-
ble, Omkar. yajnanam—Of all types of sacrifices; (aham) asmi—I am; japa-ya-
jnah—sacrifice in the form of meditative chanting of the holy names; (cha)—and;
sthavaranam—of the immovable; himalayah—(I am) the Himalayas.*

25 Amongst great sages I am Bhrigu. Amongst words I am Aum. Of all sacrifices, I am japa the repeated chanting of the Holy Names. And amongst all immovable things I am Himalaya.

Sri Chaitanyadev:

May you all be blessed by developing love for Krishna. Do not waste time speaking gossip just keep saying Krishna's holy names. Now, hear the holy Maha-Mantra from me:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare.

— Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.25

*asvatthah sarva-vrksanam devarsinan cha naradah
gandharvanam chitrarathah siddhanam kapilo munih [26]
uchchaihshravasam asvanam viddhi mam amrtodbhavam
airavatam gajendranam naranan cha naradhipam [27]*

sarva-vrksanam—Of all trees; *asvatthah*—(I am) the Asvattha tree; *deva-rsinam*—of godly sages; *naradah*—(I am) Narad Muni. *gandharvanam*—Of Gandharvas; *chitrarathah*—(I am) Chitraratha; *cha*—and; *siddhanam*—of perfected beings; *kapilah munih*—(I am) the sage Kapila. *asvanam*—Of horses; *viddhi*—know; *mam uchchaih-sravasam*—Me as Uchchaihshrava; *amrta-udbhavam*—who was born of the churning of nectar; *gaja-indranam*—Of elephants; *airavatam*—(I am) Airavata; *cha*—and; *naranam*—among men; *nara-adhipam*—(I am) the king.

26–27 I am the banyan tree amongst sheltering trees, Narada amongst godly sages, Chitraratha amongst heavenly singers, and Kapila amongst the *siddhas* who are masters of *yoga*. Among horses know Me as Uchchaihshrava who was born of the ocean of nectar. Know Me as Airavata among elephants, and amongst men I am the powerful king that they follow.

*ayudhanam aham vajram dhenunam asmi kamadhuk
prajanas chasmi kandarpah sarpanam asmi vasukih [28]
anantas chasmi naganam varuno yadasam aham
pitram aryama chasmi yamah samyamataam aham [29]*

ayudhanam—Of weapons; *aham asmi*—I am; *vajram*—the thunderbolt, the weapon of Lord Indra. *dhenunam*—Of cows; (*aham*) *asmi*—I am; *kama-dhuk*—the desire-fulfilling cow. (*kandarpanam*)—Of cupids; (*aham*) *asmi*—I am; *prajanah*—the progenitor; *kandarpah*—Cupid; *cha*—and; *sarpanam*—of single-headed venomous snakes; *vasukih*—(I am) Vasuki, the king of snakes. *naganam*—Of the multi-headed non-poisonous serpents; *aham asmi*—I am; *anantah*—the divine serpent Ananta; *cha*—and; *yadasam*—of aquatics; *aham asmi*—I am; *varunah*—Varunadev. *pitram*—Of the deified ancestors; *aryama*—(I am) Aryama; *cha*—and; *samyamatam*—among chastisers; *yamah*—Yamaraja.

28–29 Of weapons I am the thunderbolt and of cows I am Kamadhenu. Of cupids I am the progenitor, and of venomous one-headed snakes I am the king of snakes Vasuki. Amongst the multi-headed serpents with human faces I am Ananta Naga. Amongst aquatics I am Varunadev. Of the deified ancestors I am Aryama, and of government ministers I am Yamaraj the magistrate administering punishments.

*prahladas chasmi daityanam kalah kalayatam aham
mrganan cha mrgendro 'ham vainateyas cha paksinam [30]
pavanah pavatam asmi ramah sastra-bhrtam aham
jhasanam makaras chasmi srotasam asmi jahnavi [31]*

*daityanam—Of the descendents of Diti; aham asmi—I am; prahladah—Prahlaḍ;
kalayatam cha—and of subduers; aham (asmi)—I am; kalah—time; cha—and; mr-
ganam—of animals; mrga-indraḥ—the lion; cha—and; paksinam—of birds; vain-
ateyah—Garuda. pavatam—Of sanctifiers or of the rapid; aham asmi—I am; pa-
vanah—wind. sastra-bhrtam—Of weapon-wielding heroes; (aham) asmi—I am;
ramah—Lord Parasuram. jhasanam—Among fish; (aham) asmi—I am; makarah—
the shark; cha—and; srotasam—of rivers; jahnavi—(I am) the Jahnavi, the Ganges.*

30–31 Of the Daityas I am Prahlaḍ and of subjugators I am time. Of animals I am the lion and of birds I am Garuda. Of sanctifiers I am the wind, of weapon-wielding heroes I am Parasuram. Amongst fish, the shark is an emblem of Me, and amongst rivers I am the Ganges.

*sarganam adir antas cha madhyam chaivaham arjuna
adhyatma-vidya vidyanam vadah pravadatam aham [32]*

*(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; sarganam—of the manifest; aham eva adih—I am the
beginning; antah—end; madhyam cha—and middle. vidyanam—Of knowledge;
adhyatma-vidya—(I am) self-knowledge; cha—and; aham vadah—I am the philos-
ophy; pravadatam—of philosophers.*

32 O Arjuna, of all that is manifest I am the beginning, middle, and end. Of all forms of wisdom, I am self-knowledge. I am philosophy itself, which exists within philosophers.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

The Supreme Reality or God is termed ‘inscrutable.’ What evidence is there, that any type of knowledge derived from an experience in the natural world could provide an observation we might have about God the inscrutable Supreme Reality?

As a rule, smoke seen on a mountainside indicates a fire is there. This is an example of deductive logic, or what is called *anumana*, inference. In the *Gautama-Sutra* of Vatsayana it is mentioned: “There is a possibility of rain because dense clouds are gathering.” By means of an example like this, the inference of something unseen (rain) may be known by means of visible objects (dense clouds). But inference cannot be applied to the Supreme Reality since no signs of That are seen in the world.

Only two types of evidence proving a conclusion can be accepted as valid evidence, direct experience (*pratyaksa*) and inference (*anumana*). Vatsayana’s commentary states, “Knowledge generated when the senses come in direct contact with an object is called *pratyaksa*.” It is direct experience that produces *pratyaksa* knowledge. Yet in scriptures like *Nyaya-shastra*, *Uttara Mimamsa* etc. another evidence called *shabda* (words of the Veda) has been accepted. Should the words of the Veda and related scriptures be regarded as forms of

evidence that prove or validate a conclusion? In reply, it may be remembered that the seers of the Veda, and the creator Brahma, realized some of the Veda *mantras* by direct realization (*pratyaksa*) and other parts of the Veda by means of inference (*anumana*). Therefore *shabda* cannot be treated as a third form of evidence. It should be understood that a portion of the Veda was derived from *pratyaksa* and another part through *anumana*.

The realization of the self-evident Supreme Lord by means of loving devotion happens as a direct experience. That realization does not occur through the powers of deduction or inference, but by direct experience, *pratyaksa*.

- Sri Tattva-Sutra commentary 48

*aksaranam akaro 'smi dvandvah samasikasya cha
aham evaksayah kalo dhataham visvato-mukhah [33]*

aksaranam—Of letters; *aham asmi*—I am; *a-karah*—the letter 'a'; *cha*—and; *samasikasya*—of compound words; *dvandvah*—(I am) the dual compound word. *aham eva aksayah kalah*—I alone am the eternal time flow; (*srastram cha*)—and of creators; *visvatah mukhah*—four-headed; *dhata*—Lord Brahma.

33 Of the letters of the alphabet I am the letter 'a' and of compound words I am the dual-syllable. Among destroyers I am the endless flow of time, and amongst creators I am four-headed Brahma.

*mrtyuh sarva-haras chaham udbhavas cha bhavisyatam
kirtih srir vak cha narinam smrtir medha dhrtih ksama [34]*

(*harana-karinam*)—Of plunderers; *aham mrtyuh*—I am death; *sarva-harah*—the vanquisher of all; *cha*—and; *bhavisyatam*—of the predestined six transformations of the living beings; *udbhavah*—(I am) the first, as birth; *cha*—and; *narinam*—of feminine qualities; *kirtih*—fame; *srih*—beauty; *vak*—perfect speech; *smrtih*—remembrance; *medha*—intelligence (regarding scriptural wisdom); *dhrtih*—patience; *cha*—and; *ksama*—forgiveness (or the seven wives of Dharma).

34 Amongst all types of death I am that death that takes away all memory. Of the predestined six transformations I am birth, the first and foremost. Of the feminine qualities I am fame, beauty, perfect speech, remembrance, intelligence, patience, and forgiveness — the seven wives of Dharma.

*brhat-sama tatha samnam gayatri chhandasam aham
masanam marga-sirso 'ham rtunam kusumakarah [35]*

samnam—Of all the mantras in the Sama-veda; *brhat-sama*—(I am) the mantra prayer to Lord Indra; *tatha*—and; *chhandasam*—of metrical mantras; *aham gayatri*—I am the gayatri mantra. *masanam*—Of the months; *aham marga-sirsa*—I am the month Agrahayan, the month of harvest (mid-November to mid-December). (*cha*)—And; *rtunam*—of the seasons; *kusuma-akarah*—(I am) spring.

35 Amongst the *mantras* in the Sama-veda I am the Brihatsama prayer to Lord Indra. Of metrical *mantras* I am the holy *gayatri mantra*. Of months I am the first, Agrahayan, and amongst all the seasons you should see flower-bearing spring as the representative of Me.

Sripad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj:

It has already been explained by the Lord that amongst all the Vedas, He is the Sama Veda. The Sama Veda is rich with beautiful songs played by the various gods. One of these songs is the Brihat-sama, which has an exquisite melody and is sung at midnight.

In Sanskrit, there are definite rules that regulate poetry; rhyme and meter are not written whimsically, as in much modern poetry. Amongst the regulated poetry, the Gayatri mantra, which is chanted by the duly qualified brahmanas, is the most prominent. The Gayatri mantra is mentioned in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Because the Gayatri mantra is especially meant for God realization, it represents the Supreme Lord. This mantra is meant for spiritually advanced people, and when one attains success in chanting it, he can enter into the transcendental position of the Lord. One must first acquire the qualities of the perfectly situated person, the qualities of goodness according to the laws of material nature, in order to chant the Gayatri mantra. The Gayatri mantra is very important in Vedic civilization and is considered to be the sound incarnation of Brahman. Brahma is its initiator, and it is passed down from him in disciplic succession.

The month of November-December is considered the best of all months because in India grains are collected from the fields at this time and the people become very happy. Of course spring is a season universally liked because it is neither too hot nor too cold and the flowers and trees blossom and flourish. In spring there are also many ceremonies commemorating Krishna's pastimes; therefore this is considered to be the most joyful of all seasons, and it is the representative of the Supreme Lord, Krishna.

*dyutam chhalayatam asmi tejas tejasvinam aham
jaya 'smi vyavasayo 'smi sattvam sattvavatam aham [36]*

chhalayatam—Of cheats; aham asmi—I am; dyutam—gambling. tejasvinam—Of the splendid; aham asmi—I am; tejah—splendour. asmi—(I) am; jayah—victory; vyavasayah—perseverance; (cha)—and; sattvam—the power of truth; sattva-vat-am—of the truthful.

36 I am the hazards that obstruct cheats, the majesty of the glorious. I am victory, I am perseverance. I am the power of truth. I am the ideals upheld by honest people.

*vr̥sninam vasudevo 'smi pandavanam dhananjayah
muninam apy aham vyasah kavinam usanah kavih [37]*

*vr̥sninam—Of the Yadavas; aham asmi—I am; vasudevah—Vasudev; pandava-
nam—of the Pandavas; dhananjayah—Arjuna; muninam—of the sages; vya-
sah—Vyasadev; api—and; kavinam—of knowers of the scriptures; usanah kavih—
Sukracharya.*

37 Amongst the Yadavas I am my father Vasudeva. Amongst the Pandavas, Arjuna represents Me. Of sages I am Vyasadeva and of knowers of scriptures I am Sukra.

*dando damayatam asmi nitir asmi jigisatam
maunam chaivasmī guhyanam jnanam jnanavatam aham [38]
yach chapi sarva-bhutanam bijam tad aham arjuna
na tad asti vina yat syan maya bhutam characharam [39]*

*damayatam—Of law enforcers; aham asmi—I am; dandah—punishment. jigisatam—
Of those desiring to conquer; (aham) asmi—I am; nitih—political wisdom. guhya-
nam—Of all secrets; (aham) asmi—I am; maunam—silence; cha—and; jnana-vatam—
of the learned; jnanam eva—I am) knowledge. (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; cha—and;
yat—whatever is; bijam—the seed; sarva-bhutanam—of all beings; aham tat api—I
am that. yat tat syat—Whatever may exist; chara-acharam—moving and station-
ary; na asti—there is no; bhutam—existence; maya vina—without Me.*

38–39 I am the force of justified punishment meted out by up-
holders of the law. I am the political wisdom of those who become
conquerors. I am the silence implied in secrets and the wisdom of the
wise. O Arjuna, whatever is considered the origin of all beings, I am
that. Nothing, whether stationary or moving, can exist without Me.

*nanto 'sti mama divyanam vibhutinam parantapa
esa tuddesatah prokto vibhuter vistaro maya [40]*

*(he) parantapa—O chastiser of the enemy; na asti—there is no; antah—end; mama
divyanam vibhutinam—of My divine opulences; esah tu—so; uddesatah—an indi-
cation; vistarah—of the expanse; vibhuteh—of these opulences; proktah—has been
mentioned; maya—by Me.*

40 O conqueror of the enemy, My divine powers have no end. I
have given only an indication here.

Srila Rupa Goswami:

Just as a single substance, milk, contains many qualities such as milk's form
and taste — different qualities perceived differently by the senses, such as the
white colour seen by the eye and the sweet taste enjoyed by the tongue — in
a similar manner Bhagavan Sri Krishna manifests Himself in many different
ways to His worshipers, according to the type of worship they are engaged in.
— Laghubhagavatamritam 5.201

*yad yad vibhutimat sattvam srīmad urjitam eva va
tat tad evavagachchha tvam mama tejo 'msa-sambhavam [41]*
*yat yat eva—Of each and every; vibhutimat—magnificent; srīmat—beautiful; va—
or; urjitam—glorious; sattvam—existence; tvam—you; ava-gachchha eva—should
know; tat tat—each of them; amsa-sambhavam—as born of a portion; mama te-
jah—of My power.*

41 Know for certain that whatever is magnificent, beautiful or glo-
rious is born from a small fraction of My power.

*athava athava bahunaitena kim jnatena tavarjuna
vistabhyaham idam kṛtsnam ekamsena sthito jagat [42]*
*(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; athava—however; tava kim—what is your need; jnatena—
of knowing; etena—this; bahunaitena—elaborately? vistabhya—Supporting; idam—
this; kṛtsnam—entire; jagat—universe; aham sthitah—I am situated; eka-amsena—
in My fractional expansion as the Supersoul of material nature—Mahavisnu
or Karanarnavasayi Visnu. [42]*

42 But, O Arjuna, what is the need of elaborating further on My
opulences? I preserve this entire universe in My Form as the all-per-
vading Higher Self, constantly overseeing the changes happening in
Nature.

Chapter Eleven

The Vision of the Universal Form

Visva-rupa-darsana-yoga

arjuna uvacha

*mad-anugrahaya paramam guhyam adhyatma-samjnitam
yat tvayoktam vachas tena moho 'yam vigato mama [1]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: ayam—this; mama mohah—ignorance of mine, about You; vigatah—has been dispelled; tena—by that; paramam—most; guhyam—secret; vachah—revelation; adhyatma-samjnitam—pertaining to the divine glories of Your Supreme Self; yat—as; uktam—described; tvaya—by You; mat-anugrahaya—out of Your mercy for me.

1 Arjuna said: You have revealed Your hidden treasure to me and by Your grace my ignorance about You is dispelled.

*bhavapyayau hi bhutanam srutau vistaraso maya
tvattah kamala-patraksa mahatmyam api chavyayam [2]*

(he) kamala-patra-aksa—O Lord Krishna, whose eyes are like the petals of a lotus flower; hi—certainly; vistarasa—elaborately; bhava-apyayau—the manifestation and withdrawal; bhutanam—of all beings; srutau—has been heard; maya—by me; tvattah—from You; cha—and; (tava)—Your; avyayam—inexhaustible; mahatmyam—glories; api—too; (srutam)—have been heard.

2 O beautiful Lord, I heard Your description of the manifestation and destruction of the living beings born in mortal existence, and also Your descriptions of Your inexhaustible opulence.

*evam etad yathattha tvam atmanam paramesvara
drastum ichchhami te rupam aisvaram purusottama [3]
manyase yadi tach chhakyam maya drastum iti prabho
yogesvara tato me tvam darsayatmanam avyayam [4]*

(he) parama-isvara—O Supreme Lord; yatha—as; tvam—You; attha—have spoken; atmanam—of the glories pertaining to Yourself; evam—such; etad—is so; (tathapi)—yet; (he) purusa-uttama—O Supreme Person; (aham) ichchhami—I wish; drastum—to see; te—Your; aisvaram—glorious; rupam—form. (he) prabho—O Lord; yadi—if; manyase iti—You consider; tat—that; sakyam drastum—is possible to be seen; maya—by me; tatah—then; (he) yoga-isvara—O all-powerful one; tvam—You; darsaya—please reveal; avyayam atmanam—Your imperishable Self; me—to me.

3–4 O Lord, You have revealed Yourself to me as the Supreme Self. I am insignificant, yet may I see this omnipresent Form of Yours? O Highest Person, Purushottam! O Master of Yoga, Yogeshwar! I im-

plore You, if it is possible for me to see that Divine Form please show me that omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient Form.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*pasya me partha rupani sataso 'tha sahasrasah
nana-vidhani divyani nana-varnakrtini cha [5]
pasyadityan vasun rudran asvinau marutas tatha
bahuny adrsta-purvani pasyascharyani bharata [6]
ihaikastham jagat krtsnam pasyadya sa-characharam
mama dehe gudakesa yach chanyad drastum ichchasi [7]
na tu mam sakyase drastum anenaiva svachaksusa
divyam dadami te chaksuh pasya me yogam aisvaram [8]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) partha—O Partha; *pasya*—see; *me*—My; *satasah*—hundreds; *atha sahasrasah*—of thousands of; *divyani*—divine; *rupani*—forms; *nana-vidhani*—of many kinds; *nana-varna-akrtini cha*—and many colours and shapes. (he) bharata—O descendant of Bharat; *pasya*—see; *adityan*—the twelve Adityas; *vasun*—the eight Vasus; *rudran*—the eleven Rudras; *asvinau*—the Asvini twins; *tatha marutah*—and the forty-nine Vayus. *pasya*—See; *bahuni*—many; *ascharyani*—wondrous forms; *adrsta-purvani*—hitherto unseen. (he) *gudakesa*—O conqueror of sleep; *krtsnam*—the whole; *jagat*—universe; *sa-chara-acharam*—including moving and stationary beings; *eka-stham*—is situated in one place; *iha dehe*—in this form; *mama*—of Mine; *cha*—and; *yat*—whatever; *anyat*—else; (*tvam*)—you; *ichchasi*—wish; *drastum*—to see; *pasya*—see; (*tadapi*)—that too; *adya*—today. *tu*—But; *anena*—with these; *svachaksusa eva*—present eyes of yours; (*tvam*)—you; *na sakyase*—cannot; *drastum*—see; *mam*—Me. *dadami*—(So) I give; *te*—you; *divyam*—divine; *chaksuh*—eyes. *pasya*—Behold; *me*—My; *aisvaram*—opulences; *yogam*—of divine potency.

5-8 The Supreme Lord said: Arjuna your fleshy eyes cannot see properly, so I will grant you spiritual vision. Behold My divine opulences! O Partha! Behold My innumerable features of many kinds, colours and shapes. Behold the gods within Me, the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Asvin Kumaras and Vayus. Behold many wondrous manifestations hitherto unseen. Behold the whole universe of moving and stationary beings in one place here within Me, within My Form. Behold all you wish to see! See!

sanjaya uvacha

*evam ukta tato rajan maha-yogesvaro harih
darsayamasa parthaya paramam rupam aisvaram [9]*

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: (he) rajan—O King Dhrtarastra; *ukta*—speaking; *evam*—in this way; *maha-yoga-isvarah*—the omnipotent Supreme Lord; *har-ih*—Sri Krishna; *tatah*—then; *darsayamasa*—revealed; *paramam*—His almighty; *aisvaram*—magnificent; *rupam*—form; *parthaya*—to Arjuna.

9 Sanjaya said: O King Dhritarastra, saying this the omnipresent Lord Sri Hari revealed His magnificent, mighty Form to Arjuna.

*aneka-vaktra-nayanam anekadbhuta-darsanam
aneka-divyabharanam divyanekodyatayudham [10]
divya-malyambara-dharam divya-gandhanulepanam*

sarvascharyamayam devam anantam visvato-mukham [11]

(*harī*)—The Supreme Lord; (*rupam darsayamasa*)—revealed His form; *aneka-vaktra-nayanam*—of many mouths and eyes; *aneka-adbhuta-darsanam*—many wonders; *aneka-divya-abharanam*—many effulgent ornaments; *divya-ane-ka-udyata-ayudham*—and many raised gleaming weapons; *divya-malya-am-bara-dharam*—resplendently garlanded and dressed; *divya-gandha-anulepan-am*—anointed with celestial fragrances; *sarva-ascharya-mayam*—all-wonderful; *anantam*—unlimited; *devam*—effulgent; *visvatah-mukham*—and facing all direc-tions of the universe.

10–11 Krishna revealed that dazzling Universal Form with many mouths, eyes and limbs. Marvelous, strange! A Form draped with jew-eled ornaments, glowing clothing and perfumed garlands of flowers. A fragrant Form with arms upraised, arms holding whirling weapons.

divi surya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthita

yadi bhah sadrsi sa syad bhasas tasya mahatmanah [12]

yadi—If; *yugapat*—simultaneously; *bhah*—the effulgence; *surya-sahasrasya*—of a thousand suns; *utthita bhavet*—appeared; *divi*—in the sky; (*tarhi*)—then; *syat*—perhaps; *sa*—that; *sadrsi*—might resemble; *bhasah*—the effulgence; *tasya ma-ha-atmanah*—of this supreme universal form.

12 If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the mighty effulgence of the huge Universal Form of the Lord.

tatraika-stham jagat krtsnam pravibhaktam anekadha

apasyad deva-devasya sarire pandavas tada [13]

tada—Then; *tatra*—there on the battlefield; *pandavah*—Arjuna; *apasyat*—saw; *sari-re*—in the body; *deva-devasya*—of the God of gods; *krtsnam*—the entire; *jagat*—uni-verse; *eka-stham*—situated in one; *aneka-dha*—variously; *pravibhaktam*—divided.

13 In that moment, standing there on the battlefield, Arjuna saw the entire multi-faceted universe in one place. He saw everything within the body of the Supreme God of gods Lord Sri Krishna.

Sripad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj:

What Arjuna saw was indescribable, yet Sanjaya is trying to give a mental picture of that great revelation to Dhritarastra. Neither Sanjaya nor Dhritarastra was present, but Sanjaya, by the grace of Vyasa, could see whatever happened. Thus he now compares the situation, as far as it can be understood, to an imag-inable phenomenon (i.e., thousands of suns).

*tatah sa vismayavisto hrsta-roma dhananjayah
pranamyasirasa devam krtanjalir abhasata [14]*

tatah—After that; (san)—being; vismaya—avistah—astonished; hrsta—romah—with body hairs standing on end; sah dhananjayah—Arjuna; pranamyasirasa—offering obeisances; sirasa—with bowed head; devam—unto Lord Krishna; abhasata—spoke; krtanjalih—placing his palms together in prayer.

14 Astonished Arjuna, with the hairs of his body standing on end, lowered his head in complete submission to Lord Krishna. Placing his palms together, he prayed.

*arjuna uvacha
pasyami devams tava deva dehe
sarvams tatha bhuta-visesa-sanghan
brahmanam isam kamalasana-stham
rsims cha sarvan uragams cha divyan [15]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) deva—O Lord; (aham) pasyami—I see; tava dehe—within Your body; sarvan—all; devan—the gods; tatha—and; bhuta-visesa-sanghan—all species of life; sarvan—all; divyan rsin—the celestial sages; uragan—and serpents; isam cha—and Mahadev, Lord Siva; brahmanam cha—and Lord Brahma, too; kamala-asana-stham—seated on the lotus flower.

15 Arjuna began: O Lord, I see the gods are all inside Your body. All species of life too, and all the sages and celestial serpents. I see Shiva in You as well as the creator Brahma, seated on a lotus flower.

*aneka-bahudara-vaktra-netram
pasyami tvam sarvato 'nanta-rupam
nantam na madhyam na punas tavadin
pasyami visvesvara visva-rupa [16]*

(he) visva-isvara—O Lord of the universe; (he) visva-rupa—O universal form; (aham) pasyami—I see; tvam—You; ananta-rupam—of infinite form; sarvatah—in all directions; aneka-bahu-udara-vaktra-netram—with Your many arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes. punah—Yet; (aham) pasyami—I see; na adim—no beginning; na madhyam—no middle; na antam—and no end; tava—of You.

16 O Lord of the universe, O universal form, I see You are growing, extending in all directions with countless eyes, mouths, arms and bellies. I see no beginning, middle or end of You!

Rig Veda Samhita, mantra 10.7.90.1:

*sahasra shirsha purusha sahasrakshah sahasrapat
sa bhumim vishvato vritva atyatishtat dasangulam*

The supreme Person has thousands of faces, thousands of seeing eyes, thousands of feet moving everywhere. He is beyond the world, He is infinite, beyond the count of the digits of men.

*kiritinam gadinam chakrinam cha tejorasim sarvato diptimantam
 pasyami tvam durniriksyam samantad diptanalarka-dyutim aprameyam [17]*
 (aham) pasyami—I see; tvam—You; samantat—everywhere; kiritinam—with
 crown; gadinam—club; cha—and; chakrinam—disc; tejah-rasim—a mass of efful-
 gence; sarvatah diptimantam—illuminating all; dipta-anala-arka-dyutim—like
 the blazing fire of the sun; durniriksyam—difficult to behold; aprameyam—and
 incomprehensible.

17 I see Your Faces everywhere wearing crowns. I see You hold-
 ing many maces embedded with jewels and countless devastating
 chakras that keep rotating at Your fingertips. You radiate light, You
 are self-illuminating Light! You emanate light like the sun! O Lord,
 difficult to behold! O Lord, You are incomprehensible, inexpressible.

*tvam aksaram paramam veditavyam
 tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam
 tvam avyayah sasvata-dharma-gopta
 sanatanas tvam puruso mato me [18]
 anadi-madhyantam ananta-viryam
 ananta-bahum sasi-surya-netram
 pasyami tvam dipta-hutasa-vaktram
 svatejasa visvam idam tapantam [19]*

*tvam paramam aksaram—You are Parabrahma; veditavyam—knowable by the
 Vedas. tvam param—You are the supreme; nidhanam—reservoir; asya vis-
 vasya—of this universe. tvam avyayah—You are the imperishable; sasvata-dhar-
 ma-gopta—preserver of Vedic sanatan-dharma, the eternal religion. tvam sana-
 tanah—You are the eternal; purusah—Supreme Personality; (iti)—this is; me—my;
 matah—understanding. (aham) pasyami—I see; tvam—You; anadi-madhy-a-
 ntam—without beginning, middle, and end; ananta-viryam—infinately powerful;
 ananta-bahum—with infinite arms; sasi-surya-netram—and Your eyes are the
 sun and moon; dipta-hutasa-vaktram—Your mouth of blazing fire; idam vis-
 vam—this universe; tapantam—is seared; svatejasa—by Your radiance.*

18–19 You are Brahman, the Absolute. You are knowable (*jneyam*),
 You are the meaning revealed in Veda *mantras* and in the teachings
 of the Rishis, the seers of the Veda. You contain the entire reality of
 Nature inside Yourself, preserving natural laws and *dharma* and the
 perpetual religion disclosed in the Veda *mantras*. I now understand
 You are the Purusha, the eternal Supreme Person. I see You have no
 beginning, middle or end, with countless powerful arms reaching ev-
 erywhere. Your eyes are suns and moons. Your mouths are blazing
 fires. The whole cosmos is burning in Your radiance! Your effulgence
 creates worlds and incinerates them too!

