

ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ



Composed by
Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa

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ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

With