*dyav aprthivyor idam antaram hi
 vyaptam tvayaikena disas cha sarvah
 drstvadbhutam rupam idam tavogram
 loka-trayam pravayathitam mahatman [20]*

hi—Certainly; idam—this; antaram—space between; dyau aprthivyah—heaven and earth; sarvah disah cha—and all directions; vyaptam—are pervaded; tvaya—by You; ekena—alone. (he) maha-atman—O gracious one; drstva—seeing; idam—this; adbhutam—wondrous; ugram—fearsome; rupam—form; tava—of Yours; loka-trayam—all the three worlds; pravyathitam—are terrified.

20 You pervade all things in all directions. And things in spaces in between. O gracious One, seeing this wondrous and frightening Form of Yours, I see that the inhabitants of all the worlds are terrified of You.

*ami hi tvam sura-sangha visanti
kechid bhitaḥ prañjalayo grṇanti
svastity ukṭva maharṣi-siddha-saṅghaḥ
stuvanti tvam stutibhiḥ puskalabhiḥ [21]*

ami—All these; sura-saṅgha—gods; visanti—are entering; tvam hi—into You; kechit—some; bhitaḥ—fearfully; grṇanti—offering prayers; prañjalayah—with cupped hands. su-asti iti ukṭva—“May auspiciousness come to the world”—saying this; maha-rṣi-siddha-saṅghaḥ—the great sages and perfected beings; stuvanti—are offering prayers; tvam—to You; puskalabhiḥ—by excellent; stutibhiḥ—verses singing Your glories.

21 Gods are all entering into one aspect of You, some fearfully offering prayers to You with cupped hands. Great sages and perfected beings are singing Your glories in beautiful verses, praying, “May auspiciousness come into the world.”

*rudraditya vasavo ye cha sadhya
visve 'svinau marutaś chosmapas cha
gandharva-yaksasura-siddha-saṅgha
viksante tvam vismitas chaiva sarve [22]*

rudra-adityaḥ—The Rudras and the Adityas; vasavaḥ—the Vasus; ye cha (nama)—and those called; sadhyaḥ—the Sadhyas; visve—the Visvadevas; asvinau—the Asvini Kumaras; marutaḥ cha—and the Vayus; usma-paḥ cha—and the forefather-gods; gandharva-yakṣa-asura-siddha-saṅghaḥ cha—and also the Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras, and perfected beings; (te) sarve eva—indeed, they all; vismitaḥ—marvel; viksante tvam—to behold You.

22 The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Visvadevas, Asvin Kumaras, Vayus, deities of the forefathers, the Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas — indeed all the beings in the elevated worlds are marveling, beholding You.

*rupam mahat te bahu-vaktra-netram
maha-baho bahu-bahuru-padam
bahudaram bahu-damstra-karalam
drstva lokah pravyathitas tathaham [23]*

lokaḥ—All; tatha aham—including myself; pravyathitaḥ—are afflicted with fear; drstva—seeing; te—Your; mahat—vast; rupam—form; bahu-vaktra-netram—of

many mouths and eyes; bahu-bahu-uru-padam—many arms, thighs, and feet; bahu-udaram—many bellies; bahu-damstra-karalam—and fearful with many teeth.

23 O Oneness with mighty arms, seeing Your Form with many mouths, eyes, arms, legs, feet and bellies, a fearful Form with many gnashing teeth, all living beings including myself are struck with fear.

nabhah-sprsam diptam aneka-varnam
vyattananam dipta-visala-netram
drstva hi tvam pravyathitantar-atma
dhrtim na vindami saman cha visno [24]

(he) visno—O pervader of the universe; drstva—seeing; tvam—You; nabhah-sprsam—sky-touching; diptam—dazzling; aneka-varnam—multi-coloured; vyatta-ananam—of gaping mouth; dipta-visala-netram—and huge fiery eye; (aham)—I; pravyathita-antah-atma—with extremely fearful heart; na hi vindami dhrtim samam cha—cannot find equilibrium or peace.

24 O Vishnu, seeing Your sky-touching, dazzling form of myriad colours, with gaping mouths and huge fiery eyes, my heart trembles in terror. I cannot find my equilibrium! I cannot find any feeling of peace and satisfaction.

damstra-karalani cha te mukhani drstvaiva kalanala-sannibhani
diso na jane na labhe cha sarma prasida devesa jagan-nivasa [25]

drstva eva—Seeing; te—Your; mukhani—mouths; damstra-karalani—ghastly with their teeth; kala-anala sannibhani cha—and resembling the fire of the universal annihilation; (aham)—I; na jane—cannot know; disah—the directions; na labhe—nor can I find; sarma cha—composure. (he) deva-isa—O God of gods; (he) jagat-nivasa—O abode of the universe; (tvam) prasida—be gracious.

25 Seeing Your mouths resembling fires of annihilation, ghastly with their terrible flames in the shapes of teeth, I feel distraught and I have lost my bearings. Be gracious, O Lord of the gods! Be gracious, O great abode sheltering the universe!

ami cha tvam dhrtarastrasya putrah
sarve sahaivavanipala-sanghaih
bhismo dronah suta-putras tathasau
sahasmadiyair api yodha-mukhyaih [26]
vaktrani te tvaramana visanti
damstra-karalani bhayanakani
kechid vilagna dasanantaresu
sandrsyante churnitair uttamangaih [27]

ami cha sarve—All these; putrah—sons; dhrtarastrasya—of Dhrtarastra; avani-pala-sanghaih saha eva—along with their allied kings; tatha—as well as; bhismah—Bhisma; dronah—Drona; asau suta-putrah—and that Karna; saha

api—along with; *yodha-mukhyai*—the chief warriors; *asmadiyai*—of our party; *tvaramanah*—are swiftly; (*visanti*)—entering; *tvam*—You; *visanti*—entering; *te*—Your; *bhayanakani*—terrible; *vaktrani*—mouths; *damstra-karalani*—of terrible teeth. *kechit*—Some; *samdrsyante*—are seen; *churnitai*—uttama-angai—with crushed heads; *vilagnah*—caught; *dasana-antaresu*—between the teeth.

26–27 The sons of Dhritarastra, all their allied kings and Bhishma, Drona and Karna, along with our chief warriors also, all are rushing into Your dreadful mouths to be chewed by Your crushing teeth. Some can be seen with their heads held tight, steadily being crushed by Your burning teeth.

*yatha nadinam bahavo 'mbu-vegah samudram evabhimukha dravanti tatha
tavami nara-loka-vira visanti vaktrany abhito jvalanti* [28]

yatha—As; *bahavah*—many; *ambu-vegah*—currents of water; *nadinam*—of rivers; *abhimukhah* (*santah*)—flowing towards the ocean; *dravanti eva*—enter; *samudram*—the ocean; *tatha*—similarly; *ami*—all these; *nara-loka-virah*—heroic men; *visanti*—are entering; *tava*—Your; *vaktrani*—mouths; *jvalanti*—which are fiery, illuminating; *abhitah*—all around.

28 As many rivers flow towards the ocean before finally entering it, heroic warriors are approaching Your glowing, flaming mouths.

*yatha pradiptam jvalanam patanga visanti nasaya samrddha-vegah tathaiva
nasaya visanti lokas tavapi vaktrani samrddha-vegah* [29]

yatha—As; *patangah*—insects; *samrddha-vegah*—are impelled; *nasaya*—to their destruction; *visanti*—entering into; *pradiptam*—blazing; *jvalanam*—fire; *tatha*—similarly; *loka* *api*—all the worlds; *samrddha-vegah* (*santah*)—are helplessly rushing; *visanti*—entering into; *tava vaktrani*—Your mouths; *nasaya eva*—to certain death.

29 As moths mindlessly approach death in a blazing fire, all the worlds full of cities, forests, fields and oceans are helplessly moving towards their unavoidable death, entering Your mouths.

*lelihyase grasamanah samantal lokan samagran vadanair jvaladbhih tejobhir
apurya jagat samagram bhasas tavograh pratapanti visno* [30]

(he) *visno*—O pervader of the universe; (*tvam*)—You; *lelihyase*—are relishing; *grasamanah*—devouring; *samagran*—all these; *lokan*—persons, worlds; *samanat*—in all directions; *jvaladbhih vadanaih*—with Your flaming mouths. *apurya*—Filled; *tava tejobhih*—with Your effulgence; *ugrah*—of severe; *bhasah*—glare; *samagram jagat*—the whole universe; *pratapanti*—is being seared.

30 O Vishnu with flaming mouths, I watch while You relish different tastes, eating all these beings and the variegated worlds. Your all-pervading, glaring effulgence is searing and burning the whole cosmos.

*akhyahi me ko bhavan ugra-rupo
namo 'stu te deva-vara prasida
vijnatum ichchhami bhavantam adyam
na hi prajanami tava pravrttim [31]*

akhyahi me—Please tell me; kah bhavan—who are You; ugra-rupah—of fearsome form. namah astu—I offer obeisance; te—unto You. (he) deva-vara—O Lord of lords; (tvam) prasida—be gracious. (aham) ichchhami—I wish; vijnatum—to fully know; bhavantam—You; adyam—the Origin; hi—as; (aham)—I; na prajanami—cannot understand; tava—Your; pravrttim—intention.

31 O fearsome One, please tell me who You are! O Lord of the gods I offer my prayers to You. Be gracious! I wish to understand Your will and intentions! Now I know You are the ultimate source of everything. I feel filled with fear now! I cannot understand your intentions.

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
kalo 'smi loka-ksaya-krt pravrdhho
lokan samahartum iha pravrttah
rte 'pi tvam na bhavisyanti sarve
ye 'vasthitah pratyanyikesu yodhah [32]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (aham) asmi—I am; pravrdhah—mighty; kalah—time; loka-ksaya-krt—the destroyer of all beings; pravrttah—engaged; samahartum—to annihilate; lokan—all beings; iha—in this plane. ye yodhah—Of those warriors; avasthitah—present; pratyanyikesu—in the enemy army; (te) sarve na bhavisyanti—none will be spared; tvam rte api—despite you.

32 The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna said: Now I am become Death the destroyer of worlds. Even if you do not slay them, not one of the warriors in the enemy party will be spared.

*tasmat tvam uttistha yaso labhasva jitva
satrun bhunksva rajyam samrddham
mayaivaite nihatah purvam eva
nimitta-matram bhava savyasachin [33]*

tasmat—Therefore; tvam—you; uttistha—arise for battle; labhasva—take; yasa—the credit; jitva—and conquering; satrun—the enemies; bhunksva—enjoy; samrddham rajyam—a flourishing kingdom. ete—All these warriors; nihatah—have been slain; maya eva—by Me; purvam eva—long before. (he) savyasachin—O Arjuna, who can skilfully shoot arrows even with his left hand; (tvam)—you; bhava—be; nimitta-matram—but an instrument.

33 Arise! Be glorious! Conquer the enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom! All these warriors are already killed by Time, by Me. Arjuna, know the truth, that you are but an instrument.

*dronan cha bhisman cha jayadrathan cha
karnam tathanyan api yodha-viran*

*maya hatams tvam jahi ma vyathistha
yudhyasva jetasi rane sapatnan [34]*

tvam—You; jahi—slay; dronam cha—Drona; bhismam cha—Bhisma; jayadratham—Jayadratha; karnam cha—and Karna; tatha—as; anyan api—any other; yodha-vi-ran—warriors desiring battle; hatan—(but already) killed; maya—by Me. ma vyathisthah—Fear not; yudhyasva—fight! jeta asi—You shall conquer; sapatnan—the enemy; rane—in battle.

34 Slay Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other warriors who are already slain by Me. Fear not, fight! You will be victorious.

*sanjaya uvacha
etach chhrutva vachanam kesavasya
krtanjalir vepamanah kiriti
namaskrtva bhuya evaha krsnam
sagadgadam bhita-bhitah pranamya [35]*

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: srutva—Hearing; etat vachanam—these words; kesavasya—of Lord Krishna; kiriti—Arjuna; vepamanah—trembling; krtā-anjalih (san)—placing the palms of his hands together in prayer; namah-krtva—bowing; bhita-bhitah eva—with a very fearful heart; bhuyah—again; pranamya—offering obeisances; aha—spoke; krsnam—to Lord Krishna; sa-gad-gadam—falteringly.

35 Sanjaya said: Hearing these words of the Lord trembling Arjuna bowed his head. He placed the palms of his hands together in prayer and with a fearful heart he began speaking falteringly.

*arjuna uvacha
sthane hrsikesa tava prakirtya
jagat prahrasyaty anurajyate cha
raksamsi bhitani diso dravanti
sarve namasyanti cha siddha-sanghah [36]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) hrsikesa—O Lord of the senses of all beings; sthane—rightfully; jagat—the whole world; prahrasyati—is joyful; tava prakirtya—by singing Your glories; cha anurajyate—with love; raksamsi—the demons; bhitani (santah)—being afraid; dravanti—run; disah—in all four directions; cha—and; sarve—all; siddha-sanghah—the perfected beings; namasyanti—offer respects, obeisance.

36 Arjuna said: O Rishikesh! It is fitting that the whole world joyfully sings Your glories with feelings of love. The demons flee, scattering in all directions. The liberated *siddhas* radiant with the light of Brahman offer their homage to You, offering obeisances.

*kasmach cha te na nameran mahatman
gariyase brahmano 'py adi-kartre
ananta devesa jagan-nivasa
tvam aksaram sad-asat tat param yat [37]*

(he) maha-atman—O gracious personality; (he) ananta—O infinite, embodiment of all; (he) deva-isa—O God of gods; (he) jagat-nivasa—O abode of the universe; gariyase—the worshipping; adi-kartre cha—and the creator; brahmanah api—of even Lord Brahma; kasmāt (sarve) na nameran—how would they all not bow; te—to You? tvam sat asat—You are the manifest and the unmanifest, the material effect and cause; aksaram—the Imperishable, Brahma; tat param yat—that which is transcendental, the Supreme.

37 O gracious One, how would they not bow down to You, the adorable creator of even the creator of the universe Prajapati Brahma? You are the God of gods, O abode, O shelter of the universe! You are the manifest reality known as the material universe, but also the un-manifest origin and destination of all forms of existence. You are the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute.

tvam adi-devah purusah puranas
tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam
vettasi vedyam cha paran cha dhama
tvaya tatam visvam ananta-rupa [38]

tvam (asi)—You are; adi-devah—the original Lord; puranah purusah—the eternal personality; tvam asi—You are; param—the only; nidhanam—refuge, resting place; asya visvasya—of this universe; vetta—the knower; vedyam cha—and the knowable; param dhama cha—and the supreme abode. (he) ananta-rupa—O Lord of infinite forms; visvam—the universe; tatam—is pervaded; tvaya—by You.

38 You are the origin of the gods and the abode that the universe is existing within. You alone are the knower of the ultimate reality, indeed you are everything that is knowable. You are the supreme abode within which the whole cosmos dwells. O Lord of infinite forms, You pervade the entire universe.

vayur yamo 'gnir varunah sasankah
prajapatish tvam prapitamahas cha
namo namas te 'stu sahasra-krtvah
punah cha bhuyo 'pi namo namas te [39]

tvam vayuh—You are the god of air; yamah—the god of death; agnih—the god of fire; varunah—the god of the ocean; sasankah—the god of the moon; prajapatiḥ—the universal father, Lord Brahma; prapitamahah cha—and the grandfather, too. namah astu—My obeisances; te—unto You; sahasra-krtvah—thousands of times; punah cha namah—and again obeisances; bhuyah api—and yet again; namah namah—obeisances, obeisances; te—unto You.

39 You are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the moon, Prajapati and the great grandfather Brahma. I offer my respects to You a thousand times, and then after that I offer my respects to You again.

namah purastad atha prsthatas te namo 'stu te sarvata eva sarva
ananta-viryamita-vikramas tvam sarvam samapnosi tato 'si sarvah [40]

(he) *sarva*—O embodiment of all existences; *namah*—my obeisances; *te*—unto You; *purastat*—from the front; *atha*—and; *prsthatah*—from the rear. *namah astu*—I offer obeisances; *te*—unto You; *eva*—indeed; *sarvatah*—from all directions. (he) *ananta-virya*—O Lord of infinite potency; *amita-vikramah*—of immeasurable prowess; *tvam*—You; *samapnoshi*—pervade; *sarvam*—all; *tatah*—therefore; *asi*—You are; *sarvah*—all.

40 O embodiment of all states of existence, I offer my prayers unto You at the front, behind, and in all directions. O Lord filled with unlimited power and immeasurable potential, You permeate all things, therefore You are all things.

sakheti matva prasabham yad uktam
he krsna he yadava he sakheti
ajanata mahimanam tavedam
maya pramadat pranayena vapi [41]
yach chavahasartham asatkrto 'si
vihara-sayyasana-bhojanesu
eko 'thavapy achyuta tat-samaksam
tat ksamaye tvam aham aprameyam [42]

ajanata—Not knowing; *tava*—Your; *mahimanam*—greatness; *idam cha*—and this (universal form); *pramadat*—inadvertantly; *pranayena va api*—and due to intimacy; *sakha iti matva*—thinking of You as a friend; *yad uktam*—whatever has been said; *prasabham*—rashly; *maya*—by me; *iti*—thus: he *krsna*—“O Krishna; he *yadava*—Yadava; he *sakhe*—my friend”; (he) *achyuta*—O infallible one; *yad asatkrta*—whatever disrespect I have shown You; *avahasa-artham*—in jest; *vihara-sayya-asana-bhojanesu*—in recreation, resting, sitting, eating; *ekah*—alone; *athava*—or; *api*—even; *tat-samaksam*—in the presence of others; *tat*—for all this; *aham*—I; *tvam aprameyam ksamaye*—beg You, the inconceivable, to please forgive me.

41–42 Due to familiarity and affection, in the past I rashly addressed You saying “Krishna,” “Yadava,” or “my friend.” I was ignorant of Your greatness! O infallible Lord, whatever disrespect I may have shown in jest, while relaxing, resting, sitting or eating, either alone with You or in company — I beg You, inconceivable Lord, please forgive me for that.

pitasi lokasya characharasya
tvam asya puhyas cha gurur gariyan
na tvat-samo 'sty abhyadhikah kuto 'nyo l
oka-traye 'py apratima-prabhava [43]

tvam asi—You are; *pita*—the father; *asya lokasya*—of this universe; *chara-acharasya*—of moving and stationary beings; *puhya*—the worshipping; *gariyan*—most glorious; *guruh*—teacher; *cha*—and; *api*—indeed; *na asti*—there is no one; *tvat-samah*—equal to You; *loka-traye*—within the three worlds; *kutah*—so how can; *anyah*—another; *abhyadhikah*—be superior; (he) *apratima-prabhava*—O Lord of unrivalled power!

43 You are the father of all living beings. The worshipable and most glorious teacher also. You have no equal within these created worlds for how can there be anyone greater than You, Lord of limitless power!

*tasmat pranamya pranidhaya kayam
prasadaye tvam aham isam idyam
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuh
priyah priyayarhasi deva sodhum [44]*

(he) deva—O Lord; *tasmat*—therefore; *kayam pranidhaya*—prostrating my body; *pranamya*—in obeisance; *aham prasadaye*—I am propitiating; *tvam*—You; *idyam*—the worshippable; *isam*—Lord. *iva*—As; *pita sakha priyah*—a father, friend or lover (forgive); *putrasya sakhyuh priyayah*—(the mistakes) of a son, friend or beloved; (*tvam*)—You; (*tatha*) *iva*—similarly; *arhasi*—please; *sodhum*—forgive (me).

44 I offer my prayer to You, my Lord and worshipable Master. I pray for Your mercy. Please excuse me as would a father, friend, or lover. Or as someone overlooking the mistakes of a son, friend or beloved.

*adrsta-puroam hrsito 'smi drstva bhayena cha pravyathitam mano me tad eva
me darsaya deva rupam prasida devesa jagan-nivasa [45]*

(he) deva—O Lord; *drstva*—seeing; (*idam*) *adrsta-puroam*—this previously unseen universal form of Yours; *hrsitah asmi*—I am joyful; *cha*—and then again; *me*—my; *manah*—mind; *bhayena pravyathitam*—is distraught with fear. (he) *deva-isa*—O God of gods; (he) *jagat-nivasa*—O refuge of the universe; *prasida*—may You be gracious; *darsaya*—to show; *me*—me; *tat eva rupam*—that form You showed before.

45 O Lord, my heart feels delighted seeing Your previously unseen Universal Form yet what I see troubles me! O God of gods, shelter of the universe! Be gracious and appear in the cherished Form I knew before.

*kiritinam gadinam chakra-hastam
ichchhami tvam drastum aham tathaiva
tenaiva rupena chatur-bhujena
sahasra-baho bhava visva-murte [46]*

aham—I; *ichchhami*—wish; *drstum*—to see; *tvam*—You; *tatha eva*—as previously; *kiritinam*—with crown; *gadinam*—club; *chakra-hastam*—and holding the disc. (he) *sahasra-baho*—O Lord with a thousand arms; (he) *visva-murte*—O universal form; *bhava*—may You appear; *tena chatuh-bhujena rupena eva*—in that form of four arms.

46 I wish to see You again wearing a crown, holding a club and a discus. O thousand-armed Lord, O Universal Form, please appear in that four-arm Form.

sri-bhagavan uvacha
 maya prasannena tavarjunedam
 rupam param darsitam atma-yogat
 tejomayam visvam anantam adyam
 yan me tvad-anyena na drsta-purvam [47]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; prasannena—being satisfied; idam—this; tejah-mayam—effulgent; anantam—infinite; adyam—and primeval; param—supreme; visvam—universal; rupam—form; me—of Mine; yat—which; na drsta-purvam—was not seen previously; tvat-anyena—by anyone else; darsitam—has been shown; tava—to you; maya—by Me; atma-yogat—by My divine potency, yogamaya.

47 The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, I granted you My favour today, revealing this effulgent Universal Form, this Form never seen before. My Form I have revealed by My divine potency.

na veda-yajnadhyayanair na danair
 na cha kriyabhir na tapobhir ugraih
 evam-rupah sakya aham nrloke
 drastum tvad-anyena kuru-pravira [48]
 ma te vyatha ma cha vimudha-bhavo
 drstva rupam ghoram idrn mamedam
 vyapeta-bhih prita-manah punas tvam
 tad eva me rupam idam prapasya [49]

(he) kuru-pravira—O most valiant of the Kauravas; nr-loke—in this human plane; na veda-yajna-adhyayanaih—neither by study of the Vedas or Vedic sacrifices; na danaih—nor by giving land, etc. in charity; na kriyabhih—nor by rituals; na cha tapobhih ugraih—nor by severe austerity; sakya—can; aham—I; drastum—be seen; evam-rupah—in such a (universal) form; tvat-anyena—by persons other than you. te vyatha ma (astu)—Be not bewildered; drstva—seeing; mama rupam—My form; idrk idam ghoram—of such terrible feature; cha—and; ma (astu)—be not; vimudha-bhava—bewildered. vyapeta-bhih (san)—Being free of fear; prita-manah—and contented; tvam prapasya—behold; idam—this; tat rupam eva—four-armed form; me—of Mine; punah—again.

48–49 O Arjuna, most valiant of the Kauravas, no one in the human world can see this form of Mine you have seen, neither by study of the Veda, nor by sacrifices, charity, rituals or austerity. Do not be bewildered seeing this terrible aspect of Me, do not fear! Now, with a peaceful heart, behold My four-arm Form once again.

sanjaya uvacha
 ity arjunam vasudevas tathoktva
 svakam rupam darsayamasa bhuyah
 asvasayamasa cha bhitam enam
 bhutva punah saumya-vapur mahatma [50]

sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: uktva—speaking; iti—thus; arjunam—to Arjuna; vasudevah—Sri Krishna; bhuyah—again; darsayamasa—revealed; tatha svakam rupam—His own form; punah cha—and once again; bhutva—appearing; mahatma—as the most merciful Sri Krishna; saumya-vapuh—of charming (hu-

man) feature, dressed in yellow as familiar to Arjuna; asvasayamasa—He pacified; enam bhitam—the fearful Arjuna.

50 Sanjaya said: Saying this to Arjuna, Lord Krishna once again revealed His Vishnu Form. Then finally, Sri Krishna revealed His most charming aspect, showing Himself as merciful Krishna with two arms and human features. Arjuna at last saw Krishna's beautiful original Form dressed with yellow clothing, wearing the Kaustubha jewel and a perfumed garland. Appearing thus, the Lord reassured fearful Arjuna.

arjuna uvacha

*drstvedam manusam rupam tava saumyam janardana
idanim asmi samvrttah sa-chetah prakrtim gatah [51]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) janardana—O Krishna; drstva—seeing; idam—this; saumyam—charming; manusam—human-featured; rupam—form; tava—of Yours; idanim—now; sa-chetah samvrttah—I am pacified; prakrtim gatah asmi—and composed again.

51 Arjuna said: O Janardan! Seeing at last Your divine, human features I feel calm and composed once again.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*sudurdarsam idam rupam drstavan asi yan mama
deva apy asya rupasya nityam darsana-kanksinah [52]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: idam rupam—this sach-chid-ananda form; mama—of Mine; yat—which; (tvam)—you; drstavan asi—are seeing before you; sudurdarsam—is very rarely seen. devah api—Even the gods; nityam darsana-kanksinah—ever aspire for a glimpse; asya rupasya—of this form.

52 Sri Krishna said: O Arjuna, it is very rare for anyone to see My form you now behold. Even the gods constantly aspire for a glimpse of this human-like Form.

naham vedair na tapasa na danena na chejyaya

sakya evam-vidho drastum drstavan asi yan mama [53]

na vedaih—Neither by study of the Vedas; na tapasa—nor by severe austerities such as the Chandrayan vow; na danena—nor by giving land, etc. in charity; na ijjaya cha—nor by great sacrifices such as Agnistoma; (kaschit) sakyah—is anyone able; drastum aham—to see Me; evam-vidhah mama—in this eternal form of Mine, of human features; yat—which; (tvam)—you; drstavan asi—are seeing.

53 Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by austerity and sacrifice can anyone see My Krishna Form. My human-like eternal Form you see now.

*bhaktya tv ananyaya sanya aham evam-vidho 'rjuna
jnatum drastun cha tattvena praveṣṭun cha parantapa [54]*

(he) parantapa—O conqueror of the enemy; (he) arjuna—O Arjuna; tu—yet; evam-vidhah—in this form; aham sanyah (asmi)—can I; jnatum—be known; tattvena—in truth; drastun cha—and be seen; praveṣṭun cha—and My Pastimes be entered into; ananyaya—by exclusive; bhaktya—devotion; (bhaktena)—by the pure devotee.

54 O Arjuna, conqueror of the enemy, only by pure devotion is it possible to know Me, to see Me, and to enter My divine pastimes.

*mat-karma-kṛn mat-paramo mad-bhaktah sāṅga-varjitah
nirvairah sarva-bhūtesu yah sa mam eti pandava [55]*

(he) pandava—O son of Pandu; mat-bhaktah—My devotee; yah—who; mat-karma-kṛt—serves Me; mat-paramah—knowing Me as the supreme; (yah) sāṅga-varjitah—giving up all attachment to material objects; nirvairah—and free from enmity; sarva-bhūtesu—towards all beings; sa—such a person; eti—attains; mam—Me.

55 O Arjuna, a devotee who gives up all their attachments, whose heart is totally free from enmity, who feels respect for all beings, serving Me wholeheartedly and knowing Me to be the Supreme Being, this devoted soul reaches Me at the final hour.

Chapter Twelve

The Yoga of Love and Devotion

Bhakti-yoga

arjuna uvacha

evam satata-yukta ye bhaktas tvam paryupasate

ye chapy aksaram avyaktam tesam ke yoga-vittamah [1]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: *ye bhaktah*—Those devotees who; *evam*—thus; *satata-yuktah*—constantly with exclusive devotion; *paryupasate*—worship; *tvam*—You, Syamasundar; *cha api*—or; *ye*—those who; (*paryupasate*)—worship; *avyaktam*—the unmanifest, impersonal; *aksaram*—imperishable, Brahma; *tesam*—of these two types of yogis (jnana-yogi and bhakti-yogi); *ke*—who; *yoga-vittamah*—is the best knower of yoga?

1 Arjuna inquired: Of those devotees who are engaged in worshiping You with exclusive devotion (as Shyam-Sundar Krishna, with a human-like form), and of those impersonalists who worship the inexpressible Brahman devoid of form – the omnipresent and infinite Absolute (*nirguna brahma*) they conceive within themselves by intuition – who is the best knower of yoga?

sri-bhagavan uvacha

mayy avesya mano ye mam nitya-yukta upasate

sraddhaya parayopetas te me yuktatama matah [2]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *ye*—Those who; *sraddhaya upetah*—with faith; *paraya*—transcendental to the mundane; *avesya*—have absorbed; *manah*—the mind; *mayi*—in thought of Me, Syamasundar; *nitya-yuktah*—always engaged in exclusive devotion; (*iti*)—thus; *upasate*—worship; *mam*—Me; *te*—they; *yuktatamah*—are the best knowers of yoga. (*iti*)—This is; *me*—My; *matah*—opinion.

2 The Supreme Lord said: In My opinion, those who worship Me constantly with exclusive devotion. The faithful devotees whose thoughts are firmly fixed in Me, Shyam-Sundar Krishna. They are the better knowers of yoga.

ye tv aksaram anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate

sarvatra-gam achintyan cha kutastham achalam dhruvam [3]

sanniyamyendriya-gramam sarvatra sama-buddhayah

te prapnuvanti mam eva sarva-bhuta-hite ratah [4]

ye tu—But those who; *sanniyamya*—fully control; *indriya-gramam*—all the senses; *sama-buddhayah*—with equanimity; *sarvatra*—for everything; *ratah*—(who are) dedicated; *sarva-bhuta-hite*—to the welfare of all beings; (*iti*)—and thus; *paryupasate*—worship; (*me*)—My; *anirdesyam*—indefinable; *avyaktam*—unman-

ifest, impersonal; sarvatra-gam-all-pervading; achintyam-inconceivable; kuta-stham-unchanging; achalam-immovable; dhruvam-eternal; aksaram cha-attributeless aspect of Brahma; te eva-they, too; prapnuvanti-attain; mam-Me (as My Brahma effulgence).

3-4 However, those who worship Me as abstract Brahman, the incomprehensible, inexpressible Absolute, they too attain Me (as Brahman). The *jnana-yogi* full of adoration for the inconceivable, formless Absolute, the *jnani* who keeps their senses under control and sees everything with a calm and tranquil view, always remaining dedicated to the welfare of all beings, this *yogi* attains Brahman.

*kleso 'dhikataras tesam avyaktasakta-chetasam
avyakta hi gatih duhkham dehavadbhir avapyate [5]*

tesam-For those; avyakta-asakta-chetasam-of minds attached to the unmanifest; (bhavati)-there is; adhikatarah-greater; klesah-struggle; hi-as; avyakta gatih-the way of attaining the unmanifest, the impersonal Brahma; avapyate-is attained; duhkham-with difficulty; dehavadbhih-by the embodied soul.

5 People whose minds are attached to shapeless Brahman must undergo a greater struggle because the path to attain the unembodied Absolute is difficult for an embodied soul.

*ye tu sarvani karmani mayi sannyasya mat-parah
ananyenaiva yogena mam dhyayantah upasate [6]
tesam aham samuddharta mrtyu-samsara-sagarat
bhavami na chirat partha mayy avesita-chetasam [7]*

ye tu-But those who; sannyasya-offering; sarvani-all; karmani-actions; mayi-to Me; mat-parah-taking refuge in Me; mam dhyayantah-meditating on Me; ananyena yogena eva-with exclusive devotion; upasate-thus worship (Me); (he) partha-O Arjuna; aham-I; na chirat-without delay; bhavami-become; samuddharta-the deliverer; mrtyu-samsara-sagarat-from the deathly ocean of material suffering; tesam-of those persons; avesita-chetasam-whose hearts are absorbed in thought; mayi-of Me.

6-7 But those who offer all their actions to Me, who take refuge in Me with hearts absorbed in Me, maintaining feelings of pure devotion and worshipping Me exclusively, I swiftly deliver those souls from *samsara* the deathly ocean of material suffering.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

It is a common mistake to think Lord Sri Krishna considers as equals both the devotees who worship God as a Person and impersonalists who regard God as impersonal Brahman, a formless being. In reply to Arjuna's doubt in this respect, the Lord clearly said (Gita 12.2) the personalists are better knowers of yoga than the impersonalists. Impersonalists are also given a chance to reach

the Supreme Being, but the worshipers of impersonal Brahman only reach Brahman, the intangible aspect of the Supreme Lord.

*mayi eva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim nivesaya
nivasisyasi mayi eva ata urdhvam na samsayah [8]*

adhatsva—Steady; manah—your mind; mayi eva—in Me alone. nivesaya—Repose; buddhim—your intelligence; mayi (eva)—in Me alone. nivasisyasi—You will abide; mayi eva—in Me; atah urdhvam—hereafter; na samsayah—there is no doubt.

8 Fix your mind on Me and rest your intelligence in Me and you will live in Me constantly. Of this there is no doubt.

*atha chittam samadhatum na saknosi mayi sthiram
abhyasa-yogena tato mam ichchhaptum dhananjaya [9]*

(he) dhananjaya—O Arjuna; atha—if; na saknosi—you are unable; samadhatum—to establish; chittam—your mind; sthiram—resolutely; mayi—in Me; tatah—then; ichchha—seek; aptum—to attain; mam—Me; abhyasa-yogena—by the yoga of constant practice.

9 But Arjuna if you are unable to firmly fix your mind in Me then try to attain Me by constantly remembering Me.

*abhyase 'py asamartho 'si mat-karma-paramo bhava
mad-artham api karmani kurvan siddhim avapsyasi [10]
athaitad apy asakto 'si kartum mad-yogam asritah
sarva-karma-phala-tyagam tatah kuru yatatmaiva [11]*

(yadi)—If; (tvam) asi—you are; asamarthah—unable; abhyase api—to practise remembering Me, too; (tad)—then; mat-karma-paramah bhava—concentrate on offering your actions to Me. kurvan api—Also by performing; karmani—actions; mat-artham—for Me; avapsyasi—you will attain; siddhim—perfection. atha—And if; etad api—this, too; asi—is; asaktah—not possible; kartum—to do; tatah—then; mat-yogam asritah (san)—taking shelter in My yoga; yata-atmaiva (bhutva)—controlling your mind; sarva-karma-phala-tyagam kuru—give up, for Me, the fruits of all your actions.

10-11 If you cannot do that either, concentrate on offering your actions to Me, then you will attain perfection by performing your work for Me. But if you cannot do even that then resolve to give up the fruits of your efforts for Me.

*sreyo hi jnanam abhyasaj jnanad dhyanam visisyate
dhyanat karma-phala-tyagas tyagach chhantir anantaram [12]*

hi—For; jnanam—Knowledge of Me; sreyah—is better; abhyasat—than practice; dhyanam—meditation on Me; jnanat visisyate—is better than knowledge. karma-phala-tyagah—Giving up, for Me, the fruits of action; dhyanat—comes from

meditation. *tyagat*—From giving up, for Me, the fruits of action; *santih*—peace ensues; *anantaram*—thereafter.

12 Divine knowledge is superior to mere practice, and constant meditation on Me is superior to knowledge alone. From meditation comes selflessness — after giving up the fruits of all actions for Me a *karma-yogi* realizes the state of perfect peace.

*advesta sarva-bhutanam maitrah karuna eva cha
nirmamo nirahankarah sama-duhkha-sukhah ksami* [13]

*santustah satatam yogi yatatma drdha-nischayah
mayy-arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah* [14]

yah—One who is; *advesta*—without hatred; *maitrah*—friendly; *karunah eva cha*—and compassionate; *sarva-bhutanam*—towards all beings; *nirmamah*—free from possessiveness; *nirahankarah*—free from ego; *sama-duhkha-sukhah*—equipoised in unhappy and happy circumstances; *ksami*—forgiving, tolerant; *satatam santustah*—ever content; *yogi*—a yogi; *yata-atma*—self-controlled; *drdha-nischayah*—of firm resolve; *arpita-mano-buddhih*—who has given his mind and intelligence; *mayi*—to Me; *sah*—such a person is; *mat-bhaktah*—My devotee; *me priyah*—dear to Me.

13–14 Someone who is without hatred, who is friendly, compassionate, and free from possessiveness and ego, equipoised in unhappy and happy circumstances, forgiving and always self satisfied — a self-controlled *yogi* of firm resolve who absorbs his mind and intelligence in Me — this person is My devotee, and dear to Me.

*yasman nodvijate loko lokan nodvijate cha yah
harsamarsa-bhayodvegair mukto yah sa cha me priyah* [15]

yasmat—He by whom; *lokah*—anyone; *na udvijate*—is not disturbed; *yah cha*—and he who; *na udvijate*—is not disturbed; *lokat*—by anyone; *yah cha*—and who; *muktah*—is free; *harsa-amarsa-bhaya-udvegaih*—from elation, anger, fear, and grief; *sah*—he is; *priyah*—dear; *me*—to Me.

15 Someone who causes no disturbance to anyone, and who is not disturbed by anyone, who is free from elation, anger, fear, and grief — he is dear to Me.

*anapeksah suchir daksa udasino gata-vyathah
sarvarambha-parityagi yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah* [16]

yah—One who is; *anapeksah*—without expectation; *suchih*—clean hearted; *dak-sah*—able; *udasinah*—impartial; *gata-vyathah*—fearless; *sarva-arambha-parityagi*—and a renouncer of all selfish undertakings; *sah*—he is; *mat-bhaktah*—My devotee; *me priyah*—dear to Me.

16 Someone who is without expectation, clean hearted, capable, impartial, fearless, and a renouncer of all selfish undertakings — he is My devotee, he is dear to Me.

*yo na hrsyati na dvesti na sochati na kanksati
subhasubha-parityagi bhaktiman yah sa me priyah [17]*

yah—One who is; na hrsyati—neither elated; na dvesti—nor resentful; na sochati—neither laments any loss; na kanksati—nor hankers for the unattained; subha-asubha-parityagi—a renouncer of both auspicious and inauspicious acts; yah bhaktiman—and who is endowed with devotion; sah me priyah—he is dear to Me.

17 Someone who neither laments nor hankers, since he has renounced both auspicious and inauspicious endeavours and is filled with devotion — he is dear to Me.

*samah satrau cha mitre cha tatha manapamanayoh
sitosna-sukha-duhkhesu samah sanga-vivarjitah [18]
tulya-ninda-stutih-mauni santusto yena kenachit
aniketah sthira-matir bhaktiman me priyo narah [19]*

(yah) narah—A person who; samah—sees with equality; satrau cha—an enemy; mitre cha—and a friend; tatha—and similarly; samah—is equipoised; manapamanayoh—in honour and dishonour; sita-usna-sukha-duhkhesu—and in the presence of cold, heat, pleasure, and pain; sanga-vivarjitah—who has given up all attachment; tulya-ninda-stutih—and who considers abuse and praise equally; mauni—who is contemplative or of controlled speech; santustah—satisfied; yena kenachit—in any eventuality; aniketah—who has no attachment to hearth and home; sthira-matir—whose mind is peaceful; bhaktiman—and who is endowed with devotion; (sah) me priyah—he is dear to Me.

18–19 He is dear to me, he who sees an enemy and a friend with equal regard. He who is equipoised both in times of dishonour and honour. He who feels at peace even while suffering severe cold, heat, pleasure and pain. He who has given up all attachments and who considers both abuse and praise equally. He who is contemplative, who is satisfied in all circumstances, and who has no attachment to hearth and home. He is dear to me, this sage whose mind is peaceful and endowed with devotion.

*ye tu dharmamrtam idam yathoktam paryupasate
sraddadhanam mat-parama bhaktas te 'tva me priyah [20]*

ye tu sraddadhanah—Those faithful persons who; paryupasate—adore and follow; idam—this; dharma-amrtam—neatarean path; yatha-uktam—as described; mat-paramah—knowing Me as the supreme goal; te bhaktah—such devotees; atitva—are very; priyah—dear; me—to Me.

20 The faithful devotees know Me as the supreme goal of life. They wholeheartedly follow the joy-filled path I have described to them, and those faithful devotees are very dear to Me.

Sri Rupa Goswami:

O Krishna, O Friend of the needy, whether You chastise me or reward me, in the whole wide world I have no other shelter but You. Whether a thunderbolt

strikes or torrents of fresh water shower down, the chataka bird who drinks nothing but falling rainwater constantly goes on singing and praising the nourishing raincloud.

Chapter Thirteen

Understanding Spirit and Matter

Prakriti-purusha-viveka-yoga

arjuna uvacha

prakrtim purusan chaiva ksetram ksetrajnam eva cha

etat veditum ichchhami jnanam jneyam cha kesava [1]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *kesava*—O Keshava; (*aham*)—I; *ichchhami*—wish; *veditum*—to know; *etat*—about these subjects: *prakrtim*—material nature; *purusam cha eva*—and the person; *ksetram*—the field; *ksetra-jnam eva cha*—and the knower of the field; *jnanam*—knowledge; *jneyam cha*—and the object of knowledge.

1 Arjuna said: O Keshava, I want to properly understand the self (*purusha*) and matter (*prakriti*); and to know what the external field of material activity (*kshetra*) really is, and the internal knower of the field (*kshetra-jnana*). Also, please explain what knowledge is (*jnana*). Sentient beings internally experience knowledge (*jneyam*), please help me understand this.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

idam sariram kaunteya ksetram ity abhidhiyate

etat yo vetti tam prahuh ksetrajna iti tad vidah [2]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) *kaunteya*—O son of Kunti; *idam sariram*—this body; *abhidhiyate iti*—is called; *ksetram*—*ksetra*, or the field. *yah vetti*—One who knows; *etat*—this field; *tat vidah*—the learned; *prahuh*—describe; *tam*—him; *ksetra-jnah iti*—as *ksetrajna*, the knower of the field.

2 The Supreme Lord Bhagavan Sri Krishna said: O Arjuna, a living body is known as a field of life (*kshetra*) because the fruits of actions are sown and reaped in it. Someone who knows a field of activity from within is called a knower of a field (*kshetra-jnana*) by the Veda Rishis, the seers who can see all phases of reality perfectly clearly.

ksetrajnan chapi mam viddhi sarva-ksetresu bharata

ksetra-ksetrajnayor jnanam yat taj jnanam matam mama [3]

(he) *bharata*—O descendant of the Bharat dynasty; *api*—further; *cha*—also; *vid-dhi*—know; *mam*—Me; *sarva-ksetresu*—within all bodies; *ksetra-jnam*—as *ksetraj-na*, the knower of the field. *yat jnanam*—This knowledge; *ksetra-ksetrajnayah*—of the field and the knower of the field; *tat jnanam*—is actual knowledge; *mama matam*—in My opinion.

3 Understand too, that I know all the fields of activity everywhere. And I know all the knowers of all the fields also. It is My conclusion that knowledge of the field and the knower of the field are what constitutes true knowledge (*jnana*), the realization envisioned by the Rishis.

*tat ksetram yach cha yadrk cha yad vikari yatas cha yat
sa cha yo yat prabhavas cha tat samasena me srnu [4]
rsibhir bahudha gitam chhandobhir vividhaih prthak
brahma-sutra-padaish chaiva hetumadbhir vinischitaih [5]*

srnu—Hear; *me*—from Me; *tat samasena*—briefly; *yat tat ksetram*—what that field is; *cha*—and; *yadrk*—how is it constituted; *cha*—and; *yat vikari*—what its transformations are; *cha*—and; *yatah*—wherefrom; *yat*—it develops; *cha*—and; *yah*—who is; *sah*—that knower of the field; *cha*—and; *yat prabhavah*—what his potency is. (*tat*)—That knowledge of *ksetra* and *ksetrajna*; *gitam*—is sung; *vividhaih rsibhih*—by many types of sages; *bahudha eva*—in many ways; *prthak chhandobhih*—by the different Vedas; *brahma-sutra-padaish*—and by the aphorisms of Vedanta; *vinischitaih*—with conclusive; *hetumadbhih cha*—logic.

4-5 Now hear what the field of material activity is, the material domain. Understand the constitution of this domain where souls are creating *karma*. Know its transformations, causes and effects. Understand who the knower of the field is, and his power. This teaching has been taught in many ways by many Rishis of the Veda, and in the aphorisms of the Brahma-Sutra it is explained conclusively.

*maha-bhutany ahankaro buddhir avyaktam eva cha
indriyani dasaika cha pancha chendriya-gocharah [6]
ichchha doesah sukham dukkham sanghatas chetana dhrtih
etat ksetram samasena sa-vikaram udahrtam [7]*

maha-bhutani—The five primary elements; *ahankarah*—ego; *buddhih*—intelligence (*mahat-tattva*); *avyaktam eva cha*—the unmanifest material nature; *dasa indriyani*—the ten senses (the five senses of action—voice, hands, legs, anus, and genital; and the five senses of perception—eye, tongue, skin, nose, and ear); *ekam cha*—and the mind; *pancha cha*—and the five; *indriya-gocharah*—corresponding objects of the senses (form, taste, touch, smell, and sound); *ichchha*—likes; *doesah*—dislikes; *sukham*—happiness; *dukkham*—unhappiness; *sanghatah*—the aggregate, the gross body; *chetana*—consciousness; *dhrtih*—determination; *etat*—all these; *udahrtam*—are described; *samasena*—in brief; *ksetram*—as the field; *sa-vikaram*—with its transformations.

6-7 The five elementary transformations are solids, liquids, heat, gases and space. The elements of material personality are the ego, the intelligence, and the soul's *swabhava* — the un-manifest materialistic nature of an eternal *jiva-self*. Then there is the mind and the five senses, and five organs of sense perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch). Then the five kinds of knowable objects the senses perceive

(sights, sounds, scents, tastes, feelings). A total of twenty four items. Next is a person's conscious state embodying all their egotistical convictions, their deeply felt feelings produced by the three *gunas* that each individual feels are substantial or real. Then desire, hatred, joy and misery, which are states of mind that arise because of dualities — relationships with other living beings and with external objects that can effect one's body. In summary, these are the field of life and its transformations.

*amanitvam adambhitoam ahimsa ksantir arjavam
 acharyopasanam saucham sthairyam atma-vinigraha [8]
 indriyarthesu vairagyam anahankara eva cha
 janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-dosanudarsanam [9]
 asaktir anabhisv-angah putra-dara-grhadisu
 nityam cha sama-chittatvam istanistopapattisu [10]
 mayi chananya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicharini
 vivikta-desa-sevitvam aratih jana-samsadi [11]
 adhyatma-jnana-nityatvam tattva-jnanartha-darsanam
 etaj jnanam iti proktam ajnanam yad ato 'nyatha [12]*

etat jnanam—The following qualities denote knowledge: *amanitvam*—the quality of desirelessness for honour; *adambhitoam*—pridelessness; *ahimsa*—nonviolence; *ksantih*—forbearance; *arjavam*—straightforwardness and simplicity; *acharya-upasanam*—service to the spiritual master; *saucham*—purity; *sthairyam*—steadiness; *atma-vinigraha*—self-control; *indriya-arthesu vairagyam*—detachment from the objects of the senses; *anahankarah eva cha*—absence of egoism; *duhkha-dosa-anudarsanam*—awareness of the miseries; *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi*—of birth, death, infirmity, and disease; *asaktih*—worldly detachment; *anabhisv-angah*—not to dote on; *putra-dara-grha-adisu*—children, wife, home, etc.; *nityam sama-chittatvam cha*—constant equanimity; *ista-anista-upapattisu*—in desirable or undesirable circumstances; *cha-and; ananya-yogena*—singleminded; *avyabhicharini*—undeviating; *bhaktih*—devotion; *mayi-to Me*; *vivikta-desa-sevitam*—residing in a solitary place; *aratih*—indifference; *jana-samsadi*—to mundane association; *adhyatma-jnana-nityatvam*—constancy in self-knowledge; *tattva-jnana-artha-darsanam*—and the vision of the goal of true knowledge; *iti*—thus; *proktam*—has been proclaimed; *(rsibhih)*—by the sages. *yat*—Anything; *anyatha*—contrary; *atah*—to this; *ajnanam*—is nescience.

8–12 Disregard for status or fame, pridelessness, non-violence, forbearance, honesty, service to a true Guru, purity, self-control, detachment from the objects of sense perception, absence of egotism, awareness of the miseries of birth, disease, old age, and death — these are knowledge, *jnana*. Worldly detachment, absence of doting on children, one's spouse, home, etc., constant equanimity in desirable or undesirable circumstances, pure affection for Me, wishing to reside in a solitary place, avoiding association with unenlightened people, constantly developing self-knowledge, seeking spiritual vision and true knowledge — all of these things denote knowledge, *jnana*, and anything opposed to this should be considered ignorance.

*jneyam yat tat pravaksyami yaj jnatvamrtam asnute
anadi mat-param brahma na sat tan nasad uchyate [13]*

(aham) pravaksyami—I now describe; tat—that; yat—which; jneyam—is the object of knowledge; jnatva—realising; yat—which; amrtam—the nectar of life; asnute—is attained. tat brahma uchyate—That is known as Brahman; anadi—beginningless, eternal; mat-param—resting in Me; na sat—beyond being, beyond the material effect; na asat—and beyond non-being, beyond the material cause.

13 I said *kshetra* signifies a body existing in a physical state of existence, and that *kshetra-jnana* signifies both *Paramatma* and *jiva-atma*, the Higher Self and individual self who reside in a living body and know that body. Now understand the object of true knowledge (*jneyam*), the reality one can know through direct realization (*vijnana*), for by knowing this one can attain liberation and immortality. The object of knowledge is the soul's own fully awakened consciousness, filled with insights, that is able to envision the astounding potential of one's own self: a *siddha* uncovers knowledge, finding the truth inside themselves. Transcendental knowledge belonging to oneself arises within oneself, a knowledge that knows the truth about infinite spiritual realities, not only knowledge about finite, material realities. The liberated self realizes they are a beginningless, immortal being endowed with eternal knowledge. A knowing being existing beyond all subtle (*sat*) and gross (*asat*) states of being, and beyond any states where cause and effect have any influence. This knowable reality is Brahman, the Atma oneself — a power belonging to Me, a power subordinate to Me.

Sri Baladev Vidyabhusan:

In this verse the *jiva* is called Brahman because it is endowed with eight magnificent qualities. The Chandogya Upanishad says, “ye atmapahata...,” meaning “the *jiva* is without sin, without aging, without death, without lamentation, without hunger, without thirst, and the *jiva*'s every desire is true, and is always fulfilled.” (Chand. Up. 8.1.5)

The Lord also refers to the *jiva-atma* as Brahman in later verses in the Gita (14.26 and 18.54).

*sarvatah pani-padam tat sarvato 'ksi-siro-mukham
sarvatah srutimal loke sarvam avrtiya tisthati [14]*

sarvatah—Everywhere; *pani-padam*—hands and feet; *sarvatah*—everywhere; *ak-si-sirah-mukham*—eyes, heads, and mouths; *sarvatah*—everywhere; *srutimat*—ears; *tat*—that object of knowledge; *tisthati*—exists; *avrtiya*—pervading; *sarvam*—everything; *loke*—in the universe.

14 Paramatma is omniscient and omnipresent, His faces and eyes are seeing everything. His ears hear everything. His reaching hands and feet go everywhere. He is all-pervading and all-powerful. That divine, infinite Being resides within the heart of every *jiva-atma*.

*sarvendriya-gunabhasam sarvendriya-vivarjitam
asaktam sarva-bhrch chaiva nirgunam guna-bhoktr cha* [15]

sarva-indriya-guna-abhasam—(He) illuminates all the senses and their functions; (*tad api*)—yet; *sarva-indriya-vivarjitam*—is without (material) senses. *asaktam*—(Although) aloof; *sarva-bhrt cha*—(He is) the maintainer of all. *nirgunam cha*—(Although) transcendental to the modes of nature; *guna-bhoktr eva*—(He is) the Lord of all qualities.

15 Paramatma illuminates the senses of living beings, making the senses reveal knowledge to an embodied *jiva*-self. He knows everything everywhere but not through bodily senses, for He has no mortal body, His form is infinite. He exists in His own divine state of being yet He is perfectly aware of all the finite beings. He has none of the qualities of material existence but He has His own qualities.

*bahir antas cha bhutanam acharam charam eva cha
suksmatvat tad avijneyam durastham chantike cha tat* [16]

*avibhaktan cha bhutesu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam
bhuta-bhartr cha taj jneyam grasnisnu prabhavisnu cha* [17]

tat—That knowable is; *bahir cha*—outside; *antah*—and inside; *acharam*—stationary; *charam eva cha*—and moving; *bhutanam*—beings. *suksmatvat*—Due to subtlety; *tat*—that; *avijneyam*—is difficult to comprehend; *antike cha*—near; *dura-stham cha*—yet far. *tat avibhaktam*—That indivisible; *sthitam*—appears; *vibhaktam iva cha*—as divided; *bhutesu*—in the living beings. (*tat eva*)—He; *jneyam*—is to be known; *prabha-visnu cha*—as the manifestor; *bhuta-bhartr cha*—the maintainer; *grasisnu cha*—and the devourer.

16–17 He is situated within and outside all stationary and moving things. He is near, yet far away. Most subtle, He is most hard to grasp. Although indivisible He appears to exist in separate forms, residing within all living beings. He is the Complete Whole of everything, the One Who manifests, maintains and devours all things.

*vyotisam api taj vyotis tamasah param uchyate
jnanam jneyam jnana-gamyam hrdis sarvasya dhisthitam* [18]

tat—He; *uchyate*—is said to be; *vyotih*—the illuminator; *vyotisam api*—of the luminaries; *param*—beyond; *tamasah*—the darkness; (*tat eva*)—He is; *jnanam*—knowledge; *jneyam*—the object of knowledge; *jnana-gamyam*—reached by knowledge (verses 8–12); *dhisthitam*—situated as the Supersoul; *hrdis*—within the hearts; *sarvasya*—of all.

18 He is the illuminator making all the constellations of stars and planets visible. His Power empowers a *jiva*-soul with vision, showing a *kshetra-jnana* all the perceptions they know. That Being is all-knowing and He gives knowledge to souls from within their heart. He is known by knowledge, and is the object of knowledge (*jneyam*).

Sri Baladev Vidyabhusan:

One should not say that verses 14-18 refer to the *jiva-atma*; the *jiva* is the topic of discussion in the verse before that, verse 13. These verses can only be about the Supreme Lord. “His hands and feet go everywhere...” – this can only ever refer to the Lord, never the *jiva*.

*iti ksetram tatha jnanam jneyan choktum samasatah
mad-bhakta etad vijñaya mad-bhāvayopapadyate* [19]

iti—Thus; *ksetram*—the field; *jnanam*—knowledge; *jneyam cha*—and the object of knowledge (the Lord in His aspects of Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan); *tatha uktam*—are described; *samasatah*—in brief. *etad vijñaya*—Realising this; *mat-bhaktah*—My devotee; *upapadyate*—attains; *mat-bhāvayā*—love for Me.

19 Thus the field, knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly described by Me. Meditating on these truths a *jñani* who is not My devotee merges with formless Brahman, knowing he is Brahman. But My devotee goes further and attains pure love for Me in the world of divine love.

*prakṛtim puruṣaṁ cāiva viddhy anādī ubhau api
vikāraṁ cā gunāṁ cāiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavaṁ* [20]
*kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtiḥ uchyate
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhaṇaṁ bhoktṛtve hetuḥ uchyate* [21]

viddhi—Know; *ubhau api*—both; *prakṛtim*—nature—*māyā*; *puruṣaṁ cha*—and the *jīvātma*, individual soul, described as ‘knower of the field’; *anādī eva*—to be beginningless. *viddhi*—Know; *vikāraṁ cha*—the transformations—body, senses, and their functions; *gunāṁ eva cha*—and the transformations of the modes of nature, as happiness, unhappiness, sorrow, and delusion, etc.; *prakṛti-sambhavaṁ*—as born of material nature. *prakṛtiḥ*—Material nature (with the presence of *puruṣa*); *uchyate*—is said to be; *hetuḥ*—the cause; *kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve*—via the presiding gods of the senses, of the production of the effect, as the body, and of the cause, as the senses. *puruṣaḥ*—The person—*jīva*; *uchyate*—is said to be; *hetuḥ*—the cause; *bhoktṛtve*—of the state of being an enjoyer or a sufferer; *sukha-duḥkhaṇaṁ*—of happiness and unhappiness.

20–21 Know that both the person (*puruṣa*) and material nature (*prakṛiti*) and the combination of these two are all beginningless. Know too that all the transformations growing in the field of life are transformations produced by powers of Nature. They are things born

of Mother Nature, Maya. Maya is the maker of the body, senses, mind and intelligence, and Maya is the force stimulating the senses also. The embodied beings — by their own volition — can choose to use their body to create *karma*, wishing to act as a dominant force in the material domain. Or the *jiva* can leave their conditional state and escape their ignorance. The *jiva-atma* has knowledge and intelligence, and can act as they will.

*purusah prakrti-stho hi bhunkte prakrti-jan gunan
karanam guna-sango 'sya sad-asat-yoni-janmasu* [22]

prakrti-sthah—Situating within (the body which is an effect of) material nature; *purusah hi*—a person; *bhunkte*—enjoys; *gunan*—the modes; *prakrti-jan*—born of material nature. *guna-sangah*—Attachment to the modes (as body, senses, etc.); (*bhavati*)—is; *karanam*—the cause; *asya*—of that person's; *sat-asat-yoni-janmasu*—births in higher and lower species.

22 Constantly situated within material nature, a conditioned soul perceives a myriad of things with attributes and qualities born of nature. It is the soul's attachment to this state of affairs that is the sole cause they get reborn repeatedly in different species.

*upadrastanumanta cha bharta bhokta mahesvarah
paramatmeti chapy ukto dehe 'smin purusah parah* [23]

parah purusah—The Supreme Person; *upadrasta*—witness; *anumanta*—sanctioner; *bharta*—support; *bhokta*—maintainer; *maha-isvarah cha*—and Supreme Lord; *asmin dehe*—within this body; *api uktah*—is also described; *iti cha*—as; *paramatma*—Paramatma, the Higher Self.

23 There is also another person in the body, the Higher Self, the witness, guardian — the almighty Lord within everybody, the sanctioner, the support.

*ya evam vetti purusam prakrtin cha gunaih saha
sarvatha vartamano 'pi na sa bhuyo 'bhijayate* [24]
*dhyananatmani pasyanti kechid atmanam atmana
anye sankhyena yogena karma-yogena chapare* [25]

yah—One who; *evam vetti*—thus knows; *purusam*—the Supreme Person; *prakrtin cha*—and material nature; *gunaih saha*—with its modes; *sah*—he; *vartamanah api*—though present; *sarvatha*—in any situation; *na abhijayate*—is not born; *bhuyah*—again. *kechit*—Some; *pasyanti*—see; *dhyana*—by meditation; *atmana*—by the pure consciousness; *atmanam*—the Supersoul; *atmani*—within the heart; *anye*—others; *sankhyena yogena*—by sankhya-yoga; *apare cha*—and yet others; *karma-yogena*—by karma-yoga.

24–25 He is the Over-Soul, Paramatma. And someone who directly knows the Supreme Being and material nature, with its modes of transformation, will never take birth again in any circumstances.

With their pure consciousness, some seers look within and see the Higher Self in their heart in meditation. Others perceive Him through enlightened understanding or by practicing *karma-yoga*.

*anye tv evam ajanantah srutvanyebhya upasate
te 'pi chatitaranty eva mrtyum sruti-parayanah* [26]

anye tu—Yet others; *ajanantah*—not knowing; *evam*—of all these methods; *upasate*—worship; *srutva*—by hearing; *anyebhya*—from others. *te api*—They too; *sruti-parayanah* (*santah*)—when their faith is deepened by hearing; *atitaranti eva*—surpass; *mrtyum cha*—death.

26 There are also those who, not knowing these methods, intently engage in worship of the Supreme Being by hearing of Him from scriptures. When their faith deepens they too surpass the mortal plane.

Srila Rupa Goswami:

“How can someone attain Brahman by worshiping Krishna, a prince of the Yadu dynasty?” To this the Lord replies, “I am the basis, I am the origin of Brahman. I, standing before you, am the form radiating the bliss and knowledge of Brahman. I am the source of Brahman, just as the sun is the source of many rays, being full of plentiful powers.”

— Laghubhagavatamritam 5.221

*yavat sanjayate kinchit sattvam sthavara-jangamam
ksetra-ksetrajna-samyogat tad viddhi bharatarsabha* [27]
*samam sarvesu bhutesu tisthantam paramesvaram
vinasyatsv avinasyantam yah pasyati sa pasyati* [28]
*samam pasyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam isvaram
na hinasty atmanatmanam tato yati param gatim* [29]

(he) *bharatarsabha*—O best of the Bharat dynasty; *yavat kinchit*—whatever; *sthavara-jangamam*—stationary or moving; *sattvam*—being; *sanjayate*—is born; *viddhi*—know; *tat*—that; *ksetra-ksetrajna-samyogat*—as born of the combination of the field and its knower. *yah*—One who; *pasyati*—sees; *parama-isvaram*—the Supreme Lord; *tisthantam*—situated; *samam*—equally; *sarvesu bhutesu*—in all beings; *avinasyantam*—as the imperishable; *vinasyatsu*—within the perishable; *sah*—such a person; *pasyati*—sees perfectly. (*sah*) *hi*—Such a person; *pasyan*—by seeing; *samam*—with equality; *isvaram*—the Lord; *samavasthitam*—dwelling alike; *sarvatra*—in every place; *na hinasty*—does not deceive, deprive; *atmanam*—himself; *atmana*—by himself; *tatah*—and therefore; *yati*—attains; *param gatim*—the supreme destination.

27–29 O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, whatever is born in the world, whether it is moving or stationary, that becomes manifest through a combination of the field and its knower. Someone who sees the Supreme Being within all beings — existing within everything as the Imperishable Reality within perishable bodies — they see perfectly. A person with that vision seeing the Lord dwelling in every place does not deceive themselves. Thus, they attain the supreme destination.

*prakrtyaiva cha karmani kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tathatmanam akartaram sa pasyati [30]
yada bhuta-prthag-bhavam eka-stham anupasyati
tata eva cha vistaram brahma sampadyate tada [31]*

cha—And; yah—he who; pasyati—sees; tatha—that; sarvasah—all; karmani—actions; kriyamanani—are brought about; eva—only; prakrtya—by material nature; sah—such a person; pasyati—sees; atmanam—himself; akartaram—as non-doer. yada—When; (sah)—such a seer; anupasyati—can see; bhuta-prthag-bhavam—the different types of beings; eka-stham—situated in the one nature; cha—and; (bhutanam) vistaram—the projection of all beings; tata eva—from that nature; tada—then; brahma sampadyate—the state of Brahma is reached.

30–31 Someone who sees that all material actions are brought about by material nature and that they themselves do nothing, they can see. Knowing that all living beings exist within the one nature, and that all of the material qualities of living beings are manifestations of nature, that seer of the truth sees reality as it really is.

*anaditvan nirgunatvat paramatmayam avyayah
sarira-stho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate [32]*

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; anaditvat—because of eternality; nirgunatvat—and being transcendental to the material modes; avyayah—and inexhaustible; ayam—the; paramatma—Supersoul; sarira-sthah api—although present within the field; na karoti—neither acts; na lipyate—nor is affected by any action.

32 O Arjuna, the Higher Self Paramatma is beginningless, transcendental and inexhaustible. Although also present within the field where He remains alongside the individual *jiva-atma*, the Higher Self never acts, nor does He become affected by any action.

*yatha sarva-gatam saukshmyad akasam nopalipyate
sarvatravasthito dehe tathatma nopalipyate [33]
yatha prakasayaty ekah krtsnam lokam imam ravih
ksetram ksetri tatha krtsnam prakasayati bharata [34]*

yatha—As; sarva-gatam—the all-pervading; akasam—space; na upalipyate—is not tainted by anything, is untouched; saukshmyat—due to its subtleness; tatha—similarly; atma—atma, the soul; avasthitah—situated; sarvatra-pervading; dehe—the body; na upalipyate—is not tainted or touched. (he) bharata—O Arjuna; yatha—as; ekah—the one; ravih—sun; prakasayati—illuminates; imam—this; krtsnam—entire; lokam—world; tatha—similarly; ksetri—the occupier of the field; prakasayati—illuminates; krtsnam—the entire; ksetram—field.

33–34 O Bharata, space, the most subtle element, pervades everything, yet it is never tainted by anything it contains. Similarly, the innate spiritual qualities of the individual soul pervading a mortal body are separate from the constantly changing body's material qualities. As one sun illuminates the world, the *jiva-soul* occupying a field of activity illuminates that whole field of awareness.

ksetra-ksetrajñayor evam antaram jñana-chakṣuṣa

bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣan cha ye vidur yanti te param [35]

ye—Those who; jñana-chakṣuṣa—through the eyes of knowledge; evam viduḥ—can thus know; antaram—the distinction; ksetra-ksetrajñayoḥ—between the field and its knower; cha—and (can thus know); bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam—the way of liberation of the living beings from material nature; te—they; yanti—attain; param—the Supreme.

35 Those who are able to distinguish between the field and the knower of the field and know the path to liberation any living entity can follow, they are able to escape material nature and attain the supreme goal.

Sri Rupa Goswami:

Anyone who by their actions, mind and words, lives only for the loving service of the Lord is certainly a liberated soul, even though they may appear to be living in the state of material existence.

— Bhaktirasamṛtasindhu 1.2.187

Chapter Fourteen

The Three Divisions of Nature

Gunatraya-vibhaga-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*param bhuyah pravaksyami jnananam jnanam uttamam
yaj jnatva munayah sarve param siddhim ito gatah [1]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *bhuyah*—Again; (*aham*) *pravaksyami*—I shall speak; *param*—the supreme; *jnananam*—knowledge, teaching; *uttamam*—the highest; *jnananam*—of all fields of knowledge; *jnatva*—knowing; *yat*—which; *sarve*—all; *munayah*—the sages; *gatah*—attained; *param*—ultimate; *siddhim*—perfection; *itah*—beyond this mundane plane.

1 The Supreme Lord said: Again, I shall describe My supreme teaching to you, the highest of all fields of knowledge, knowing which the sages attained the ultimate state of perfection beyond this mundane plane.

*idam jnanam upasritya mama sadharmyam agatah
sarge 'pi nopajayante pralaye na vyathanti cha [2]*

upasritya—Taking refuge in; *idam*—this; *jnanam*—knowledge; (*jivah*)—the living being; *agatah* (*santah*)—attaining; *sadharmyam*—the same (spiritual) nature; *mama*—as Mine; *na upajayante*—is neither born; *sarge api*—in the universal manifestation; *na vyathanti*—nor suffers; *pralaye cha*—in the universal dissolution.

2 Taking refuge in this transcendental knowledge the *jiva*-soul attains a divine form like Mine. Realizing that, a soul is not born again in the cosmic manifestation nor do they suffer death in the cosmic annihilation.

Srila Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur:

This verse supports the idea that a plurality of *jiva*-souls are continually existing in the state of liberation. This is also understood from the Rig Veda verse: *tad vishnu paramam padam sada pashyanti surayah diviva caksurata-tam*. “The liberated devotees (plural case) continually see the form of Vishnu the Supreme Lord with their eyes of love.” (Rig Veda Samhita 1.22.20)

*mama yonir mahad-brahma tasmin garbham dadhamy aham
sambhavah sarva-bhutanam tato bhavati bhārata [3]*

(he) *bharata*—O Arjuna; *mahat-brahma*—primordial matter; *mama yonih*—is My place of impregnation; *tasmin*—into which; *aham*—I; *dadhami*—cast; *garbham*—the seed. *tatah*—From there; *sambhavah*—the birth; *sarva-bhutanam*—of all living beings; *bhavati*—occurs.

3 O Bharata, material nature is known as *pradhana* and it is the womb, the field in which I cast the seed of life (in the form of individual souls born from the marginal potency of God known as *Jiva-Prakriti*). In that field all living beings take birth, foremost of them being Lord Brahma the creator.

sarva-yonisu kaunteya murtayah sambhavanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir aham bija-pradah pita [4]

(he) *kaunteya*—O son of Kunti; *yah murtayah*—of all forms which; *sambhavanti*—are born; *sarva-yonisu*—of the wombs of all species; *tasam*—their; *yonih*—womb; *mahat brahma*—is primordial matter; *aham*—and I; *bija-pradah*—the seed-giving; *pita*—father.

4 O Arjuna, primordial matter is the original womb that gives birth to living beings of different species, and I am the seed-giving father.

sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakrti-sambhavah
nibadhnanti maha-baho dehe dehinam avyayam [5]

(he) *maha-baho*—O mighty hero; *gunah*—the qualities; *sattvam rajah tamah iti*—known as goodness, passion, and ignorance; *prakrti-sambhavah*—manifest from material nature; *nibadhnanti*—bind; *avyayam*—the immutable; *dehinam*—resident of the body; *dehe*—within the body.

5 O mighty hero Arjuna, the three modes of nature (goodness, passion and ignorance) are continuously transforming forces of nature. These three *gunas* produce good, bad and painful experiences. The material forces enter and fill the awareness of materialistic beings, producing the direct perceptions and the knowledge known by the embodied beings in all kinds of species — creatures born with various kinds of eyes, ears, noses and other sense organs. Nature produces the bodies of living beings, generation after generation, then nature produces perceptions and instinctive knowledge the living beings are able to know, knowledge realized through ignorance-based intuition. The three *gunas* shape and structure the mind, tinting thoughts in the minds of materialistic living beings with shades of yellow, red and dark blue.

tatra sattvam nirmalatvat prakasakam anamayam
sukha-sangena badhnati jnana-sangena chanagha [6]

(he) *anagha*—O sinless one; *tatra*—among these three; *nirmalatvat*—due to purity; *sattvam*—the mode of goodness; *prakasakam*—illuminating; *anamayam*—and wholesome; *badhnati*—binds; (*dehinam*)—the embodied living being; *sukha-sangena*—with happiness; *jnana-sangena cha*—and knowledge.

6 O sinless Arjuna, due its purity, one of these three modes, the mode of goodness, is an illuminating force, like golden sunlight. It is wholesome but it conditions living beings, encouraging them to search for beauty, happiness and knowledge – and to enjoy the pleasure in that.

rajo ragatmakam viddhi trsna-sanga-samudbhavam

tan nibadhnati kaunteya karma-sangena dehinam [7]

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; viddhi—know; rajah—the mode of passion; raga-atmakam—as the embodiment of desire; trsna-sanga-samudbhavam—born of hankering and attachment. tat—That rajo-guna mode of passion; nibadhnati—binds; dehinam—the embodied; karma-sangena—by action.

7 O son of Kunti, know that the mode of passion is the embodiment of all desires. Born of hankering and attachment, the mode of passion conditions a thinking being to engage in *karma*, in action.

tamas tv ajnana-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinam

pramadadasya-nidrabbhis tan nibadhnati bharata [8]

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; viddhi tu—and know; tamah—the mode of ignorance; ajnana-jam—born of darkness; mohanam—the delusion; sarva-dehinam—of all the embodied beings; tat—that; nibadhnati—binds; (dehinam)—the living being; pramada-alasya-nidrabbhih—with delusion, laziness, and sleep.

8 And O Bharata, know that the mode of ignorance is a force born of darkness, a power enforcing the mentality of dull ignorance. This power of nature creates delusional thoughts, laziness and sleepiness.

sattvam sukhe sanjayati rajah karmani bharata

jnanam avrtya tu tamah pramade sanjayaty uta [9]

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; sattvam—the mode of goodness; sanjayati—dominates; (dehinam)—the embodied living being; sukhe—with happiness; rajah—and the mode of passion; karmani—with action; tu—but; tamah—the mode of ignorance; avrtya—covering; jnanam—knowledge; sanjayati uta—binds one; pramade—with illusion.

9 Goodness conditions an embodied being to enjoy happiness. The mode of passion conditions the animate beings to keep working and remain chained to the wheel of *karma*. And the mode of ignorance covers up knowledge and fills the mind with illusions.

rajas tamas chabhibhuya sattvam bhavati bharata

rajah sattvam tamas chaiva tamah sattvam rajas tatha [10]

(he) bharata—O Arjuna; sattvam—the mode of goodness; bhavati—appears; abhibhuya—defeating; rajah tamah cha—the modes of passion and ignorance. rajah—The mode of passion; (bhavati)—appears; (abhibhuya)—defeating; sattvam tamah eva cha—goodness and ignorance too. tatha—Similarly; tamah—ignorance; (abhibhuya bhavati)—defeats; sattvam rajah—goodness and passion.

10 O Bharata, goodness can overcome passion and ignorance. Passion can overcome goodness and ignorance. And ignorance can overcome goodness and passion. Each mode in turn defeats the others in an unending battle for power.

sarva-dvaresu dehe 'smin prakasa upajayate

jnanam yada tada vidyad vivrddham sattvam ity uta [11]

yada—When; prakasah—illumination; jnanam—of knowledge; upajayate—appears; sarva-dvaresu—in the gateways (the senses); asmin dehe—of this body; tada—then; vidyat iti uta—know by that symptom; sattvam—the mode of goodness; vivrddham—has increased.

11 When the gateways of the body are illuminated with knowledge, this is the full manifestation of the mode of goodness.

lobhah pravrttir arambhah karmanam asamah sprha

rajasy etani jayante vivrddhe bharatarsabha [12]

(he) bharatarsabha—O most noble of the Bharata dynasty; rajasi vivrddhe—with a predominance of the mode of passion; etani—all these symptoms; jayante—are manifest: lobhah—greed; pravrtti—exertion; arambhah—undertaking; karmanam—of activities; asamah—unrest; sprha—and hankering.

12 O Arjuna, most noble amongst the Bharata dynasty, when the mode of passion is predominant in a person then greed, great exertion, unrest, and an urge to undertake difficult activities become manifest in the mind, along with a hankering for success.

aprakaso 'pravrttis cha pramado moha eva cha

tamasy etani jayante vivrddhe kuru-nandana [13]

(he) kuru-nandana—O descendant of Kuru; tamasi vivrddhe—by the force of the mode of ignorance; etani—all these symptoms; jayante—are manifest: aprakasa—dullness; apravrtti—inactivity; pramadah—delusion; mohah eva cha—and bewilderment.

13 O scion of the Kuru clan, by the influence of the mode of ignorance all the worst symptoms of dullness, inactivity, delusion and bewilderment become evident in a person.

yada sattve pravrddhe tu pralayam yati deha-bhrt

tadottama-vidam lokan amalan pratipadyate [14]

rajasi pralayam gatva karma-sangisu jayate

tatha pralinas tamasi mudha-yonisu jayate [15]

yada—When; deha-bhrt—the embodied; pravrddhe (sati)—having developed; sattve—goodness; yati—reaches; pralayam—death; tada tu—then; amalan—the pure; lokan—planes; uttama-vidam—of persons of higher knowledge (worshippers of Hiranyagarbha [Brahma], etc.); pratipadyate—are attained. (jivah) pralayam gatva—When a person dies; rajasi (pravrddhe)—with a predominance of the

mode of passion; jayate—he is born; karma-sangisu—as a human attached to action. tatha—Similarly; pralinah (san)—dying; tamasi (vivrdhe)—when the mode of ignorance predominates; jayate—one takes birth; mudha-yonisu—in the lower species.

14–15 If someone dies in a state of goodness they go into heavenly states of existence full of golden sunlight where the souls with higher knowledge reside. When someone dies in the mode of passion they take birth as a human being attached to worldly life. Then if someone dies in the mode of ignorance they take rebirth in a lower species or in the depths of the sea.

*karmanah suktasyahuh sattvikam nirmalam phalam
rajasas tu phalam duhkham ajnanam tamasah phalam [16]
sattvat sanjayate jnanam rajaso lobha eva cha
pramada-mohau tamaso bhavato 'jnanam eva cha [17]*

(panditah)—The learned; ahuh—proclaim; phalam—the fruit; suktasya karmanah—of good works; nirmalam—is pure; sattvikam—and of the nature of goodness; tu phalam—and the fruit; rajasah—of passionate action; duhkham—is sorrow; phalam (cha)—and the fruit; tamasah—of ignorant action; ajnanam—is ignorance. sattvat—From goodness; jnanam—knowledge; cha eva—and; rajasah—from passion; lobhah—greed; sanjayate—is born; tamasah (cha)—and from ignorance; pramada-mohau—delusion and bewilderment; bhavatah—arise; ajnanam eva cha—and a lack of knowledge; (bhavati)—ensues.

16–17 It is said by the learned that good actions result in purity, passionate actions result in sorrow, and ignorant actions lead to darkness. From the mode of goodness, knowledge arises. From passion, greed. Then from ignorance there is growing bewilderment, delusions, and a confused lack of knowledge.

*urdhvam gachchhanti sattva-stha madhye tisthanti rajasah
jaghanya-guna-vrtti-stha adho gachchhanti tamasah [18]*

sattva-sthah—Persons situated in the mode of goodness; gachchhanti—go; urdhvam—up (to Satyaloka). rajasah—Those in the mode of passion; tisthanti—remain; madhye—in the middle (as humans). tamasah—Persons in the mode of ignorance; jaghanya-guna-vrtti-sthah—tending to lower qualities; gachchhanti—go; adhah—down (suffer).

18 People with the nature of goodness ascend, rising up to Satyaloka. Those who are driven by their passions remain as humans in the middle planes of life. And ignorant and brutal beings get reborn in lower species as animals and plants, born into great ignorance and suffering, a kind of hell.

*nanyam gunebhyah kartaram yada drastanupasyati
gunebhyas cha param vetti mad-bhavam so 'dhigachchhati [19]*

yada—When; *drasta*—the living being, the witness; *anupasyati*—sees; *na anyam*—nothing else; *gunebhyah*—but the three modes of nature; *kartaram*—as the doer; *cha*—and; *vetti*—is able to know; *param*—the Lord, transcendental; *gunebhyah*—to the modes; (*tada*)—then; *sah*—he; *adhigachchhati*—attains; *mat-bhavam*—My nature (My *bhava-bhakti*).

19 Materialistic souls like to live in material existence. They enjoy life, willingly accepting the suffering life brings them. Material life can be alluring but a wise seer knows that the three modes are the true impetus moving the world of *samsara*. Those who know Me, and know I am beyond from the modes of nature, they come to Me to love Me.

*gunan etan atitya trin dehi deha-samudbhavan
janma-mrtyu-jara-dukhkair vimukto 'mrtam asnute* [20]

dehi—The embodied living being; *atitya*—transcending; *etan trin gunan*—these three modes of nature; *deha-samudbhavan*—that appear in the body; *vimuktah (san)*—being liberated; *janma-mrtyu-jara-dukhkaih*—from the miseries of birth, death, and old age; *asnute*—knows the joy of; *amrtam*—immortality, love transcendental (*nirguna prema*).

20 Transcending these modes that manifest within a living body born from Nature, a *yogi* attains liberation from the body's miseries of birth, death and old age. The *yogi* starts to know the joys of immortality.

*arjuna uvacha
kair lingais trin gunan etan atito bhavati prabho
kim acharah katham chaitams trin gunan ativartate* [21]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *prabho*—O Lord; *kaih lingaih*—by what symptoms; *bhavati* (*jneyah*)—can be known; *atitah*—a person who has transcended; *etan*—these; *trin*—three; *gunan*—modes? *kim acharah*—How does he behave? *katham cha*—and how; *ativartate*—does he transcend; *etan*—these; *trin gunan*—three modes?

21 Arjuna said: O Lord, what are the symptoms of a person who has transcended the three modes of material nature? How does he behave? And how does he transcend the modes?

*sri-bhagavan uvacha
prakasan cha pravrttin cha moham eva cha pandava
na dvesti sampravrttani na nivrttani kanksati* [22]
*udasinavad asino gunair yo na vichalyate
guna vartanta ity evam yo 'vatisthati nengate* [23]
*sama-dukhha-sukhah svasthah sama-lostrasma-kanchanah
tulya-priyapriyo dhira tulya-nindatma-samstutih* [24]
*manapamanayos tulyas tulyo mitrari-paksayoh
sarvarambha-parityagi gunatitah sa uchyate* [25]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord replied: (he) *pandava*—O son of Pandu; *yah*—one who; *na dvesti*—neither resents; *prakasam cha*—illumination (the effect of goodness); *pravrttim cha*—activation (the effect of passion); *moham eva cha*—and delusion (the effect of ignorance); *sampravrttani*—when they appear; *na kanksati*—nor hankers for them; *niivrttani*—when they disappear; *yah*—one who; *asinah (san)*—remaining; *udasinavat*—as unconcerned; *na vichalyate*—is not perturbed; *gunaih*—by the modes; *avatisthati*—remains poised; *na ingate*—without wavering; *iti evam (jnatva)*—knowing that; *gunah*—the modes; *var-tate*—are engaged in their functions; (*yah*)—one who; *sama-duhkha-sukhah*—is equipoised in happiness and unhappiness; *svasthah*—is situated within the self; *sama-lostra-asma-kanchanah*—with the vision of equality towards earth, stone, or gold; *tulya-priya-apriyah*—equipoised in desirable and undesirable circumstances; *dhirah*—wise; *tulya-ninda-atma-samstutih*—balanced with regard to abuse and praise; *tulyah mana-apamanayoh*—balanced in honour and dishonour; *tulyah*—balanced; *mitra-ari-paksayoh*—toward friend and foe; *sarva-aram-bha-parityagi*—and is a renouncer of all mundane endeavours; *sah*—that person; *uchyate*—is described; *guna-atitah*—as transcendental to the modes of material nature.

22–25 The Supreme Lord replied: O Pandava, a person who has transcended the three *gunas* is neither resentful of goodness, passion and ignorance when they appear, nor hankering for them when they are absent. Poised, steady in the knowledge that the *gunas* are engaging in activities, he is not distracted by them. He remains unperturbed and unconcerned. He is self-satisfied, and that *buddhi-yogi* sees earthly joys and sorrows to be equal. He sees earth, rocks or gold from an equipoised viewpoint and this is wise. He is steady in desirable and undesirable circumstances, he is not disturbed by abuse, praise, honour or dishonour. He behaves fairly with friends and foes alike, renouncing all types of mundane endeavours.

Srila Sanatan Goswami:

The *antah-karana*, the inner consciousness of an unembodied, liberated soul free from *Maya*, has four divisions: mind (*manas*), intelligence (*buddhi*), ego (*ahankara*), and consciousness (*chitta*). Sometimes in the mind, sometimes in the intelligence, in the ego or consciousness, one will taste overwhelming transcendental bliss. Then for a liberated person in a living body the bliss is also experienced through other senses such as hearing, sight, and speech (when someone utters the Holy Name of the Lord).

– Brihad-Bhagavatamritam commentary 2.2.215

man cha yo 'vyabhicharena bhakti-yogena sevate

sa gunan samatityaitan brahma-bhuyaya kalpate [26]

yah—One who; *bhakti-yogena*—by the yoga of devotion; *avyabhicharena*—without deviation; *sevate*—renders service; *mam cha*—unto Me (the Supreme Lord

Syamasundar); *sah*—that person; *amatitya*—transcending; *etan*—these; *gunan*—modes; *kalpate*—becomes qualified; *brahma-bhuyaya*—to know his internal divine identity (*chit-svarup-siddhi*).

26 A person who serves Me with devotion, without deviation, transcends the three modes of material nature. They become qualified to know their own divine identity that is of the nature of Brahman.

*brahmano hi pratisthaham amrtasyavyayasya cha
sasvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasyaikantikasya cha* [27]

hi—For; *aham pratistha*—I am the basis; *brahmanah*—of the Absolute Truth; *avyayasya cha*—and of the inexhaustible; *amrtasya*—nectar; *sasvatasya cha*—and of the eternal; *dharmasya*—divine Pastimes; *aikantikasya sukhasya cha*—and of the ultimate ecstasy of divine love.

27 I am the Supreme Being, the Source of the pure light of Brahman. I am the Origin of the Jiva-Prakriti, I am the Original Source of every *prana*, each individual radiant *jiva* soul. Every *jiva* is a spark of divine life-force and each soul can attain the sea of immortality and swim in the sweetest elixir, the ambrosial nectar of immortality I produce by My whims, and by the unlimited power of the song of My flute. I am the giver, I am the Teacher giving a taste of Divine Love, the eternal religion that gives the *jiva*-soul everlasting bliss.

Chapter Fifteen

The Supreme Person

Purushottama-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*urdhva-mulam adhah-sakham asvattham prahur avyayam
chhandamsi yasya parnani yas tam veda sa veda-vit [1]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *prahuh*—It is said in the scriptures (when describing this material world): *urdhva-mulam*—“The roots are uppermost as it is rooted in aversion to the highest principle, the Supreme Lord; *adhah-sakham*—the branches face downwards, representing all beings from Lord Brahma down to the lowest species; *avyayam*—and it is endless (for those who desire the independence to enjoy the fruits of their actions); *asvattham*—yet transient; (for a person with devotion to the Lord) it will be ‘gone tomorrow’. *chhandamsi*—The ritualistic verses of the Vedas; *parnani*—are represented by the protective leaves; *yasya*—of the *Āsvattha* or Peepul tree of this material world.” *yah*—One who; *veda*—knows; *tam*—that tree; *sah*—he; *veda-vit*—is a knower of the Vedas.

1 The Supreme Lord said: In *mantras* of the Veda material existence is described as an upside down banyan tree, an ephemeral tree of life. A jungle of living, growing branches that keep withering and dying too perpetually. Verses of the Veda signify leaves of the tree, nourishing the tree, and someone who knows that tree is a knower of the underlying meaning revealed by the Veda.

*adhas chordhvam prasrtas tasya sakha guna-pravrdhha visaya-pravalah adhas
cha mulany anusantatani karmanubandhini manusya-loke [2]*

tasya sakha—Its branches, representing the living beings; *visaya-pravalah*—with shoots, representing the objects of the senses; *guna-pravrdhah*—nourished by the three modes of nature; *adhah prasrtah*—extend downwards as the planes of human, animal, and lower species; *urdhvam cha*—and upwards, as the planes of higher celestial beings. *karma-anubandhini*—According to religious and irreligious actions; *mulani*—some roots, as aerial roots; *anusantatani*—as a secondary causal factor, as the search to enjoy the fruits of actions, have extended; *adhah cha*—downwards also; *manusya-loke*—in the human plane.

2 Branches of the tree of life grow up culminating in blossoming spheres where gods and celestial beings live. Some branches go down producing spheres where humans, animals and lower life forms dwell. Nourished by the three powers of ignorant thinking, passions and piety, the three *gunas*, the tree of life keeps growing new shoots – the countless perceptions experienced by the senses. Aerial roots shooting down seek to take root in the land of *karma*.

*na rupam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nanto na chadir na cha sampratistha
asvattham enam suvirudha-mulam
asanga-sastrena drdhena chhittva [3]*

iha—Within this world; tatha rupam—that inverted form; asya—of the Asvattha tree representing this world; na upalabhyate—cannot be realised (through any method except Vedic knowledge); (asya) antah na—nor its end; adih cha na—nor its origin; sampratistha cha na—nor its continuance. chhittva—Cutting down; enam suvirudha-mulam—this stubbornly rooted (in aversion to the Supreme Lord); asvattham—perishable tree of the material world; drdhena—with the sharp; asanga-sastrena—axe of detachment acquired from sadhu-sanga, association of saints.

3 In the human understanding, this banyan tree representing the living world seems to be an almost inconceivable thing. The meaning of this representation can only be grasped through the Veda, neither the beginning, middle or end of the tree can be imagined ordinarily. From the advice of sages, one gets a sharp axe to cut down the world-tree embodying all of one's own fixations. Using the axe to fell this tree rooted in ignorance, one can at last approach that Reality that is shining brightly above the shadows of the tree of mortality.

*tatah padam tat parimargitavyam yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah tam eva
chadyam purusam prapadye yatah pravrttih prasrta purani [4]*

tatah—and thereafter; yasmin gatah (santah)—having reached that plane from which; (kechid api)—one; na nivartanti—does not return; bhuyah—again; parimargitavyam—one should approach for shelter; tat padam—the holy feet of Lord Visnu; (ekanta bhaktya)—with exclusive devotion; (iti evam)—in this way; prapadye—"I surrender unto; tam eva cha—Him alone; adyam—the original; purusam—Supreme Person; yatah—from whose illusory energy; (esa)—this; purani—perpetual; pravrttih—manifestation; prasrta—has appeared."

4 Entering the land of no return, the bright land where the feet of Lord Sri Vishnu are standing in His full glory, one should approach the Lord for shelter and pray, "I surrender to the Original Person, the Supreme Lord, whose illusory potency Maha-Maya generates the tree of material existence."

Rig Veda Samhita, mantra 1.22.20:

om tad vishnu paramam padam
sada pashyanti surayah diviva caksuratatam
tad vipraso vipanyavo jagrivamsah samindhate
vishnor yat paramam padam

The liberated sages are always conscious of Lord Vishnu's feet they can see with their divine insight. They see the Lord's feet clearly, His feet radiating light like the sun overhead (sada pasyanti surayah). Devotees of Vishnu are conscious of that always, the reality of Vishnu is clearly visible to them (diviva

caksur atatam). The reality of Sri Vishnu is as clear and real as the sun in the sky illuminating the things in the world.

*nirmana-moha jita-sanga-dosa
adhyatma-nitya viniortta-kamah
dvandvair vimuktah sukha-duhkha-samjnair
gachchhanty amudhah padam avyayam tat [5]*

nirmana-mohah (santah)—Having become free from pride and delusion; jita-sanga-dosah—free from the defect of unholy association; adhyatma-nityah—dedicated to self-realisation; viniortta-kamah—completely free from desire; vimuktah—completely liberated; dvandvaih—from the dualities; sukha-duhkha-samjnah—known as joy and sorrow; amudhah—thus undeluded; (te)—those surrendered souls; gachchhanti—reach; tat—that; avyayam—eternal; padam—goal.

5 Free from vanity and misconceptions, aloof from unholy association, dedicated to self-realization and desireless, liberated from the duality of joy and sorrow, un-deluded, the surrendered souls attain the eternal goal.

Srimad Bhagavat Purana (11.15.22):

Sri Krishna said: When a siddha (a yogi) wants to assume a living body that very form manifests immediately. This perfection (kama-rupa-siddhi) becomes possible when a jiva-soul engaged in the practices of mystic yoga absorbs their mind in sattwa-guna, taking shelter under My inconceivable mystic potency Maha-Maya.

*na tad bhasayate suryo na sasanko na pavakah
yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama [6]
tat mama—That is My; paramam—all-illuminating; dhama—holy abode; gatva—having reached; yat—which; (prapannah)—the surrendered souls; na nivartante (tatah)—never return from there. suryah—The sun; na bhasayate—cannot illuminate; tat—that; na sasankah—nor the moon; na pavakah—nor fire.*

6 Surrendered souls reach My eternal abode, never to return to this world. No sun, no moon, no fire — nothing else illuminates My supreme abode that I Myself illuminate with My effulgence.

*mamaivamso jiva-loke jiva-bhutah sanatanah
manah sasthanindriyani prakrti-sthani karsati [7]
eva—Certainly; jiva-bhutah—the spirit soul living being is; mama—My; sanatanah—eternal; amsah—particle, potency. jiva-loke—In this world; karsati—it attracts, adopts; prakrti-sthani—the mundane; manah sasthan indriyani—six perceptual senses including the mind.*

7 The individual soul is a purusha, a person, a particle of life-force belonging to Me. Although eternal, in their embodied existence the materialistic souls adopt the five bodily senses and the mind, the sixth sense, trying to use these things to know and dominate Maya, the material reality called prakriti they are absorbed in.

Tridandi Swami B.H. Bon:

Prakriti and Purusha are both eternal. They existed even before the dawn of worldly time and space, born of the Lord's Potencies which co-exist with Him in the spacious undivided spirit-time that is eternity. The Jiva is Purusha, due to his enjoying mood in his conditioned state. Paramatma is the Lord's Immanent Manifestation between Prakriti and Purusha. The Cosmic Power was dormant in the Lord, then He made it manifest in worldly time when He willed to create the universe. The Jivas also are among the Lord's eternal Potencies and they have stepped into the realm of Cosmic Power by turning their back upon Him, in an act of misuse of their free will. Submitting to the slavery of an enjoying mood, they have a tendency to master phenomena within the bounds of time and space. Albeit the Jivas are essentially all spiritual in their unalloyed existence and it was the Lord's Inward Potency that gave the Jivas their own Tatastha-Nature, or the oscillating tendency upon the margin. The oscillating tendency offered them a free choice to come to Him and be most lovingly attached to Him and His service, or to cast themselves within the bounds of earthly limitations in order to offer adulation unto Maya.

sariram yad avapnoti yach chapy utkramatisvarah
grhitvaitani samyati vayur gandhan ivasayat [8]

yat sariram—Regarding any body which; isvarah—the soul, as master of the body; avapnoti—obtains; yat cha api—and from which; utkramati—it departs; (tada)—then; grhitva—taking; etani—these six senses; vayuh iva—as the wind; gandhan—carries fragrance; asayat—from its source, such as a flower; (sariran-taram) samyati—it goes to enter another body.

8 Maha-Maya, like a flower, inhales a *jiva*-soul, a *prana*, a breath of life-force, then Maha-Maya exhales it at some other place. Like a breeze carrying aromas of flowers that endlessly bloom then fruit and seed, a conditioned *jiva* soul carries the infertile seeds of their misconceptions from one lifetime to the next. Time and again, souls rise up like airs exhaled by flowers. An embodied *jiva* soul keeps going along with all the lingering essences the soul retains, their memories of misconceived conceptions, their reminders of lovely and unpleasant flavours that soul tasted in prior states of being.

srotran chaksuh sparsanan cha rasanam ghranam eva cha
adhisthaya manas chayam visayan upasevate [9]

adhithaya—Presiding over; srotram—the ear; chaksuh—eye; sparsanam—skin; rasanam cha—tongue; ghranam eva cha—and nose; manah cha—and also the mind; ayam—this soul; upasevate—enjoys; visayan—the objects of the senses—sound, etc.

9 Dominating the ear, eye, skin, tongue, nose and mind, the self-deceived self wants to enjoy sensual pleasures it loves and clings to. The different things made of sound, form, touch, taste and smell.

*utkramantam sthitam vapi bhunjanam va gunanvitam
vimudha nanupasyanti pasyanti jnana-chaksusah [10]*

vimudhah—Those thus deluded; na anupasyanti—cannot see; (jivam)—the soul; utkramantam—when departing the body; sthitam va api—or residing in the body; bhunjanam va—or enjoying; guna-anvitam—in association with the senses and their objects. jnana-chaksusah—Persons with the eyes of wisdom; pasyanti—see.

10 Those who are deluded cannot perceive the breath of life, the *jiva* soul, when it is leaving a body. Or dwelling in a body, or enjoying things through their senses. But the wise *yogi* can perceive the *jiva* with their eye of knowledge.

*yatanto yoginas chainam pasyanty atmany avasthitam
yatanto 'py akrtatmano nainam pasyanty achetasah [11]*

cha—And; yatantah—the perseverent, sincere; yoginah—yogis—seekers; pasyanti—see; enam—this soul; avasthitam—situated; atmani—within. yatantah api—But despite endeavouring; achetasah—those of poor understanding; akrtatmanah—lacking self-control; na pasyanti—cannot see; enam—this soul.

11 The *yogi* can see the Lord within the *jiva*-self but those whose intelligence is impure, and have poor understanding, lacking self-control, cannot see their own self however much they try.

*yad aditya-gatam tejo jagad bhasayate 'khilam
yach chandramasi yach chagnau tat tejo viddhi mamakam [12]*

yat tejah—That effulgence which; aditya-gatam—emanates from the sun; bhasayate—and illuminates; akhilam jagat—the entire universe; yat chandramasi cha—and which is in the moon; yat agnau (cha)—and which is in fire; viddhi—know; tat tejah—that effulgence; mamakam—as Mine.

12 The light of the sun illuminates the world. The light of the moon, the radiance of fire too. Know that these powers providing illumination are all powers of Mine.

*gam avisya cha bhutani dharayamy aham ojasa
pusnami chausadhih sarvah somo bhutva rasatmakah [13]
aham vaisvanaro bhutva praninam deham asritah
pranapana-samayuktah pachamy annam chatur-vidham [14]*

avisya cha—Entering; *gam*—the earth; *aham*—I; *dharayami*—maintain; *bhutani*—the living beings; *ojasa*—by My potency. *bhutva cha*—And becoming; *rasa*—atmakah—the essential; *somah*—moon; (*aham*) *pusnami*—I nourish; *sarvah*—all; *ausadhih*—crops. *bhutva*—Becoming; *vaisvanarah*—the power of digestion; *aham*—I; *asritah*—entering into; *praninam deham*—the bodies of the living beings; *pachami*—digest; *chatuh-vidham annam*—the four types of foodstuffs; *prana-apanasamayuktah*—through the agency of the ascending and descending vital airs.

13–14 Entering the earth, I nurture all beings by My fertility. In the form of the life-giving moon, I nourish the rising sap in plants. Within the bodies of animate beings I am the power that absorbs food, I digest the different types of foods through the agency of the *prana* and *apana* airs circulating in a living body.

*sarvasya chaham hrdi sannivistho
mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam cha
vedaish cha sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedanta-krd veda-vid eva chaham* [15]

aham cha sannivistah—I am situated as the indwelling monitor, the Supersoul; *hrdi*—within the heart; *sarvasya*—of all beings. (*jivasya*)—The living being's; *smrtih*—remembrance; *jnanam*—knowledge; *apohanam cha*—and the disappearance of both; *mattah*—arise from Me; *aham eva cha vedyah*—and I alone am the object to be known; *sarvaih vedaih*—by means of all the Vedas. *aham eva vedanta-krt*—In the form of Vedavyas, I am the revealer of the Vedanta; *veda-vid cha*—and the knower of the meaning of the Vedas.

15 I am situated in the heart of awareness of all living beings. I am Purushottama the Higher Self and from Me comes the soul's remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. I alone am the Sweet Absolute, known through study of the Veda. Indeed I am the revealer of the Vedanta — and the true knower of the Veda.

*dvau inau purusau loke ksaras chaksara eva cha
ksarah sarvani bhutani kutastho 'ksara uchyate* [16]

loke—In the fourteen worlds; *inau dvau eva*—only these two types of; *purusau*—conscious entities; (*sthah*)—exist: *ksarah cha*—the perishable; *aksarah cha*—and the imperishable. (*tayoh*)—Of the two; *sarvani bhutani*—all beings, from Lord Brahma down to the lowest stationary beings; *uchyate*—are described; *ksarah*—as perishable, as they are fallen from their true nature; *kuta-sthah*—and the associates of the Lord, situated in their eternally perfect nature; (*uchyate*)—are described; *aksarah*—as imperishable; (*vidvadbhih*)—by the knowledgeable.

16 In this world, there are two types of beings, the perishable and imperishable. All beings from the creator Brahma down to the lowest kinds of stationary life-forms like clumps of grass are perishable beings who remain alive but keep perishing day by day. Apart from them, there are other souls who are situated in their own eternal, spiritual nature — the imperishable beings. These liberated beings form the divine Host of My associates.

*uttamah purusas tv anyah paramatmety udahrtah
yo loka-trayam avisya bibharti avyaya isvarah [17]*

anyah tu—But otherwise; uttamah—the Supreme; purusah—Person; udahrtah—is described; iti—as; paramatma—the Supersoul, Aksara-purus, or the Supreme Imperishable Personality; isvarah—the Lord: yah—who; avisya—entering; loka-trayam—the three worlds; avyayah—in His eternal form; bibharti—is maintaining all beings.

17 Separate from both the perishable and imperishable beings is the Higher Self Purushottama, Paramatma — the Supreme Lord. He has entered the three worlds Bhu, Bhuvah and Swah in His own eternal form. And from within each of the living beings He maintains all the beings that exist.

*yasmat ksaram atito 'ham aksarad api chottamah
ato 'smi loke vede cha prathitah purusottamah [18]*

yasmat—Because; aham atitah—I am transcendental to; ksaram—the perishable beings; cha—and; (aham) uttamah—I am superior; aksarat api—to the liberated souls, too; atah—therefore; prathitah asmi—I am glorified; loke—in the world; vede cha—and in the Vedas; purusottamah—as Purusottam, the Supreme Person.

18 I am Shyam-Sundar Krishna. I am He Who transcends the perishable beings, and I am the Guardian of the divine Host of My imperishable associates. My glories are sung in the world and in scriptures where I am lauded as the Supreme Person, Purushottam.

*yo mam evam asammudho janati purusottamam
sa sarva-vid bhajati mam sarva-bhavana bhārata [19]*

(he) bhārata—O descendant of Bharat; yah—one who; asammudhah (san)—being free from delusion; janati—knows; mam—Me; evam purusottamam—as the Supreme Person; sah sarva-vid—that knower of complete essential truth; bhajati—worships; mam—Me; sarva-bhavana—in all ways (in all spiritual relationships).

19 O Bharata, a liberated soul who knows Me as Purushottam, a soul free from illusion who is able to see I am the eternal and omniscient Lord, and who sees My Form is infinite Bliss — only they know Me perfectly. Those liberated souls love Me, in a spiritual relationship of tranquility, of servitorship, friendship, parenthood or consortherhood.

*iti guhyatamam sastram idam uktam mayanagha
etat buddhva buddhiman syat kṛta-kṛtyas cha bhārata [20]*

(he) anagha—O sinless one; iti—in this way; idam—this; guhyatamam—most hidden; sastram—purport of all the scriptures; uktam—has been described; maya—by Me. (he) bhārata—O Bharat; etat buddhva—taking this to heart; buddhiman—the intelligent persons of fine theistic temperament; kṛta-kṛtyah cha syat—attain their goal.

20 O pure hearted Arjuna, this explains my most hidden treasure, the essential meaning hidden deep within the scriptures. O Bharata,

embracing this knowledge in their hearts, saintly souls with theistic understanding attain perfection and self-fulfillment. Pure devotion does not function whilst conceptions of Brahman and Paramatma are confused with the Bhagavan conception of God, but only when Bhagavan is identified as the Supreme Being: Purushottama, Shyam-Sundar Krishna.

Chapter Sixteen

Divine and Demonic Natures

Daivasura-sampad-vibhaga-yoga

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*abhayam sattva-samsuddhir jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih
danam damas cha yajnas cha svadhyayas tapa arjavam [1]
ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah santir apaisunam
daya bhutesv aloluptvam mardavam hrir achapalam [2]
tejah ksama dhrtih saucham adroho natimanita
bhavanti sampadam daivim abhijatasya bharata [3]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: (he) bharata—O Arjuna; (ete gunah) bhavanti—these are the qualities; abhijatasya—of a person born to a destiny; daivim sampadam—blessed with godliness; abhayam—fearlessness; sattva-samsuddhih—gracious-heartedness; jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih—absorption in the yoga of knowledge (13.8–12); danam—generosity; damas cha—sense-control; yajnah cha—sacrifice; svadhyayah—study of the Vedas; tapah—austerity; arjavam—straightforwardness; ahimsa—nonviolence; satyam—truthfulness; akrodhah—freedom from anger; tyagah—worldly detachment; santih—mental control, tranquillity; apaisunam—freedom from finding fault in others; daya—compassion; bhutesu—for all beings; aloluptvam—absence of greed; mardavam—gentleness; hrir—modesty; achapalam—steadfastness; tejah—vigour; ksama—forgiveness; dhrtih—patience; saucham—external and internal purity; adrohah—freedom from malice; na ati-manita—and freedom from conceit.

1–3 The Supreme Lord said: O Bharata, these are the qualities of a person born of *sattva guna*, the godly nature: fearlessness, graciousness, yearning for self-knowledge, generosity, sense-control, self-sacrifice, a student of the Vedas, austere, sincere, non-violent, truthful, free from anger, detached from worldliness, tranquil, disinclined to see faults in others, compassionate, free from greed, gentle, modest, steadfast, vigorous, forgiving, patient, pure and free from malice and egotism.

*dambho darpo 'bhimanas cha krodhah parusyam eva cha
ajnanam chabhijatasya partha sampadam asurim [4]*

(he) partha—O son of Kunti; (ete gunah bhavanti)—these are the (impure) characteristics; abhijatasya—of a person born to a destiny; asurim sampadam—of the ungodly nature: dambhah—pride (of religiosity, etc); darpah—conceit (on account of one's knowledge, wealth, or high birth); abhimanah cha—considering oneself worshipping; krodhah—anger; parusyam eva cha—mercilessness; ajnanam cha—and ignorance.

4 O Partha, these are the qualities of a person born of ungodly, demonic nature: pride, conceit, egotism, anger, cruelty and ignorance.

*daivi sampad vimoksaya nibandhayasuri mata
ma suchah sampadam daivim abhijato 'si pandava [5]*

daivi sampat—The godly qualities; *mata*—are described; *vimoksaya*—as the cause of liberation; *asuri (cha)*—and the demoniac qualities; *nibandhaya*—as the cause of bondage. (he) *pandava*—O son of Pandu; (*tvam*)—you; *abhijatah asi*—are born to a destiny; *daivim sampadam*—of the godly and virtuous qualities; *ma suchah*—so do not fear.

5 The godly qualities have been described by the sages as the cause of liberation. Ungodly qualities are said to be the cause of bondage. O Pandava, do not fear for you are born from a godly nature.

*dvau bhuta-sargau loke 'smin daiva asura eva cha
daivo vistarasah prokta asuram partha me srnu [6]
pravrttin cha nivrttin cha jana na vidur asurah
na saucham napi chacharo na satyam tesu vidyate [7]
asatyam apratistham te jagad ahur anisvaram
aparaspara-sambhutam kim anyat kama-hetukam [8]*

(he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *dvau eva bhuta-sargau*—these two natures of beings; (*drsyate*)—are seen; *asmin loke*—in this material world; *daivah*—the godly nature; *asurah cha*—and the ungodly. *daivah*—The godly nature; *proktah*—has been described; *vistarasah*—elaborately. *srnu*—Now hear; *me*—from Me; *asuram*—of the ungodly nature. *asurah janah*—Persons of demoniac nature; *na viduh*—do not know; *pravrttin cha*—right action; *nivrttin cha*—and wrong action. *na vidyate*—There is neither; *saucham*—purity; *na*—nor; *acharah api*—good practices; *na satyam cha*—nor truthfulness; *tesu*—in them. *te*—They, the persons of demoniac nature; *ahuh*—say: *jagat asatyam*—“The world is without truth; *apratistham*—baseless; *anisvaram*—godless; *aparaspara-sambhutam*—and everything is born of male and female union. *kama-hetukam*—The reason for existence is lust alone. *kim anyat*—What is there beyond this?”

6–8 O Partha, in this world the living beings are of two natures — godly and demonic. I have described the godly nature to you, now learn about the ungodly. Demonic beings do not distinguish between right and wrong actions. No purity, good practices or truthfulness is found in them. People of ungodly nature say the world is without any truth, baseless and godless, and that living beings are only born because of the sexual union of a male with a female. They say their own life and their individual nature were caused by accidents, and that life has no meaning beyond this; life is born of lust.

*etam drstim avastabhya nastatmano 'lpa-buddhayah
prabhavanty ugra-karmanah ksayaya jagato 'hitah [9]*

avastabhya—Holding; *etam*—such; *drstim*—a view; (*asurah*)—the demons; *nasta-atmanah*—depraved; *alpa-buddhayah*—of low intelligence; *ugra-karmanah*—

of cruel acts; ahitah—of inauspicious nature; prabhavanti—become powerful; ksayaya—for the destruction; jagatah—of the world.

9 Holding such views, depraved demons and men of low intelligence become powerful and engage in cruel, inauspicious activities that can bring about the destruction of the natural world.

*kamam asritya duspuram dambha-mana-madanvitah
mohad grhitvasad-grahan pravartante 'suchi-vratah [10]*

asritya—Giving themselves up to; duspuram—insatiable; kamam—desire; (te)—such demons; dambha-mana-mada-anvitah—full of vanity, pride, and arrogance; mohat—deluded; asat-grahan grhitva—by eagerness for mundane enjoyment; pravartante—engage; asuchi-vratah—in grave malpractices.

10 Giving themselves up to pure fantasies and their insatiable desires for enjoyment, the demons, full of vanity, pride and arrogance, engage in malevolent practices.

*chintam aparimeyan cha pralayantam upasritah
kamopabhoga-parama etavad iti nischitah [11]
asa-pasa-satair baddhah kama-krodha-parayanah
ihante kama-bhogartham anyayenartha-sanchayan [12]*

pralaya-antam—Until death; upasritah—overwhelmed with; aparimeyam cha—unlimited; chintam—cares; (te)—they; nischitah iti—consider that; etavat—only; kama-upabhoga-paramah—enjoyment of desires is the ultimate. baddhah—Bound; asa-pasa-sataih—by the snares of hundreds of wishes; kama-krodha-parayanah—overcome with desire and anger; (te) ihante—they try; artha-sanchayan—to amass wealth; anyayena—unlawfully; kama-bhoga-artham—for the fulfillment of their desires.

11–12 They feel enjoyment is the only goal of life. Until death, they feel burdened by cares. Bound by hundreds of wishes and overcome by their desires and anger, they endeavour to amass wealth deceitfully, always hoping to satisfy their insatiable lust.

Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:

The theory of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence is by no means the fiction that some philanthropists think it is. The term 'commercialism' perhaps best expresses the typical method of the immediate modern age. Everything is being rapidly and visibly commercialised. The nation that possesses the strongest commercial organisations and capacity for production is also the most successful in the struggle for all-round efficient international existence. Nothing, however, is so easy now-a-days as the manufacture of experts. And civilization is being made in turn by making exports from laboratories. Nothing that will sell can be made except with the help of the most up-to-date workshop. Nations judge one another's civilization by the respective sizes of the focal lengths of their biggest and smallest telescopes, and other scientific

appliances. Good looks, good health, strength, a good voice, a charming landscape, everything worth having is being turned to its full commercial use. Such is the age.

Poets and painters rely upon the equally futile resources of their limited imagination, masking the inherent ugliness of the real conditions of mundane, mortal existence. The function of the worldly poet and artist is merely to amuse the imagination in this dream called mundane life.

*idam adya maya labdham idam prapsye manoratham
idam astidam api me bhavisyati punar dhanam [13]
asau maya hatah satrur hanisye chaparan api
isvaro 'ham aham bhogi siddho 'ham balavan sukhi [14]*

adya—"Today; idam—this; labdham—was gained; maya—by me; (punah)—and again; prapsye—I will get; idam manoratham—this other desirable object. idam—This wealth; asti me—is mine; punah—and again; idam api dhanam—more wealth; bhavisyati—will be; (me)—mine." asau—"This; satruh—enemy; hatah—has been destroyed; maya—by me; api cha—and again; hanisye—I will destroy; aparan—others. aham isvarah—I am the lord; aham bhogi—I am the enjoyer; aham siddhah—I am successful; balavan—powerful; sukhi—and happy."

13–14 The demons say, "Today I got what I wanted and tomorrow again I will get what I want. All this is mine, and I will have even more than this in the future. I have destroyed one enemy and soon I will destroy the others. I am successful, powerful, happy.

*adhyo 'bhijanavan asmi ko 'nyo 'sti sadrso maya
yaksye dasyami modisyati ity ajnana-vimohitah [15]*

(aham) asmi—"I am; adhyah—rich; abhijanavan—and high-born. kah asti—Who is; anyah—another; maya sadrsah—like me? (aham)—I; yaksye—will perform sacrifice; dasyami—give charity; modisyati—and enjoy." iti—Thus; ajnana-vimohitah—they are deluded by ignorant notions.

15 "I am wealthy, I am noble. I am an aristocrat lording over others and who can compare with me? I will perform religious sacrifices, give away charity to impress people, and cause people to think I am kind. Thus I will enjoy myself here." Deluded like this, they abide in ignorance.

*aneka-chitta-vibhranta moha-jala-samavrtah
prasaktah kama-bhogesu patanti narake 'suchau [16]*

aneka-chitta-vibhramantah—Their minds full of many vain thoughts; moha-jala-samavrtah—caught in the net of illusion; prasaktah—engrossed; kama-bhogesu—in mundane enjoyment; patanti—they fall; asuchau—to a foul; narake—hell, like Vaitarani.

16 Their minds are always full of vain thoughts, they live in a net of illusions. They are forever choosing to keep themselves engrossed

in physical pleasures. Demonic beings dwell in the foul hells they themselves create by their evil efforts.

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj:

Why do I say “Joy Maa Kali” from time to time? I should not say why, because if you hear then you will feel very shy. It is because it is not appropriate to discuss Sri Sri Radha Krishna’s pastimes in the place where we are living at present. It is impossible. And not only that, but offensive. For that reason I say “Joy Maa Kali.” (Mother Kali is victorious here. She is successful and She is the conqueror) It is an appropriate place here for Mother Kali, but not Radha Krishna. We are trying to discuss about Radha Krishna no doubt, but the liberated souls are praying and trying very hard to discuss this and not one of us is liberated like they are. Still, we have some hankering for hearing about Radha Krishna. For that reason we do some discussion sometimes.

If you teach a parrot the parrot will say, “Radha Krishna, Radha Krishna.” But if you hit the parrot he will say “Tah! Tah! Tah!” What does the parrot really know or understand? This is a fact. It is best if we honour that plane of Sri Sri Radha Krishna’s pastimes from afar. This is why I said you will be shy to hear why I say “Joy Maa Kali”. We are living here within the lap of Mother Kali.

atma-sambhavitah stabdha dhana-mana-madanvitah

yajante nama-yajnaish te dambhenavidhi-purvakam [17]

atma-sambhavitah—Conceited; stabdhah—obstinate; dhana-mana-mada-anvitah—intoxicated by wealth and pride; te—those demons; avidhi-purvakam—ignoring the scriptural injunctions; dambhena—hypocritically; yajante—perform sacrifices; nama-yajnaish—in name only (pseudo-sacrifices).

17 Conceited, obstinate, intoxicated by wealth and grandeur, ignoring insightful scriptural teachings, demons make a hypocritical show of religion and sacrifices.

ahankaram balam darpam kamam krodhan cha samsritah

mam atma-para-dehesu pradvisanto 'bhyasuyakah [18]

samsritah—Given to; ahankaram—egoism; balam—power; darpam—pride; kamam—lust; krodham cha—and anger; (te bhavanti)—they are; pradvisantah—resentful; mam—of Me; (sthitam)—who am situated; atma-para-dehesu—within their own and others’ bodies; abhyasuyakah—and they ascribe faults to the good qualities of saintly people.

18 Given to egotism, pomp, power, lust and anger, they are always resentful of Me, the all-seeing Higher Self situated in their own mind and in the minds and bodies of others. Hatefully, they find faults if they see good qualities in a saintly person. The demons hate to see goodness.

*tan aham dvisatah kruran samsaresu naradhaman
ksipamy ajasram asubhan asurisu eva yonisu [19]*

aham—I; ajasram—continually; ksipami—cast; tan—these; dvisatah—resentful; kruran—cruel; asubhan—inauspicious; naradhaman—decadent persons; samsaresu—into the cycle of birth and death; asurisu yonisu eva—in the wombs of the demoniac.

19 I cast the cruel, inauspicious, decadent demons into rebirths in demonic species.

*asurim yonim apanna mudha janmani janmani
mam aprapyaiva kaunteya tato yanti adhamam gatim [20]*

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; apannah—taking; janmani janmani—birth after birth; asurim—in demoniac; yonim—species; mudhah—these deluded persons; aprapya eva—not reaching; mam—Me; yanti gatim—suffer a fate; tatah adhamam—worse than that.

20 They rise from that state to a human form again, then once again they descend, rotating in a repeating cycle of birth and death. Repeatedly taking birth in demonic forms, these deluded souls never come to Me and never want to love Me. They like to descend into lower, baser states of existence.

*tri-vidham narakasyedam dvaram nasanam atmanah
kamah krodhas tatha lobhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet [21]*

idam tri-vidham—These three kinds of; dvaram—doors; narakasya—of hell; atmanah nasanam—lead to self-destruction; kamah—lust; krodhah—anger; tatha lobhah—and greed; tasmad—so; etat trayam—these three; tyajet—must be abandoned.

21 Lust, anger and greed are the three doors leading to hell and self-destruction. They must be avoided.

*etair vimuktah kaunteya tamo-dvarais tribhir narah
acharaty atmanah sreyaṣa tato yati param gatim [22]*

(he) kaunteya—O Kaunteya; narah—a person; vimuktah—liberated; etaih—from these; tribhiḥ tamah-dvaraih—three doors of darkness; acharati—acts; sreyaḥ—for the benefit; atmanah—of the soul. tatah—By that; yati—he reaches; param—the supreme; gatim—goal.

22 But those who turn away from these three doorways to darkness keep constantly searching for their own higher goal, striving with intense determination to attain a higher destination.

*yah sastra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kama-charatah
na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na param gatim [23]*

sah yah—He who; utsrjya—disregarding; sastra-vidhim—the injunctions of the scriptures; vartate kama-charatah—acts according to his own desires; avapnoti—attains; na siddhim—neither perfection, purification; na sukham—nor happiness; na param gatim—nor the supreme destination.

23 Those who act according to their own desires, disregarding scriptural advice, cannot attain perfection, happiness or the supreme destination.

*tasmach chhastram pramanam te karyakarya-vyavasthitau
jnatva sastra-vidhanoktam karma kartum iharhasi [24]*

tasmat—Therefore; sastram—the scriptural injunctions; karyakarya-vyavasthitau—concerning duty and non-duty; te pramanam—are your authority. jnatva—Knowing; sastra-vidhana-uktam—scripturally enjoined; karma—duty; iha—in this world of action; (tvam) arhasi—you ought; (tat) kartum—to act accordingly.

24 Therefore, let the scriptural injunctions be your precedents. The directions explaining proper duties, and what is not proper duty. Know your own duty by understanding the advice of sages recorded in the sacred scriptures then act in accord with your conscience.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur:

The revealed scriptures are the rays of the sun of divine knowledge.

— Sri Tattva Sutram, verse 41.

Divine knowledge is characterized as the sun whereas all the scriptures are rays of the sun. This saying reveals that no scripture can contain spiritual knowledge to the fullest extent.

Our Shastras, or in other words, books of thought, do not contain all that we could get from the infinite Father. No book is without its errors.

God’s revelation is absolute truth, but it is scarcely received and preserved in its natural purity. We have been advised in the 14th Chapter of the 11th Skandha of the Bhagavat Purana to believe that truth when revealed is absolute, but it gets the tincture of the nature of the receiver in course of time and is converted into error by continual exchange of hands from age to age. New revelations, therefore, are continually necessary, in order to keep truth in its original purity. We are thus warned to be careful in our studies of old authors, however wise they are reputed to be. Here we have full liberty to reject the wrong idea which is not sanctioned by the peace of conscience.

Vyasa was not satisfied with what he collected in the Vedas, arranged in the Puranas and composed in the Mahabharata. The peace of his conscience did not sanction his labours. It told him from inside “No, Vyasa! you can’t rest contented with the erroneous picture of truth which was necessarily presented to you by the sages of bygone days! You must yourself knock at the door of the inexhaustible store of truth from which the former ages drew their wealth. Go,

go up to the fountain-head of truth where no pilgrim meets with disappointment of any kind.”

Vyasa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have been all advised to do so.

Chapter Seventeen

The Three Types of Faith

Sraddhatraya-vibhaga-yoga

arjuna uvacha

*ye sastra-vidhim utsrjya yajante sraddhayanvitah
tesam nistha tu ka krsna sattvam aho rajas tamah [1]*

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) krsna—O Krishna; ka—what; nistha—is the position; tesam—of those; ye—who; utsrjya—ignore; sastra-vidhim—the scriptural injunctions; tu—yet; sraddhaya-anvitah (santah)—faithfully; yajante—worship? (sa kim)—Is that; sattvam—in goodness; aho rajas—or passion; (uta) tamah—or ignorance?

1 Arjuna inquired: O Krishna, what is the position of those who worship with faith but ignore the teachings in the scriptures? Is their faith in the mode of goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), or ignorance (*tamas*)?

sri-bhagavan uvacha

*tri-vidha bhavati sraddha dehinam sa svabhava-ja
sattviki rajasi chaiva tamasi cheti tam srnu [2]*

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: *sraddha eva*—Faith; *dehinam*—of the living beings; *bhavati*—is; *tri-vidha iti*—of these three types: *sattviki*—good; *rajasi cha*—passionate; *tamasi cha*—and ignorant. *sa*—That faith; *svabhava-ja*—is born of their own nature acquired from impressions of previous lives. *tam srnu*—Now hear of that.

2 The Supreme Lord said: Faith is of three types, born of the embodied soul's nature, whether that be good, bad or worse. The innermost heart of a soul is always pure *sattva*, goodness. But from the start of his fallen state when the good heart fell asleep the soul has cultivated a *saguna* (materialistic) temperament. The covering over the heart becomes reshaped by the *saguna* temperament, becoming modified by Maya's qualities passion and ignorance.

Sri Jiva Goswami:

Some thinkers say that the individual spiritual souls are tiny particles of light. It is sometimes said that the individual souls are particles of light emanating from the Supreme Lord's jewel necklace named Kaustubha (Srimad Bhagavatam 3.28.28, 12.11.10 and Vishnu Purana 1.22.68). The individual souls are described as tiny particles of light in these words of Skanda Purana, Prabha-khanda:

“No evidence of the soul having a material form or material characteristics is seen anywhere. Nor is it possible to even speak of its subtle and infinite embodiments. With eyes of knowledge the yogis see that the individual soul is like a tiny particle of sunlight, like a star shining in the sky, like a drop of water on a lotus flower.”

— Paramatma Sandarbha, Anuccheda 46 Text 6

*sattvanurupa sarvasya sraddha bhavati bharata
sraddhamayo 'yam puruso yo yach chhraddhah sa eva sah [3]*

(he) bharata—O descendant of Bharata; sraddha—the faith; sarvasya—of all living beings; bhavati—is; sattva-anurupa—according to their consciousness. ayam purusah—The living being; sraddha-mayah—possesses faith by constitution. sah—He; sah eva—is that; yah yat sraddhah—which his faith is.

3 O Bharata, all people have a particular faith according to their individual mentalities. The nature of a living being is the result of their faith, so their particular faith can be recognised according to the form of reverence or worship they choose to exhibit when they live in the world.

*yajante sattvika devan yaksa-raksamsi rajasah
pretan bhuta-ganams chanye yajante tamasa janah [4]*

sattvikah—Those with faith of the nature of goodness; yajante—worship; devan—gods of the nature of goodness. rajasah—Those of passionate faith; yajante—worship; yaksa-raksamsi—the Yaksa gods and Raksasa demons of passionate nature. anye—Others; tamasa janah—who possess ignorant faith; (yajante)—worship; pretan bhuta-ganan cha—the ghosts and spirits of the nature of ignorance.

4 People with faith of the nature of goodness worship the gods, people with faith of a passionate nature worship supernatural beings like Yakshas and Rakshasa demons, while those with faith of the nature of ignorance worship malevolent beings or ghosts.

*asastra-vihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janah
dambhahankara-samyuktah kama-raga-balanvitah [5]*

achetasah—Ignorant; janah—persons; ye—who; tapyante—perform; ghoram—severe; tapah—austerities; asastra-vihitam—unsanctioned by the scriptures; dambha-ahankara-samyuktah—full of pride and egoism; kama-raga-bala-anvitah—and impelled by desire, attachment, and power.

5 Full of pride and egotism, motivated by ambition, attachment and power, ignorant people perform severe austerities that are not sanctioned by the Vedas.

*karsayantah sarira-stham bhuta-gramam achetasah
man chaivantah sarira-stham tan viddhy asura-nischayan [6]*

karsayantah—torture; bhuta-gramam—the five basic material elements; sari-ra-stham—in the body; (karsayantah) mam cha eva—and also torment Me, in the form of My particle, the spirit soul, the jivatman; antah sarira-stham—in the body. viddhi—Know; tan—them; asura-nischayan—to be of demoniacal conviction.

6 Some torture their body, or expose themselves to the natural elements. Tormenting their own unhappy self, their own distressed identity deep within them, some aim to dissolve their thinking mind in a state of everlasting sleep. They embrace darkness, chaos and misunderstanding, always considering that to be the basis of reality. Know these people as people with a demonic form of faith. Know too, they are people convinced of the certainty of their dark inner convictions.

*aharas tv api sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyah
yajnas tapas tatha danam tesam bhedam imam srnu [7]*

(guna bheda)—According to the three modes of material nature; bhavati tu api—there are also; tri-vidhah aharah—three kinds of food; priyah—pleasing; sarvasya—to everyone. tatha—There are similarly; (tri vidham)—three kinds; yajnah—of sacrifice; tapah—austerity; danam—and charity. srnu—Now hear of; imam—this; bhedam—classification; tesam—of them.

7 According to the three modes of material nature, there are also three kinds of foods people choose by preference. In the same way, three kinds of sacrifice, three kinds of austerity and three kinds of charity. Hear of these.

*ayuh-sattva-balarogya-sukha-priti-vivardhanah
rasyah snigdha sthira hradya aharah sattvika-priyah [8]*

aharah—Foods; ayuh-sattva-bala-arogya-sukha-priti-vivardhanah—that increase longevity, vitality, strength, health, happiness, and loving kindness; rasyah—tasty; snigdha—succulent; sthirah—wholesome; hradyah—and pleasant; (bhavati)—are; sattvika-priyah—dear to persons of the nature of goodness.

8 Foods that increase longevity, vitality, strength, health and happiness, then also foods that are prepared with loving kindness, which are tasty, succulent, wholesome and pleasant, these foods are dear to people of the nature of goodness.

*kato-amlalavanaty-usnatiksna-ruksha-vidahinah
ahara rajasasyesta dukkha-sokamaya-pradah [9]*

aharah—Food; katu-amlalavana-ati-usnatiksna-ruksha-vidahinah—that is too bitter, too sour, too salty, too hot, too pungent, too dry, and overheating; dukkha-soka-amaya-pradah—and which cause pain, sorrow, and illness (bhavati)—are; istah—dear; rajasasya—to the passionate.

9 Foods dear to people with a passionate nature are things too bitter, too sour, too salty, too hot, too pungent, too dry and too heating. These foods cause bodily pain, sorrow and illnesses.

*yata-yamam gata-rasam puti paryusitan cha yat
uchchhistam api chamedhyam bhojanam tamasa-priyam [10]*
yat bhojanam—That food which is; *yata-yamam*—cooked, but left to become cold;
gata-rasam—tasteless; *puti*—odoriferous; *paryusitam cha*—putrid; *uchchhistam*
api—remnants (other than that of worshippable persons); *amedhyam cha*—and
impure foods unofferable in sacrifice (meat, wine, and onions, etc.); (*tat bhava-*
ti)—such food is; *tamasa-priyam*—dear to the ignorant.

10 Foods dear to the ignorant are things that are decayed, foul-smelling, stale and tasteless. Also rotten leftovers and all types of impure foods.

*aphalakanksibhir yajno vidhi-disto ya iyyate
yastavyam eveti manah samadhaya sa sattvikah [11]*
sah yajnah—That sacrifice; *yah iyyate*—which is performed; *vidhi-distah*—accord-
ing to scriptural injunctions; *aphala-akanksibhih*—by one who does not hanker
for its fruit; *manah samadhaya*—with the firm conviction; *yastavyam eva iti*—
and dutifully; *sattvikah*—is sacrifice of the nature of goodness.

11 A sacrifice performed in accord with scriptural directions, faithfully executed by a person free from fruitive desires, is a sacrifice of the nature of goodness.

*abhisandhaya tu phalam dambhartham api chaiva yat
iyyate bharata-srestha tam yajnam viddhi rajasam [12]*
tu—But; (*he*) *bharata-srestha*—O Bharat; *yat*—that which; *iyyate*—is performed;
abhisandhaya—motivated by; *phalam*—remuneration; *dambha-artham api cha*
eva—and which is a show of pomp and grandeur; *viddhi*—know; *tam yajnam*—
that sacrifice; *rajasam*—to be of a passionate nature.

12 But a sacrifice performed in expectation of rewards, or as a display of pomp and grandeur, is a sacrifice of the nature of passion.

*vidhi-hinam asrstannam mantra-hinam adaksinam
sraddha-virahitam yajnam tamasam parichaksate [13]*
vidhi-hinam—Non-scriptural; *yajnam*—sacrifice; *asrsta-annam*—without the
distribution of food, etc.; *mantra-hinam*—without mantra; *adaksinam*—with-
out appropriate offerings to the priests; *sraddha-virahitam*—and without faith;
parichaksate—is called; *tamasam*—ignorant.

13 Worse than this, a sacrifice that ignores advice presented in the scriptures, an event performed without any distribution of food, without uttering appropriate *mantras*, without faith and without offerings to priests, is a sacrifice performed in ignorance.

*deva-dviija-guru-prajna-pujanam saucham arjavam
brahmacharyam ahimsa cha sariram tapa uchhyate [14]*

deva-dviija-guru-prajna-pujanam—Worship of the deity, the brahman, the guru, and the enlightened soul; *saucham*—internal and external purity; *arjavam*—simplicity; *brahmacharyam*—celibacy; *ahimsa cha*—and nonviolence; *uchyate*—are called; *sariram*—bodily; *tapah*—austerity.

14 Active service rendered to a celestial deity, service of a *brahmin*, a *guru* or an enlightened soul, service done in a state of purity and simplicity in an atmosphere of non-violence — these constitute austerity of the body.

anudvega-karam vakyam satyam priya-hitan cha yat
svadhyaya-abhyasanam chaiva vanmayam tapa uchyate [15]

satyam—Truthful; *vakyam*—speech; *yat*—which; *anudvega-karam*—does not disturb; *priya-hitam cha*—and is pleasing yet beneficial; *svadhyaya-abhyasanam cha eva*—and regular recitation of the Vedas; *uchyate*—is called; *vak-mayam*—verbal; *tapah*—austerity.

15 Words that do not cause trouble for anyone, truthful speech, pleasant yet beneficial, as well as regular recitation of the Vedas, these are what is known as verbal austerity.

manah prasadah saumyatvam maunam atma-vinigraha-
bhava-samsuddhir ity etat tapo manasam uchyate [16]

iti etat—All these; *uchyate*—are called; *manasam*—mental; *tapah*—austerity; *manah prasadah*—self-satisfaction; *saumyatvam*—benevolence; *maunam*—stability; *atma-vinigraha-*—mental control; *bhava-samsuddhih*—and pure-heartedness.

16 Serenity, benevolence, stability, mental control and pure-heartedness are what is known as mental austerity.

sraddhaya paraya taptam tapas tat tri-vidham naraih
aphalakanksibhir yuktaih sattvikam parichaksate [17]

taptam—When practised; *yuktaih*—by the devout; *aphala-akanksibhih*—desireless; *naraih*—person; *paraya*—with deep; *sraddhaya*—faith; *tat*—that; *tri-vidham tapah*—threefold austerity (bodily, verbal, and mental); *parichaksate*—are designated as; *sattvikam*—being of the nature of goodness.

17 Actions performed by a selfless, devout soul with faith in the Supreme Lord, a person performing the threefold austerity of thought, word and deed, is seen by the world as an illuminating act of holy revelation, a direct manifestation of pure goodness within the living world.

* NOTE:

Refer to Bhagavad-gita verse 4.24

satkara-mana-pujartham tapo dambhena chaiva yat
kriyate tad iha proktam rajasam chalam adhruvam [18]

tat—That; chalam—unenduring; adhruvam—transitory; tapah—austerity; yat—which; kriyate—is performed; satkara-mana-puja-artham—for the sake of gain, worship, and fame; dambhena cha eva—and performed with great pride; iha proktam—is designated in this world as; rajasam—passionate austerity.

18 That un-enduring, cursory austerity which is proudly performed for the sake of ritualism, name and fame, is known as austerity of the nature of passion.

mudha-grahenatmano yat pidaya kriyate tapah
parasyotsadanartham va tat tamasam udahrtam [19]

tat tapah—That austerity; yat—which; kriyate—is performed; mudha-grahena—with dubious intent; pidaya—causing pain; atmanah—to oneself; va—or; utsadana-artham—for harming; parasya—others; udahrtam—is described as; tamasam—ignorant.

19 That austerity that is performed with dubious intent, involving self-torture, or causing harm, pain or torture to other beings (animal sacrifices), is known as austerity of the nature of ignorance.

datavyam iti yad danam diyate 'nupakarine
dese kale cha patre cha tad danam sattvikam smrtam [20]

danam—The gift; yat—which; diyate—is given; anupakarine iti—without expectation of return; dese—at an auspicious or holy place; kale cha—at an astrologically auspicious time; patre—to a qualified recipient; datavyam cha—and with the conviction that it ought to be given; tat danam—that gift; smrtam—is considered; sattvikam—to be of the nature of goodness.

20 A gift given without an expectation of return, with the conviction that it ought to be given, a gift given at an appropriate place and time to an appropriate recipient, is considered to be a gift of the nature of goodness.

yat tu praty-upakartham phalam uddisya va punah
diyate cha pariklistam tad danam rajasam smrtam [21]

yat tu—And that which; diyate—is given; prati-upakara-artham—with expectation of return; va—or; phalam uddisya—for the purpose of a reward; punah cha—and moreover; pariklistam—(is given) begrudgingly; tat danam—that gift; smrtam—is considered; rajasam—to be of the nature of passion.

21 Otherwise, a gift given begrudgingly, or given in expectation of gaining something in return, or with a desire for a reward such as the attainment of heaven, is a gift of the nature of passion.

adesa-kale yad danam apatrebhyas cha diyate
asatkrtam avajnatam tat tamasam udahrtam [22]

yat danam—That gift which; diyate—is given; asat-krtam—disrespectfully; avajnatam cha—and scornfully; adesa-kale—at an improper place and time; apatrebhyah—to an undeserving recipient; tat—that gift; udahrta—is described as; tamasa—being of the nature of ignorance.

22 The gift given disrespectfully and scornfully to an unworthy recipient at an improper place and time is considered to be a gift embodying ignorance.

*om-tat-sad iti nirdeso brahmanas tri-vidhah smrtah
brahmanas tena vedas cha yajnas cha vihitah pura [23]*

iti—These; tri-vidhah—three words: om-tat-sat—Om Tat Sat; smrtah—are known in the scriptures as; nirdesa—indicating; brahmanah—Brahma, the Supreme Spirit. pura—In ancient times, at the universal manifestation; brahmanah—the brahmins; vedas cha—the Vedas; yajnah cha—and sacrifices; vihitah—were manifested; tena—by these three words.

23 The incantation ‘Aum Tat Sat’ mentioned in the Veda represents Parambrahma, the Absolute. In bygone times, the engineer of creation Brahma manifested the Veda, the sacrificial Fire and the *brahmins* by uttering this *mantra* comprised of three words.

*tasmad om ity udahrtya yajna-dana-tapah-kriyah
pravartante vidhanoktah satatam brahma-vadinam [24]*
tasmad—Therefore; vidhana-uktah—scripturally prescribed; yajna-dana-tapah-kriyah—duties of sacrifice, charity, and austerity; brahma-vadinam—of the followers of the Vedas; satatam pravartante—are always initiated; udahrtya—uttering; om iti—the syllable Om, representing Brahma, the Absolute.

24 Thus, the followers of the Veda always utter Aum, representing Parambrahma, the Absolute, whenever they begin to do their acts of sacrifice, their gifting of charity, and engagement in austerity.

*tad ity anabhisandhaya phalam yajna-tapah-kriyah
dana-kriyas cha vividhah kriyante moksa-kanksibhih [25]*
moksa-kanksibhih—persons aspiring for liberation; (udahrtya)—uttering; tat iti—the word tat, representing brahma, the absolute; kriyante—perform; vividhah yajna-tapah-kriyah—acts of various kinds of sacrifice and austerity; dana-kriyah cha—and acts of charity; anabhisandhaya—without motivation; phalam—for the fruits.

25 Rejecting all desires to gain fruits by their actions, the liberation-seekers begin all their sacrifices by first expressing the word ‘Tat.’

*sad-bhave sadhu-bhave cha sad ity etat prayujyate
prasaste karmani tatha sach chhabdah partha yujyate [26]*

(he) *partha*—O son of Kunti; *sat iti*—the word Sat, representing Brahma, the Absolute; *prayujyate*—is used; *sat-bhave*—to indicate truth, the nature of Brahma; *sadhu-bhave cha*—and persons dedicated to the truth, knowers of Brahma. *tatha*—Therefore; *etat sat-sabdah*—this word Sat; *yujyate*—is uttered; *prasaste karmani*—during auspicious activities.

26 Saying the word ‘Sat’ indicates *brahmins* and the eternal Truth *brahmins* dedicate themselves to. It also indicates auspicious activities.

yajne tapasi dane cha sthitih sad iti chochyate

karma chaiva tad-arthiyam sad ity evabhidhiyate [27]

sthitih—The eternality; *yajne*—in sacrifice; *tapasi*—austerity; *dane cha*—and charity; *uchyate*—is described; *sat iti cha*—by this word Sat. *karma cha eva*—And action; *tad-arthiyam*—for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord; *abhidhiyate*—is designated; *sat iti eva*—by the word Sat.

27 O Partha, ‘Sat’ signifies both the eternality of sacrifice, austerity and charity, as well as the act of satisfying the Supreme Lord.

asraddhaya hutam dattam tapas taptam krtam cha yat

asad ity uchyate partha na cha tat pretya no iha [28]

(he) *partha*—O Arjuna; *yat*—whatever; *hutam*—sacrifice is offered; *dattam*—charity is given; *tapah taptam*—austerity is endured; *cha*—and; *krtam*—action is performed; *asraddhaya*—without faith; *tat*—that; *uchyate*—is described; *asad iti*—as *asad*, untruth; (*yatah tat*)—because that; (*phalati*)—fructifies; *na u iha*—neither in this world; *na cha pretya*—nor the next.

28 O Partha, sacrifice, charity and austerity, or any action performed without faith in the Supreme Being, is considered to be *asad* (an untruth). Such actions cannot bring about an auspicious result, either in this world or in the next.

Chapter Eighteen

The Path of Liberation

Moksa-yoga

arjuna uvacha

sannyasasya maha-baho tattvam ichchhami veditum

tyagasya cha hrsikesa prthak kesinisudana [1]

arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) maha-baho—O mighty hero; (he) hrsikesa—O Lord of all senses; (he) kesinisudana—O slayer of the Kesi demon; ichchhami—I wish; veditum—to understand; tattvam—the subject; sannyasasya—of renunciation; tyagasya cha—and detachment; prthak—separately.

1 Arjuna said: O almighty Lord, Keshi-nisudana, slayer of egotism personified, I wish to understand *sannyasa* and *tyaga*.

sri-bhagavan uvacha

kamyanam karmanam nyasam sannyasam kavayo viduh

sarva-karma-phala-tyagam prahuh tyagam vichaksanah [2]

sri-bhagavan uvacha—The Supreme Lord said: kavayah—the learned; vichaksanah—enlightened personalities; viduh—know; nyasam—renunciation; karmanam—of actions; kamyanam—that are motivated by fruitive desires; sannyasam—as sannyas, renunciation; prahuh—and they say that; sarva-karma-phala-tyagam—the renunciation of the fruits of all actions, whether daily, incidental, or fruitive; tyagam—is detachment.

2 The Supreme Lord said: Wise sages say the renunciation of obligatory and occasional duties is what is called *sannyasa*, and giving up wanting to enjoy any fruit produced by *karma* is *tyaga*.

tyajyam dosavad ity eke karma prahur manisinah

yajna-dana-tapah-karma na tyajyam iti chapare [3]

eke manisinah—Some scholars (generally the sankhyas); prahuh—declare that; karma—action; tyajyam—should be given up; dosavat iti—as imperfect (due to violence, etc.); apare cha—and others (generally the mimamsakas); iti (prahuh)—say that; yajna-dana-tapah-karma—(scripturally enjoined) action of the nature of sacrifice, charity, and austerity; na tyajyam—should not be abandoned.

3 One class of *pundits* believe *karma* should be avoided entirely, since whatever a person aims to do they always do *karma* imperfectly. Others say acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should never be avoided.

*nischayam srnu me tatra tyage bharata-sattama
tyago hi purusa-vyaghra tri-vidhah samprakirtitah [4]*

(he) *bharata-sattama*—O best of the Bharatas; *srnu*—hear; *me*—My; *nischayam*—perfect conclusion; *tatra tyage*—concerning *tyaga*, detachment, or the quality of renunciation; *hi*—since; (he) *purusa-vyaghra*—O best of men; *tyagah*—the quality of renunciation; *samprakirtitah*—has been clearly described (in the scriptures); *tri-vidhah*—to be of three types.

4 O Arjuna, hear My determination on this. As is told in the scriptures, *tyaga* is of three kinds since it arises from three different modes of nature, the *gunas*: *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

yajna-dana-tapah-karma na tyajyam karyam eva tat
yajno danam tapas chaiva pavanani manisinam [5]

yajna-dana-tapah-karma—Duties of sacrifice, charity, and austerity, etc.; *na tyajyam*—should not be given up. *tat*—They; *eva*—certainly; *karyam*—must be performed; (*yatah*)—because; *yajnah*—sacrifice; *danam*—charity; *tapah cha*—and austerity; (*bhavanti*)—are; *pavanani eva*—the purifiers; *manisinam*—of the wise.

5 The nature of goodness (*sattwa*) is to do pious acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity. These acts inspired by goodness should never be neglected, they must be performed. They are purifiers, these actions purify even the wise.

etany api tu karmani sangam tyaktva phalani cha
kartavyaniti me partha nischitam matam uttamam [6]

(he) *partha*—O son of Kunti; *api tu*—but even; *etani*—these; *karmani*—actions; *kartavyani*—must be performed; *tyaktva*—renouncing; *sangam*—attachment; *phalani cha*—and desire for the results. *iti*—This is; *me*—My; *nischitam*—definite; *uttamam*—supreme; *matam*—perfect conclusion (*siddhanta*).

6 These actions must be done, but done without any desire to enjoy benefits personally. And without a misconceived view of oneself as the ultimate doer. Understand that this is My final determination.

niyatasya tu sannyasah karmano nopapadyate
mohat tasya parityagas tamasah parikirtitah [7]

tu—But; *sannyasah*—renunciation; *niyatasya*—of obligatory; *karmanah*—duties; *na upapadyate*—cannot be justified. *parityagah*—Abandonment; *tasya*—of those duties; *mohat*—out of delusion; *parikirtitah*—is called; *tamasah*—renunciation of the nature of ignorance.

7 A *sannyasi* should not give up doing their proscribed rituals. Stopping doing things due to a lack of knowledge is not justifiable, it is false renunciation, *tamasik tyaga*. It is renunciation performed under the influence of the nature of ignorance *tama-guna*.

duhkham ity eva yat karma kaya-klesa-bhayat tyajet
sa krtva rajasam tyagam naiva tyaga-phalam labhet [8]

(yah)—That person who; *iti* (*matva*)—thinks that; *yat karma*—such obligatory

duties; duhkham eva—are troublesome; tyajet—and renounces them; kaya-kle-sa-bhayat—out of fear of physical discomfort; sah—that person; krtva—by performing; tyagam—renunciation; rajasam—of the nature of passion; na labhet eva—cannot attain; tyaga-phalam—the fruit of detachment—enlightenment.

8 When someone abandons their duties because of concerns about physical discomfort, thinking their duties are troublesome, this is *ra-jasik tyaga*, renunciation influenced by passion. Acting in this way one fails to attain the auspicious results that come from *sattwik tyaga*.

*karyam ity eva yat karma niyatam kriyate 'rjuna
sangam tyaktva phalam chaiva sa tyagah sattviko matah [9]*

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; niyatam—obligatory; karma—duties; yat—which; kri-yate—are performed; karyam iti eva—as a matter of duty; tyaktva—abandoning; sangam—attachment; phalam eva cha—and fruitive desire; sah tyagah satt-vikah—constitute renunciation of the nature of goodness; (me) matah—in My consideration.

9 O Arjuna, that type of *tyaga* whereby someone does their work as a matter of duty, abandoning attachment and fruitive desires, is renunciation of the nature of goodness, *sattwik tyaga*. This is My determination.

*na dvesty akusalam karma kusale nanusajjate
tyagi sattva-samavisto medhavi chhinna-samsayah [10]*

medhavi—The wise; tyagi—renunciate; sattva-samavistah—absorbed in the nature of goodness; chhinna-samsayah—having slashed all doubts; na dvesti—neither resents; akusalam—troublesome; karma—duties; na anusajjate—nor is attached to; kusale—duties which bestow happiness

10 Endowed with good qualities, intelligent and free from doubts, a renunciate filled with goodness stays absorbed in the nature of goodness. He does not shirk painful tasks or feel attached to pleasant work.

*na hi deha-bhrta sakyam tyaktum karmany asesatah
yas tu karma-phala-tyagi sa tyagity abhidhiyate [11]*

deha-bhrta—The embodied soul; na sakyam hi—can never; asesatah—fully; tyak-tum—renounce; karmani—actions; tu—however; abhidhiyate—it is said; iti—that; yah sah karma-phala-tyagi—one who renounces the fruits of action; tyagi—is a renunciate.

11 It is not possible for an embodied person to abstain from doing any actions whatsoever. However, someone who renounces the fruits of his actions is a real *tyagi*.

*anistam istam misran cha tri-vidham karmanah phalam
bhavaty atyaginam pretya na tu sannyasinam kvachit [12]*

tri-vidham phalam (iti)—These three kinds of fruits; *karmanah*—of action; *bhavati*—remain; *pretya*—after death; *atyaginam*—for those who desire material enjoyment; *anistam*—undesirable (low or hellish birth); *istam*—desirable (high or godly birth); *misram cha*—and mixed (human birth); *tu*—but; *na (bhavati)*—these fruits do not ensue; *kvachit*—at any time; *sannyasinam*—for those who are *sannyasi*, renounced.

12 After death, those who have not given up attachment to the fruits of their actions must meet with the three results of their actions — pleasure, pain, and the mixture of them. But a genuine *tyagi*, a *sannyasi*, does not experience any of those results.

*panchaitani maha-baho karanani nibodha me
sankhye krtante proktani siddhaye sarva-karmanam [13]*

(he) maha-baho—O mighty hero; *nibodha*—know; *me*—from Me; *etani*—these; *pancha*—five; *karanani*—causes; *siddhaye*—of the accomplishment; *sarva-karmanam*—of all actions; *proktani*—described; *krtante*—in the conclusive knowledge of action; *sankhye*—in the Vedanta scripture.

13 O mighty hero, you should know the five causes of the process that produces *karma*. These five factors are detailed in the *Brahma Sutra*, the scripture called *Vedanta*.

*adhistanam tatha karta karanam cha prthag-vidham
vividhas cha prthak chesta daivam chaivatra panchamam [14]*

adhistanam—(1) The basis, the body; *tatha*—and; *karta*—(2) the ‘doer’, the ego of the knot of spirit and matter; *prthag-vidham*—(3) the separate, various; *karanam cha*—senses—eyes, ears, etc., as the instrument; *vividhas*—(4) the various; *prthak cha*—and separate; *chesta*—endeavours or functions of the vital airs; *atra panchamam*—and the fifth factor; *daivam eva cha*—(5) is the Divine, the Supersoul.

14 All *karma* is accomplished by these five causes: The physical body, the body’s senses that engage in physical actions, the person (the ego, the subject), the intentions the person intends to enact, and Nature.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

The environment where I am living at present, this is earned by me. Earned by my *karma*, my previous action. Man is the architect of his own fortune and I shall have to take the whole responsibility for myself, and not accuse any others when I suffer. In the Gita (5.14) it is mentioned by Krishna, “*swabhavas tu pravartate*.” Krishna says, “I’m not responsible for this worldly suffering, it is because of *swabhava*, the nature of each jiva who is suffering. He is responsible for his suffering.”

Some power has been delegated to Nature by the Lord. Nature is doing things and producing things automatically, but still the Lord’s sanction is there, always. Otherwise, without him, not even a straw can move.

The delegated power is doing things in different places and not in direct connection with the Lord. Suppose a murderer is going to be hanged, who is the cause of that? Is God the cause? He's the cause of everything but still in this case he is not the direct cause. The government also is not the cause, not fully. The real cause is the man who committed the offence, the murder. Because of that he's going to be hanged. His action is the real cause. But if there were no government then he may not be hanged for killing a person. The murderer is the main cause of his own hanging, but another cause is that a government exists and that laws exist. So there are many causes, direct and indirect causes, for things that happen. In the Bhagavad-gita [18.14] it is said that in the background of a particular event there are five causes. The body, the body's senses, the intentions of an embodied person, the ego or mentality of a person, and Nature, which is moving under the direction of the Lord. These are those five causes.

That which is in the person's mental system, which is kept as their thoughts and words, that is *adhyatma swabhavah*. The word *swabhavah* means the nature someone has. And there is *raja swabhavah*, *sattwic swabhavah*, and *tamah swabhavah*. There is the *swabhavah* of the animals, the birds, the beasts, the worms, the gods and the Rishis that are within the circle of Maya, the many stages of life within Maya. The result of karma is contained in the mental system and that produces *swabhavah*.

In the area of karma, of action and reaction in this world, there are different types of *swabhavah*, but after liberation that *swabhavah* will disappear. Still, for the jiva in illusion it is constant. Wherever he goes he has got his mentality, his mind that is connected with exploitation, his mental tendency to try to exploit and enjoy Nature.

We are children of the land of exploitation, but there is another land which is just the opposite. To enter there you must be prepared to sacrifice yourself. If you don't like to be exploited by God, no entrance is possible into that holy land. If you like to submit and serve, with the wholesale serving attitude of self-giving, then you can come in contact with that higher realm.

sarira-vanmanobhir yat karma prarabhate narah

nyayam va viparitam va panchaite tasya hetavah [15]

yat karma—Whatever action; *narah*—a man; *prarabhate*—performs; *sarira-vak-manobhih*—with his body, speech, and mind; *nyayam va*—whether lawful; *viparitam va*—or unlawful; *ete pancha*—these five; *tasya*—are its; *hetavah*—causes.

15 Whether lawful or unlawful, whatever action anyone performs with their body, mind, or speech is caused by these five factors combining together.

*tatraivam sati kartaram atmanam kevalam tu yah
pasyati akarta-buddhitvan na sa pasyati durmatih [16]*

tatra—In this respect; *evam sati tu*—despite this; *yah*—whoever; *pasyati*—sees; *kevalam*—only; *atmanam*—the living being; *kartaram*—as the doer; *sah durmatih*—that ignorant person; *akrta-buddhitvat*—due to impure intelligence; *na pasyati*—does not see.

16 But a wicked fellow who considers himself the only doer never actually sees the reality of his situation because of his impure intelligence.

*yasya nahankrto bhavo buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvapi sa imal lokan na hanti na nibadhyate* [17]

yasya—He within whom; *bhava*—the mentality; *ahankrtah*—of considering oneself a doer; *na*—does not occur; *yasya*—and he whose; *buddhih*—intelligence; *na lipyate*—is not attached to the fruits of actions; *sah*—such a person; *hatva api*—even if he kills; *imal lokan*—the entire world; *na hanti*—he neither kills anyone; *na nibadhyate*—nor is he bound by action.

17 He who is free from egotism, whose intelligence is not influenced by materialistic intentions, even if he kills the entire world, he never kills at all. He only watches the wheel of *karma* moving in the world, doing its actions. Nor does he suffer any consequences.

*jnanam jneyam pariijnata tri-vidha karma-chodana
karanam karma karteti tri-vidhah karma-sangraha* [18]

jnanam—knowledge; *jneyam*—the knowable; *pariijnata*—the knower. *tri-vidhah (iti)*—These three are; *karma-sangraha*—the constitution of action; *karanam*—the instrument, the senses; or the practice to attain the objective (*sadhana*); *karma*—the action; *karta*—the performer.

18 These three form the impetus for action: knowledge, the knowable object, and the knower. These three form the substance of actions: the physical senses, the act, and the doer (*karta*) who is doing actions.

*jnanam karma cha karta cha tridhaiva guna-bhadatah
prochyate guna-sankhyane yathavach chhru tany api* [19]

guna-sankhyane—In the *sankhya* scripture; *jnanam*—knowledge; *karma cha*—action; *karta cha*—and the performer; (*ete*) *prochyate*—are mentioned; *tri-dha eva*—in three divisions; *guna-bhadatah*—according to the three modes of material nature. *srnu*—now hear; *tani api*—of these, too; *yathavat*—as it is.

19 In the *sankhya* scripture, knowledge, action and the doer have been discussed in relation to the three modes of material nature *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Hear of this.

*sarva-bhutesu yenaikam bhavam avyayam iksate
avibhaktam vibhaktesu taj jnanam viddhi sattvikam* [20]

viddhi—You should know; *tat jnanam*—that knowledge; *yena*—by which; *ekam*—one; *avibhaktam*—undivided; *avyayam*—imperishable; *bhavam*—nature; *iksate*—is seen; *vibhaktesu sarva-bhutesu*—within all the diverse living beings; *sattvikam*—as knowledge of the nature of goodness.

20 That knowledge by which the one imperishable and undivided principle (God) is seen everywhere, this is known as knowledge of the nature of goodness, *sattwik jnana*.

*prthaktoena tu yaj jnanam nana-bhavan-prthag-vidhan
vetti sarvesu bhutesu taj jnanam viddhi rajasam* [21]

yat jnanam—That knowledge by which; *vetti*—one experiences; *sarvesu*—within all; *bhutesu*—living beings; *prthaktoena*—separately; *nana-bhavan*—many natures; *prthag-vidhan*—engaged in many pursuits; *viddhi*—know; *tat jnanam tu*—that knowledge; *rajasam*—to be of the nature of passion.

21 That knowledge in which someone perceives many separate or independent entities clashing in many separate pursuits, this is known as knowledge of the nature of passion, *rajasik jnana*.

*yat tu krtsnavad ekasmin karye saktam ahaitukam
atattvarthavad alpan cha tat tamasam udahrtam* [22]

tat—That; *yat tu*—which; *saktam*—is attached; *ekasmin karye*—to the peripheral only, such as the body; *krtsnavat*—as everything; *ahaitukam*—(and which is) irrational; *atattva-arthavat*—not seeking the truth—without spiritual or scriptural conception; *alpan cha*—and trivial; *udahrtam*—is said to be; *tamasam*—knowledge of the nature of ignorance.

22 And that ideology which remains stubbornly attached to the idea of looking at everything from a peripheral viewpoint, considering one's own viewpoint to be all-in-all, without any spiritual or scriptural conceptions whatsoever, and without seeking the truth, this is knowledge born from the animalistic nature of ignorance, *tamasik jnana*.

*niyatam sanga-rahitam araga-doesatah krtam
aphala-prepsuna karma yat tat sattvikam uchyate* [23]

tat karma yat—That action which is; *niyatam*—constantly; *krtam*—performed; *sanga-rahitam*—without attachment; *aphala-prepsuna*—by a person without fruitive desire; *araga-doesatah*—unbiased by likes and dislikes; *uchyate*—is called; *sattvikam*—action of the nature of goodness.

23 An obligatory action, faithfully executed without attachment, performed by a person who does not seek any rewards, and who is unbiased and unaffected by likes and dislikes, is said to be action of the nature of goodness, *sattwik karma*.

yat tu kamepsuna karma sahanakarena va punah

kriyate bahulayasam tad rajasam udahrtam [24]

punah—Again; tat karma yat tu—that action which is; kriyate—performed; karma-ipsuna—by one desiring the result; va—or; sa-ahankarena—by an egotistic person; bahula-ayasam—with great endeavour; udahrtam—is said to be; rajasam—of the nature of passion.

24 And an action performed with great endeavour by an egotistical person who desires to enjoy the fruits of their labours is action of the nature of passion, *rajasik karma*.

anubandham ksayam himsam anapeksya cha paurusam

mohad arabhyate karma yat tat tamasam uchyate [25]

tat karma yat—That action which; arabhyate—is undertaken; mohat—due to delusion; anapeksya—without considering; anubandham—consequence; ksayam—loss; himsam—harm to others; paurusam cha—and one's capability of performing it; uchyate—is called; tamasam—action of the nature of ignorance.

25 Work which is undertaken because of illusions, without consideration of the consequences, or of likely losses or any harm done to others, or indeed of one's own ability or inability to succeed, is action of the nature of ignorance, *tamasik karma*.

mukta-sango 'nahamvadi dhrty-utsaha-samanvitah

siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikarah karta sattvika uchyate [26]

mukta-sangah—Unattached; anaham-vadi—without ego; dhrty-utsaha-samanvitah—patient, enthusiastic; karta—the worker; nirvikarah—who is unaffected; siddhi-asiddhyor—in success or failure; uchyate—is called; sattvikah—a worker of the nature of goodness.

26 A doer engaged in the service of the Lord, who is unattached, without ego, patient, enthusiastic and unaffected by success or failure, is known as a worker of the nature of goodness, a *sattwik karta*.

ragi karma-phala-prepsur lubdho himsatmako 'suchih

harsa-sokanvitah karta rajasah parikirtitah [27]

ragi—The attached; karma-phala-prepsuh—desirer of the fruits of action; lubdhah—covetous; himsa-atmakah—cruel-natured; karta—worker; asuchih—engaged in unscriptural or abominable practices; harsa-soka-anvitah—and always subject to joy and sorrow; parikirtitah—is called; rajasah—a worker of the nature of passion.

27 The worker who is attached to results, hungering for the fruits of action, covetous, cruel, engaged in abominable practices not sanctioned by the scriptures, always in turmoil and distracted by joys and sorrows, is known as a worker of the nature of passion, a *rajasik karta*.

*ayuktah prakrtah stabdhah satho naiskrτικο 'lasah
visadi dirgha-sutri cha karta tamasa uchyate [28]*

ayuktah—The uncontrolled; prakrtah—vulgar; stabdhah—stubbornly arrogant; sathah—deceitful; naiskrतिकah—offensive; alasa—lazy; visadi—despondent; dirgha-sutri cha—procrastinating; karta—worker; uchyate—is called; tamasa—a worker of the nature of ignorance.

28 The worker who is uncontrolled, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, offensive, lazy, despondent and a procrastinator, is known as a worker of the nature of ignorance, a *tamasik karta*.

*buddher bhedam dhrtes chaiva gunatas tri-vidham srnu
prochyamanam asesena prthaktvena dhananjaya [29]*

(he) dhananjaya—O Arjuna; srnu—hear; prochyamanam—as I describe; asesena—fully; prthaktvena—and distinctly; tri-vidham bhedam—the three types; buddheh—of intelligence; dhrteh cha eva—and determination; gunatah—according to the modes of nature.

29 O Arjuna listen attentively. I shall clearly describe the three types of intelligence and determination, according to the three modes of nature.

*pravrttin cha niivrttin cha karyakarye bhayabhaye
bandham moksa cha ya vetti buddhih sa partha sattviki [30]*

(he) partha—O son of Kunti; sattviki buddhih—intelligence of the nature of goodness; sa ya—is that which; vetti—distinguishes; pravrttin cha—virtuous engagement; niivrttin cha—and abstinence from vice; karya-akarye—duty and non-duty; bhaya-abhaye—danger and safety; bandham moksa cha—and bondage and liberation.

30 O Partha, *sattwik buddhi*, intelligence of the nature of goodness, is that form of intelligence which recognizes and chooses to do virtuous activities free from vices. It is intelligence that can see duty and not-duty, danger and safety, bondage and liberation.

*yaya dharmam adharman cha karyan chakaryam eva cha
ayathavat prajanati buddhih sa partha rajasi [31]*

(he) partha—O Partha; rajasi buddhih—intelligence of the nature of passion; sa yaya—is that by which; dharmam—religion; adharman cha—and irreligion; karyam cha—and duty; akaryam eva cha—and non-duty; prajanati ayathavat—are misunderstood.

31 O Partha, intelligence of the nature of passion, *rajasik buddhi*, is misguided intelligence influenced by erroneous beliefs about religion, irreligion, duty and non-duty.

*adharman dharmam iti ya manyate tamasavrtta
sarvarthan viparitams cha buddhih sa partha tamasi [32]*

(he) partha—O Partha; tamasi buddhih—intelligence of the nature of ignorance; avṛta—covered; tamasa—by the mode of ignorance; sa ya—is that which; manyate—considers; adharmam—vice; dharmam—virtue; sarva—arthan cha—and all knowable objects; viparitan iti—contrary to what they are.

32 Intelligence of the nature of ignorance, *tamasik buddhi*, is intelligence influenced by fantasies and illusions. In this case, a vice is imagined to be a virtue. Everything is considered to be the opposite of its true reality.

*dhṛtya yaya dharayate manah-pranendriya-kriyah
yogenavyabhicharinya dhṛtiḥ sa partha sattviki* [33]

(he) partha—O Partha; yaya avyabhicharinya dhṛtya—that unwavering determination which; yogena—with single-minded concentration; dharayate—controls; manah-prana-indriya-kriyah—the functions of the mind, life forces, and senses; sa dhṛtiḥ sattviki—is determination of the nature of goodness.

33 O Partha, fortitude of the nature of goodness is determination with steadfast concentration, unfailingly supporting the clear functioning of the mind, the *prana* (breath of life), senses and actions.

*yaya tu dharma-kamarthan dhṛtya dharayate 'rjuna
prasangena phalakankṣi dhṛtiḥ sa partha rajasi* [34]

tu—But; (he) partha arjuna—O Partha, Arjuna; yaya dhṛtya—determination by which; dharma-kama-arthan—religiosity, desire, and wealth; dharayate—are held; (pradhanyena)—foremost; prasangena—by the contact of which; (bhavati)—one becomes; phala-akankṣi—desirous of their fruits; sa dhṛtiḥ—that determination; rajasi—is of the nature of passion.

34 O Arjuna, fortitude of the nature of passion is reward-seeking, materially attached determination. A type of determination that adheres to some type of ritualistic religiosity, a belief system advocating the idea that amassing wealth and satisfying material desires is right and good.

*yaya svapnam bhayam sokam visadam madam eva cha
na vimunchati durmedha dhṛtiḥ sa tamasi mata* [35]

sa dhṛtiḥ—That determination; yaya—by which; durmedha—a foolish person; na vimunchati—never leaves; svapnam—sleep; bhayam—fear; sokam—sorrow; visadam—depression; madam eva cha—pride, arrogance; mata—is considered; tamasi—determination of the nature of ignorance.

35 Fortitude of the nature of ignorance is the determination of a lazy person who never willingly gives up their foolish plans, their sleep, their fears, their sorrows, depression or arrogance.

*sukham tv idanim tri-vidham srnu me bharatarsabha
abhyasad ramate yatra duhkhsantan cha nigacchati* [36]

yat tad agre visam iva pariname 'mrtopamam
tat sukhām sattvikam proktam atma-buddhi-prasada-jam [37]

(he) bharatarsabha—O best of the Bharatas; idanim tu—now; srnu—hear; me—from Me; tri-vidham sukhām—about the three kinds of happiness: yatra—that in which; ramate—one delights; abhyasat—through his practices; nigachchhati cha—and attains; duhkha-antam—the cessation of unhappiness; yat tat—and that which; agre—initially; visam iva—is like poison; pariname—and subsequently; amṛta-upamam—like nectar; tat sukhām—such happiness; atma-buddhi-prasada-jam—born of the purity of self-realisation; proktam—is called; sattvikam—happiness of the nature of goodness.

36–37 O Bharata, hear from Me about the three kinds of happiness. That state in which one is joyful while doing his practices, seeking to attain the cessation of all unhappiness, and that is like poison in the beginning but ultimately like nectar, this is happiness born of the purity of self-realization. This is happiness of the nature of goodness, *sattvik sukhām*.

visayendriya-samyogad yat tad agre 'mrtopamam
pariname visam iva tat sukhām rajasam smrtam [38]

tat yat—That which; (jayate)—is born; visaya-indriya-samyogat—from the contact of the senses with their objects; agre—and in the beginning; amṛta-upamam—is like nectar; pariname—and subsequently; visam iva—like poison; tat sukhām—that happiness; smrtam—is called; rajasam—happiness of the nature of passion.

38 Happiness born from contact of the senses with physical objects, which is sweet like nectar in the beginning but like poison at the end, is happiness of the nature of passion, *rajasik sukhām*.

yad agre chanubandhe cha sukhām mohanam atmanah
nidralasya-pramadottham tat tamasam udahrtaṁ [39]

nidra-alasya-pramada-uttham—Born of sleep, laziness, and illusion; yat sukhām—that happiness which; agre cha—in the beginning; anubandhe cha—and in the end; atmanah mohanam—is self-deception; tat—such happiness; udahrtaṁ—is called; tamasam—happiness of the nature of ignorance.

39 And happiness which is built upon self-deception from beginning to end, a type of happiness arising out of illusions, is called happiness of the nature of ignorance, *tamasik sukhām*.

na tad asti prthivyam va divi devesu va punah
sattoam prakṛti-jair muktam yat ebhiḥ syat tribhir gunaih [40]

prthivyam va—Either on earth; (manusyadisū)—amongst the humans, etc.; va punah—or again; divi—in the heavenly plane; devesu—amongst the demigods; na asti—there is no; tat sattoam—such entity; yat—which; muktam syat—can be free; ebhiḥ tribhiḥ gunaih—from these three modes; prakṛti-jaiḥ—born of material nature.

40 Amongst all species on Earth, including humans, and indeed even amongst the gods in heavenly spheres, there is no living being who is free from the effects of the modes of material nature.

*brahmana-ksatriya-visam sudranam cha parantapa
karmani pravibhaktani svabhava-prabhavair gunaih* [41]

(he) *parantapa*—O vanquisher of the enemy; *karmani*—the duties; *brahmana-ksatriya-visam*—of the brahman, ksatriya, and vaisya; *sudranam cha*—and sudra sections; *pravibhaktani*—are appropriately classified; *gunaih*—according to the qualities of goodness, passion, and ignorance; *svabhava-prabhavaih*—born of their natures.

41 O Arjuna, the duties of *brahmins*, *kshatriyas* (warriors), *vaisyas* (peasants and traders) and *sudras* (labourers) are detailed in the Veda.

Srimad Bhagavat Purana (11.11.32):

Sri Krishna said, “Realizing the qualities and faults of the *varna-ashram dharma* system I generated, a devoted soul who completely abandons *varnashram-dharma* and devotes themselves to Me becomes the best of all *sadhus*.”

*samo damas tapah saucham ksantir arjavam eva cha
jnanam vijnanam astikyam brahma-karma svabhava-jam* [42]
(etani)—All these; (bhavati)—are; *svabhava-jam*—the natural; *brahma-karma*—duties of the brahmins: *samah*—internal sense-control; *damah*—external sense-control; *tapah*—austerity; *saucham*—external and internal purity; *ksantih*—forbearance; *arjavam eva cha*—straightforwardness; *jnanam*—scriptural knowledge; *vijnanam*—realisation of essential truth; *astikyam*—theistic mentality or firm faith in the teachings of the scriptures.

42 Internal and external sense-control, austerity, purity, forbearance, straight-forwardness, knowledge, realization, and theistic faith — these are the natural symptoms of *brahmins*.

*sauryam tejo dhrtir daksyam yuddhe chapy apalayanam
danam isvara-bhavas cha ksatram karma svabhava-jam* [43]
(etani)—All these; (bhavati)—are; *svabhava-jam*—the natural; *ksatram karma*—duties of the ksatriyas: *sauryam*—prowess; *tejah*—valour; *dhrtih*—endurance; *daksyam*—dexterity; *apalayanam*—never retreating; *yuddhe cha api*—in battle; *danam*—generosity; *isvara-bhava cha*—and regality.

43 Prowess, valour, endurance, dexterity, never cowering in fear, generosity — these are the characteristics of *kshatriyas*.

*krsi-goraksya-vanijyam vaisya-karma svabhava-jam
paricharyatmakam karma sudrasyapi svabhava-jam* [44]

(etani)—All these; (bhavati)—are; svabhava-jam—the natural; vaisya-karma—functions of the vaisyas: krsi-go-raksya-vanijyam—agriculture, cow protection, and trade. karma api—The duty; paricharya-atmakam—of service to the brahmins, ksatriyas, and vaisyas; svabhava-jam—is natural; sudrasya—for the sudra section.

44 Agricultural work, cow protection and trade are the natural work of the *vaisyas*. And the natural habit of *sudras* is to labour for their employers.

sve sve karmany abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah
svakarma-niratah siddhim yatha vindati tach chhrnu [45]
yatah pravrttir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam
svakarmana tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati manavah [46]

narah—The man; *abhiratah*—devoted; *sve sve karmani*—to his own appropriate duty; *labhate*—attains; *samsiddhim*—perfection in self-knowledge. *srnu tat*—Now hear; *yatha*—how; *svakarma-niratah*—one dedicated to executing his prescribed duty; *vindati*—attains; *siddhim*—perfection. *manavah*—A man; *vindati*—attains; *siddhim*—perfection; *abhyarchya*—by worshipping; *svakarmana*—through his appropriate, prescribed duty; *tam*—that Supreme Lord; *yatah*—from whom occurs; *pravrttih*—the manifestation or impetus; *bhutanam*—of all living beings; *yena*—and by whom, individually and collectively; *idam*—this; *sarvam*—entire universe; *tatam*—is pervaded.

45–46 Anyone diligently doing their duty can attain perfection and self-knowledge. Understand now how someone attains perfection by doing their daily work. People achieve perfection by dutifully doing their work externally, while internally meditating on God constantly. Always meditate on Bhagavan the Supreme Lord from Whom all beings originate, by Whom all beings are sustained, and by Whom the universe is pervaded.

sreyan svadharma vigunah para-dharmat svanusthitat
svabhava-niyatam karma kurvan napnoti kilbisam [47]

svadharma—One's own prescribed duty; *vigunah*—though imperfect; *sreyan*—is better; *para-dharmat*—than another's duties; *su-anusthitat*—executed well. *kurvan*—By doing; *karma*—the duty; *svabhava-niyatam*—prescribed according to his nature; (*manavah*)—a man; *kilbisam na apnoti*—does not incur sin.

47 Doing one's own duty, though imperfectly, is better than doing someone else's work well. Sin is never incurred by a man fulfilling his duty defined by his innate nature.

saha-jam karma kaunteya sa-dosam api na tyajet
sarvarambha hi dosena dhumenagnir ivavrtah [48]

(he) *kaunteya*—O son of Kunti; *sa-dosam api*—although imperfect; *karma*—action; *saha-jam*—prescribed according to one's nature; *na tyajet*—must not be given up; *hi*—for; *sarva-arambhah*—all undertakings; *avrtah*—are covered; *dosena*—by defects; *agnih iva*—as fire is covered; *dhumena*—by smoke.

48 O Arjuna, even though it may be imperfect, one should never give up the characteristic duty proscribed for them according to their nature. Verily, all action (*karma*) is covered by imperfections, just as fire is covered by smoke.

*asakta-buddhih sarvatra jitatma vigata-sprhah
naiskarmya-siddhim paramam sannyasenadhigachchhati [49]*

asakta-buddhih—One with the wisdom of detachment; *sarvatra*—from all mundane objects; *jita-atma*—the self-controlled; *vigata-sprhah*—person whose desires have gone; *adhigachchhati*—attains to; *paramam naiskarmya-siddhim*—the higher state, of transcending all duties; *sannyasena*—by renouncing the fruits of his actions.

49 One who has the wisdom to remain detached from mundane objects, one who is self-controlled and whose desires are gone — such a person attains perfection, transcending all their duties in the world by renouncing the fruits of their actions.

*siddhim prapto yatha brahma tathapnoti nibodha me
samasenaiva kaunteya nistha jnanasya ya para [50]*

(he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; *yatha*—how; *siddhim praptah*—the person who has achieved the state of transcending all duties; *apnoti*—attains to; *brahma*—Brahma, the Absolute; *ya para nistha*—the ultimate state; *jnanasya*—of knowledge; *tatha nibodha*—now understand that; *samasena eva*—in brief; *me*—from Me.

50 O Arjuna, know how a person who attains transcendence reaches the plane of the Absolute, the ultimate state of divine knowledge.

*buddhya visuddhaya yukto dhrtyatmanam niyamy cha
sabdadin visayams tyaktva raga-dvesau vyudasya cha [51]
vivikta-sevi laghu-asi yata-vak-kaya-manasah
dhyana-yoga-paro nityam vairagyam samupasritah [52]
ahankaram balam darpam kamam krodham parigraham
vimuchya nirmamah santo brahma-bhuyaya kalpate [53]*

yuktah (san)—A person possessing; *visuddhaya buddhya*—intelligence of the nature of goodness; *niyamy cha*—and controlling; *atmanam*—the mind; *dhrtya*—through determination of the nature of goodness; *tyaktva*—rejecting; *visayan*—the sense objects; *sabdadin*—of sound, touch, etc.; *vyudasya cha*—abandoning; *raga-dvesau*—attachment and aversion — likes and dislikes; *vivikta-sevi*—remaining free from the association of materialistic persons; *laghu-asi*—a temperate eater; *yata-vak-kaya-manasah*—disciplining the body, mind, and speech; *nityam*—and constantly; *dhyana-yoga-parah*—absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Lord; *vairagyam samupasritah*—fully detached from the mundane; *vimuchya*—giving up; *ahankaram*—ego—considering oneself ‘the doer’; *balam*—power; *darpam*—vanity; *kamam*—desire; *krodham*—anger; *parigraham*—possessiveness; *santah*—being at peace; *nirmamah*—not thinking of anything as ‘mine’; *kalpate*—is qualified; *brahma-bhuyaya*—for spiritual realisation.

51–53 Endowed with intelligence of the nature of goodness, with a mind controlled through determination of the nature of goodness, rejecting alluring sense objects composed of sound, touch, form, taste and smell, abandoning all attachments, free from association with materialists, being a moderate eater with a disciplined body and mind, one must stay constantly absorbed in thoughts about Bhagavan the Lord. Staying free from mundane life and giving up lust for ego, power, vanity, desire, anger and possessiveness, while not thinking of anything as ‘mine’ and always being at peace, such a person is qualified to attain transcendence.

*brahma-bhutam prasannatma na sochati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu mad-bhaktim labhate param [54]
bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas chasmi tattvatah
tato mam tattvato jnatva visate tad-anantaram [55]*

prasanna-atma—The joyful, enlightened soul; *brahma-bhutam*—who has attained his divine nature; *na sochati*—neither sorrows; *na kanksati*—nor desires. *samah*—Being of equal vision; *sarvesu*—for all; *bhutesu*—living beings (considering My superior potency to be in everything); *labhate*—he attains; *param*—transcendental; *mat-bhaktim*—devotion to Me. *bhaktya*—Through devotion; (*sah*)—he; *abhijanati*—can well know; *mam*—Me; *tattvatah*—in reality; *yavan*—as far as being the Master of all opulences; *yah cha (aham) asmi*—and that which I am. *jnatva*—Thus knowing Me; *tattvatah*—in truth; (*sah*)—he; *tat-anantaram*—thereafter; *tatah*—by the potency of that devotion; *visate*—enters; *mam*—My eternal Pastimes (*nitya-lila*), non-different from Me.

54–55 The joyful-hearted, enlightened soul who has attained their own divine nature never feels sorrows or feels disturbed by desires. Seeing all beings equally, they attain transcendental loving devotion to the Lord. Through devotion, they realize I am the Lord of all beings and the Sweet Absolute. Then, realizing their individual relationship with Me, they enter into the Host of My intimate associates who are non-different from My very Self.

*sarva-karmany api sada kurvano mad-vyapasrayah
mat-prasadad avapnoti sasvatam padam avyayam [56]
api*—Although; *sada*—ever; *kurvanah*—active; *sarva-karmani*—in all duties; *mat-vyapasrayah*—My surrendered souls; *avapnoti*—attain; *sasvatam*—the eternal; *avyayam*—immutable (flourishing); *padam*—plane (of service); *mat-prasadat*—by My grace.

56 Although ever active and performing their duties, by My grace, those who take refuge in Me attain the transcendental plane of eternal service.

*chetasa sarva-karmani mayi sannyasya mat-parah
buddhi-yogam upasritya mach-chittah satatam bhava [57]*

*mach-chittah sarva-durgani mat-prasadat tarisyasi
atha chet tvam ahankaran na srosyasi vinanksyasi [58]*

sannyasya—Offering; chetasa—whole-heartedly; sarva-karmani—all actions; mayi—to Me; mat-parah—keeping Me as the supreme objective; upasritya—and taking refuge; buddhi-yogam—in dedicating your intelligence to Me; bhava—be; satatam—ever; mat-chittah—devoted to Me. mach-chittah—Giving your heart to Me; tvam—you; tarisyasi—will cross; sarva-durgani—all obstacles; mat-prasadat—by My grace. atha chet—Yet, if; ahankarat—out of pride; na srosyasi—you do not heed (My words); (tarhi)—then; vinanksyasi—you will perish.

57–58 O Arjuna, whole-heartedly offer every action you do to Me, keeping Me as your goal while dedicating your intelligence to Me. Be ever devoted to Me, be My devotee. Give your heart to Me and by My grace you will be able to overcome the obstacles you meet. But if out of pride you do not heed My words, you will perish.

*yad ahankaram asritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasayas te prakrtis tvam niyoksyati [59]
svabhava-jena kaunteya nirbaddhah svena karmana
kartum nechchasi yan mohat karisyasy avaso 'pi tat [60]*

asritya—Resorting to; ahankaram—pride; yat manyase iti—you are thinking; na yotsya—"I shall not fight"; (esah)—but such; vyavasayah—a decision; te—of yours; (bhavisyati)—will be; mithya eva—only in vain. prakrtih—The nature befitting a ksatriya; niyoksyati—will compel; tvam—you. (he) kaunteya—O son of Kunti; nibaddhah (san)—being bound; svena—by your; karmana—duty; svabhava-jena—born of your nature; tat api—that very action; yat—which; mohat—out of delusion; (tvam)—you; na ichchasi—do not wish; kartum—to perform; karisyasi—you will do; avasah (san)—inevitably.

59–60 Out of pride you are thinking, "I shall not fight." But your decision will be in vain for your *kshatriya* nature will compel you to fight. Arjuna, being moved to act by your innate tendencies, your *svabhava*, that very action you are avoiding now will be done by you inevitably, undoubtedly.

*isvarah sarva-bhutanam hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani yantrarudhani mayaya [61]
tam eva saranam gachchha sarva-bhavana bhārata
tat prasadat param santim sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam [62]*

(he) arjuna—O Arjuna; sarva-bhutanam—for all beings; isvarah—the Supreme Lord as the Supersoul; tisthati—is situated; hrd-dese—in region of the heart. mayaya—By His illusory potency; sarva-bhutani bhramayan—He causes all beings to revolve (through many existences); yantra-arudhani (iva)—as though riding a carousel. (he) bhārata—O Bharat; (atah)—therefore; saranam gachchha—surrender; sarva-bhavana—wholeheartedly; tam eva—unto Him, alone. tat-prasadat—By His grace; prapsyasi—you will attain; param—the supreme; santim—peace; sasvatam—the eternal; sthanam—abode.

61–62 O Arjuna, the Supreme Lord is situated in the heart of every living being. His insurmountable power Maha-Maya causes a living being to move through different stages of existence like a passenger traveling in a chariot. O Bharata, wholeheartedly surrender to the Lord, the Absolute. By His grace you will attain supreme peace and reach the eternal abode.

*iti te jnanam akhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya
vimrsyaitad asesena yathecchchasi tatha kuru [63]*

iti—Up to this point; guhyat—from profound; guhyataram jnanam—to more profound knowledge; akhyatam—has been disclosed; maya—by Me; te—to you. asesena—Fully; vimrsya—considering; etat—that; kuru—do; yatha—as; ichchhasi—you wish; tatha—accordingly.

63 I have revealed more and more profound teachings to you. Consider all this, then do as you like.

*sarva-guhyatamam bhuyah srnu me paramam vachah
isto 'si me drdham iti tato vaksyami te hitam [64]*

bhuyah—Again; srnu—hear; me—My; paramam—supreme; vachah—teaching. sarva-guhyatamam—most profound of all. (tvam)—You; asi—are; drdham—extremely; istah—dear; me—to Me; iti tatha—so; vaksyami—I am speaking; te—to you; hitam—for your benefit.

64 Hear again My supreme teaching, the most hidden treasure of all. I tell you this for you are most dear to Me.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

According to Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, the wisdom of self-realization presented in the second and third chapters of Sri Gita are the profound (*guhyam*) teachings of Lord Sri Krishna. The Lord's descriptions of Himself as the Supreme Absolute in the seventh and eighth chapters are more profound (*guhyataram*), with such knowledge giving birth to devotion. Then in chapter nine the most profound (*guhyatamam*) teachings begin, as the Lord describes the symptoms of exclusive devotion (*kevala-bhakti*).

Because His devotee Arjuna is very dear to Him, the Lord now repeats His secret teaching for Arjuna's benefit. This time, however, He reveals His most hidden of all hidden treasures (*sarva-guhyatamam*), His most affectionate advice: "Arjuna, you are most dear to Me, so I will now divulge the whole truth to you."

*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi satyam te pratijane priyo 'si me [65]*

bhava—Be; mat-manah—of mind dedicated to Me; mat-bhaktah—devoted to Me; mat-yaji—be My worshipper; namaskuru—and offer obeisance—offer yourself; mam—to Me; (tarhi)—then; eva—certainly; esyasi—you will come; mam—to Me.

satyam—Truly; pratijane—I promise this; te—to you; (yatah tvam)—as you; asi—are; priyah—dear; me—to Me.

65 Devote yourself to Me. Think of Me always. Worship Me and bow down to Me then surely you will come to Me. I promise you this because you are most dear to Me.

sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma suchah [66]
parityajya—Totally rejecting; sarva-dharman—all kinds of religion; saranam vraja—take shelter; mam—of Me; ekam—alone. aham—I; moksayisyami—will liberate; tvam—you; sarva-papebhyah—from all kinds of sins. ma suchah—Do not despair.

66 Give up all kinds of religion and surrender to Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Do not despair.

Srila Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj:

Here, the glory of the hidden purpose in the Bhagavad-gita is sung: “Give up all engagements and come to Me. You won’t have to repent Arjuna because I am everything to you and you are everything to Me. This is the most hidden of all hidden truths. What more can I say? And you will find this in Vraja.”

There is a literary ornament in Sanskrit called *dhvani*, echo, by which a word ‘echoes’ or suggests an additional meaning. Here, such a hint is given. Krishna says: *mam ekam sharanam ‘vraja’*. Vraja means “You may go.” Go to ‘Vraja’ and there you will find the most hidden of all hidden truths (*sarva-guhyat-amam*). The deepest secret of the inner loving heart has been fully revealed there. Krishna says “I am beyond all conceptions of religion, society, friends — everything. My position is above everything, and in the heart of the heart of everything. In the land of Vraja you will experience the whole conception of beauty. Dismiss all other prospects and come to Me there, then your inner hankering will be fulfilled beyond your expectations. You will find such dignity in Me that you will be beyond reaction and repentance.” This is the deepest meaning, the highest glory of the Bhagavad Gita.

If someone comes to this conception everything else will be seen as sin (*aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami*). Everything considered to be a religious duty, or purity in this material world, will be seen as something sinful. All conceptions of religiosity will be reduced to conceptions on the same level as sin. In the absolute plane, everything and everyone belongs wholly to Krishna, so the slightest deviation from this ideal is no better than committing a sin. Mere self-forgetfulness leads to impersonalism and culminates in the deep slumber of *samadhi*. But self-forgetfulness (*sarva-dharman parityajya*) in Krishna’s service (*mam ekam sharanam vraja*) is a positive, living thing. It is the full, absolute plane of life.

The hidden treasure of the Bhagavad Gita attracts our hearts. We have been deprived of our heart's deepest joy; though we have a natural claim to it, it has been hidden from us (*srutibhir vimrgyam*). In an unparalleled way, Sri Gita considers all these aspects, and directs us to the correct meaning and conclusion.

idam te natapaskaya nabhaktaya kadachana

na chasusrusave vachyam na cha mam yo 'bhyasuyati [67]

te—You; kadachana na vachyam—should never disclose; idam—this; atapaskaya—to one devoid of self-sacrifice; na abhaktaya—nor to a non-devotee; asusrusave na cha—nor to one who is averse to My service; yah na cha—nor to one who; abhyasuyati—is resentful; mam—towards Me.

67 You should never disclose this hidden treasure to any person devoid of the spirit of self-sacrifice. Disclose it not to the non-devotee, nor to the faithless or someone averse to My service. Do not reveal this to someone resenting Me.

ya inam paramam guhyam mad-bhaktesu abhidhasyati

bhaktim mayi param krtva mam evaisyaty asamsayah [68]

yah—One who; abhidhasyati—sings the glories of; inam—this; paramam—supreme; guhyam—secret; mat-bhaktesu—to My devotees; (sah)—such a person; krtva—attaining; param—transcendental; bhaktim—devotion; mayi—to Me; esyati—will reach; mam eva—Me; asamsayah—without a doubt.

68 Anyone who reveals the glories of this secret teaching of Mine to My devotees will attain loving devotion to Me and reach Me without a doubt.

na cha tasman manusyesu kaschin me priya-krttamah

bhavita na cha me tasmad anyah priyataro bhuvi [69]

manusyesu—In human society; na cha kaschit—no one; me priya-krttamah—pleases Me more by his actions; tasmad—than he (the preacher of Bhagavad-gita); cha—and; na bhavita—there will not be; anyah—any other; priyatarah—dearer; me—to Me; tasmad—than he; bhuvi—in the world.

69 In human society there is no-one who pleases Me more by their actions than My devotee who preaches the glories of the Bhagavad-Gita. Nor will there ever be anyone in the world dearer to Me than this devotee.

adhyesyate cha ya inam dharmyam samvadam avayoh

jnana-yajnena tena aham istah syam iti me matih [70]

yah cha—And for he who; adhyesyate—studies; inam—this; dharmyam—holy; samvadam—conversation; avayoh—of ours; aham—I; syam—shall be; istah—worshipped; tena—by that (by him); jnana-yajnena—by the 'knowledge-sacrifice'. iti—That; me matih—is My opinion.

70 And anyone who studies, with devotion, this holy conversation between us, worships Me by the ‘knowledge-sacrifice’ (*jnana-yajne-na*). This is My conclusion.

sraddhavan anasuyas cha srnuyad api yo narah
so ‘pi muktah subhal lokan prapnuyat punya-karmanam [71]
sah narah api—That person, too; *sraddhavan*—possessing faith; *anasuyah cha*—and without resentment; *yah—who*; *srnuyat api*—only hears; *muktah (san)*—shall be liberated; (*papat*)—from sin; *prapnuyat*—and will reach; *subhan*—the auspicious; *lokan*—abodes; (*prapya*)—attainable; *punya-karmanam*—by the performers of virtuous acts.

71 Simply by hearing this teaching with an open heart, a faithful person becomes liberated and attains the auspicious world reached by My devotees.

kachchid etach chhrutam partha tvayaikagrena chetasa
kachchid ajnana-sammohah pranastah te dhananjaya [72]
(he) *partha*—O son of Kunti; *kachchit*—has; *etat*—this Gita; *srutam*—been heard; *tvaya*—by you; *ekagrena*—with your single-minded; *chetasa*—attention? (he) *dhananjaya*—O Arjuna; *kachchit te*—has your; *ajnana-sammohah*—ignorance and delusion; *pranastah*—been dispelled?

72 O Partha, have you listened to this with your undivided attention? Are you now free from the darkness of your illusion?

arjuna uvacha
nasto mohah smrtir labdha tvat prasadan mayachyuta
sthitoh smi gata-sandehah karisyeh vachanam tava [73]
arjunah uvacha—Arjuna said: (he) *achyuta*—O Sri Krishna; *tvat prasadat*—by Your grace; (me)—my; *mohah*—delusion; *nastah*—is dispelled. *smrtih*—Self-remembrance; *labdha*—is regained; *maya*—by me. *sthitah asmi*—I am steady. *gata-sandehah*—My doubts have gone. *karisyeh*—I shall follow; *tava*—Your; *vachanam*—instructions.

73 Arjuna said: O infallible one, by Your grace my illusion is now gone. I remember who I am and my doubts are destroyed. I am firm in my resolve and I shall follow Your instructions.

sanjaya uvacha
ity aham vasudevasya parthasya cha mahatmanah
samvadam imam asrausam adbhutam roma-harsanam [74]
sanjayah uvacha—Sanjaya said: *iti*—thus; *aham*—I; *asrausam*—heard; *imam*—this; *adbhutam*—wonderful; *roma-harsanam*—thrilling; *samvadam*—conversation; *maha-atmanah vasudevasya*—of the Supreme Soul Vasudeva; *parthasya cha*—and Arjuna.

74 Sanjaya said: Thus, I heard this wondrous conversation of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and Arjuna the son of Pritha. A conversation that arouses ecstasy in the hearts of everyone.

*vyasa-prasadach chhrutavan imam guhyam aham param
yogam yogesvarat krsnat saksat-kathayatah svayam [75]*

vyasa-prasadat—By the grace of Sri Vyasadev; aham—I; srutavan—heard; imam—this; param—supreme; guhyam—secret; yogam—yoga (yoga of action, knowledge, and devotion); saksat-kathayatah—spoken directly; yogesvarat—by the Lord of yoga; krsnat svayam—Krishna Himself.

75 By the mercy of Sri Vyasadeva I heard this supreme secret teaching of *yoga* sung by the Supreme Master of *yoga*, Lord Sri Krishna Himself.

*rajan samsmrtya samsmrtya samvadam imam adbhutam
kesavarjunayoh punyam hrsyami cha muhur muhuh [76]*

(he) rajan—O King Dhrtarastra; samsmrtya samsmrtya—ever remembering; imam adbhutam—this miraculous; punyam—sacred; samvadam—conversation; kesava-arjuna-yoh—of Sri Krishna and Arjuna; hrsyami—my heart thrills; muhuh muhuh cha—repeatedly.

76 Remembering this miraculous, sacred conversation of Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna, my heart feels thrilled over and over again.

*tach cha samsmrtya samsmrtya rupam atyadbhutam hareh
vismayo me mahan rajan hrsyami cha punah punah [77]*

(he) rajan—O King; samsmrtya samsmrtya cha—and repeatedly remembering; tat—that; ati-adbhutam—most miraculous; rupam—universal form; hareh—of the Lord, Sri Hari; me—my; mahan—great; vismayah—wonder; (bhavati)—occurs; cha—and; hrsyami—and I thrill with ecstasy; punah punah—again and again.

77 And remembering again the sight of that astonishing, almighty Universal Form of the Supreme Lord Hari, my whole being shivers with ecstasy.

*yatra yogesvarah krsno yatra partho dhanur-dharah
tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama [78]*

yatra—Where there is; yoga-isvarah—the Lord of yoga, the objective of yoga; krsnah—Lord Krishna; yatra—where there is; dhanuh-dharah parthah—Arjuna with bow in hand, the winner of wealth; tatra—there; dhruva—prevails; srir—fortune; vijayah—victory, Jayasri; bhutih—prosperity; nitih—and virtue. (iti)—This is; mama—my; matih—opinion.

78 Where there is Yogeshwara Krishna, the Master of Yoga, and where there is Arjuna, the noble archer with his bow in hand, there good fortune prevails. There, there will be victory, prosperity and virtue. This is my firm conviction.

Glossary

Term:	Verse:	Explanation:
adhi-bhuta	7.30; 8.1-4	God, the controller of the cosmos.
adhi-daiva	7.30; 8.1-4	God, the God of all the gods that guide the thinking of living beings. The aggregate of all the inner voices that create thoughts within the awareness of living beings. The sum of all the ‘thinking’ that guides embodied beings, giving animals insights and instinctive knowledge.
ahankara	3.27	The ego.
akarma	4.16	Inaction; action that does not produce karma; the actions performed by a liberated being.
ananda	2.21	Divine, blissful, spiritual consciousness.
anumana	10.32	Inference; a method of gaining knowledge by formulating conclusions based on evidence (a conscious being witnesses the fact that they can move their limbs then they conclude that their limbs are parts of themselves).
antah-karana	14.22	The inner substance of an individual person, comprised of four divisions: mind (manas), intelligence (buddhi), ego (ahankara), and consciousness (chitta).
aprakrita jnana	5.16	Spiritual knowledge (in contrast to knowledge about material objects, prakrita jnana).
aryan	2.2	In Buddhist and Hindu scriptures, an Aryan is a person searching to understand the ultimate reality.
atma	2.55	The spiritual self, the soul.
aum	17.23	Om, an aspect of God; the sound vibration aum creates and sustains the universe.
baddha-jiva	7.6	A soul in a material body.
bhakta	4.30	A devotee of God.
brahma-nirvana	2.72	The liberated state experienced by a siddha, a perfectly liberated, spiritual being.

brahmin	2.38	A seeker of the truth (people who are not saintly are not brahmins).
buddhi	18.3	Intelligence; the dominant factor that guides most people most of the time.
chit	2. 17	Consciousness; the self.
deva	7.30	A god; a being with supernatural powers known as siddhis.
dharma	2.34	Obligatory duties a person is expected to do in a civil society, such as attending funerals and other ceremonial events.
gayatri	10.35	A holy mantra included in Rig Veda.
guna	3.27	States of material consciousness. Abstract states of awareness (passionate, realistic or stupid states of mind) that generate instincts, urges and thoughts in the minds of beings living in physical bodies.
higher self	8.9-10	Paramatma, God.
jiva (atma)	13.13	The individual self.
jiva-prakriti	15.27	The total mass of all the jiva souls.
jivan-mukta	6.46	A liberated person.
jnana	18.63	Spiritual knowledge.
jnani	2.72	An enlightened sage.
jneyam	13.19	The knowledge about the world someone experiences internally. The world as we know it within ourselves.
karma	8.3	Work performed for a purpose.
karma-yoga	5.2	Selfless work done for Vishnu.
karta	3.27	A doer who does karma.
kshatriya	18.43	A warrior.
kshetra	13.18	The world we perceive.
kshetra-jnana	13.13	A subjective person (purusha) who knows and perceives the objective world.

manasa (yantra)	5.13	The mind, an impure material mechanism produced by the transforming powers of material nature.
mukta	18.26	A liberated being, a siddha.
om	17.24	Aum, a name of God.
paramatma	8.9-10	God, the omniscient knower of everything.
prakrita jnana	5.16	Knowledge about material nature.
prakriti	15.7	Nature.
prana jiva self.	8.15	The breath of life-force in a living body; the
pranayama the mind can be calm.	4.29	A yoga process that focuses the breath so
pratyaksa	10.32	The ability to know things by means of direct perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching).
pundit	5.18	A knower the understands the reality of the divine self and material nature.
purusha	13.13	The kshetra-jnana, the individual self, the knower who knows the objective world.
rajas (guna)	2.45	Passionate nature, a mentality.
rajasik buddhi	18.31	Intelligence inspired by passions.
rajasik jnana	18.21	Knowledge influenced by passions.
rajasik karma	18.24	Actions performed by a passionate person.
rajasik karta the fruits of their labours.	18.27	A worker who passionately hungers to enjoy
rajasik sukham	18.38	Happiness that arises from passions.
rajasik tyaga	18.8	Renunciation influenced by passions, for example the irresponsible act of abandoning one's children.
rishi	10.2	A sage.

samsara	3.9	Life in material existence.
sankhya	2.16	The philosophy taught by the sage Kapila.
sannyasi	5.3	A karma-yogi; a pure natured monk dedicated to the worship of the Absolute Truth.
sat	2.16	A permanent reality, a thing that is real and true.
sattva (guna)	10.41	Ideas that are true, ideas that motivate a person to do something good.
sattvik buddhi	18.30	Intelligence that aims to do what is right.
sattvik jnana	18.51-53	Knowledge that acknowledges God.
sattvik karma	18.23	Work done by a saintly soul.
sattvik karta	18.26	A doer who does whatever they do for God alone.
sattvik sukham	18.36-37	Pure happiness.
sattvik tyaga	18.6	Actions done with a divine intentions.
satyaloka	14.16	The abode of the god Brahma, the creator.
siddha	6.15	A liberated being, a mukta.
sudra	2.31	A labourer.
supersoul	8.9-10	God, the omniscient knower of everything.
swabhava	5.15	The inherent nature of a conscious being. Crocodiles are inherently cruel; worker bees serve the hive, not themselves.
swa-dharma	3.30	A person's role in society; ultimately, the proper role of a person is to worship the Lord.
tamas (guna)	15.8	Ignorance that mystifies living beings. Ignorance that fills the minds of living beings with selfish ideas and desires.
tamasik buddhi	18.32	Intelligence influenced by falsehoods.
tamasik jnana	18.22	Knowledge stubbornly rooted in misconceptions and lies.

tamasik karma	18.25	The activities a living being engages in when they are under the influence of stupid or misconceived thinking.
tamasik karta	18.14	A doer; an ego engaged in troubling activities because of their ignorance, their lack of understanding of what kind of action is right or wrong.
tamasik sukham	18.39	Happiness built upon self-deception and ignorance.
tamasik tyaga	18.7	Refusal to do whatever is right or good; pride or stubbornness built upon deep ignorance and misconception.
tyaga	18.2	The act of giving up the fruit that is produced by doing work, karma.
tyagi	18.11	A person who engages in tyaga.
universal mind	8.9-10	God, the omniscient knower of everything.
vaishya	4.13	A farmer or merchant.
vijnana	3.40-41	Direct experience of the reality of God's existence. Experience of the reality that God has infinite powers and opulences.
vikarma	4.17	Forbidden actions.
yajna	4.24	A sacrificial rite.
yantra	18.61	A machine. A body or moving shape, often in the form of a design with moving parts. A yantra, like a picture, displays possible actions someone might do, together with the actions results; a <i>yantra</i> speaks to you from <i>chakras</i> located in your body, guiding your steps. There are many kinds of <i>chakras</i> and <i>yantras</i> that get reborn generation after generation in the bodies and nerves and eyes of different species of creatures inhabiting the world.
yogi	4.18	A seeker of the truth.

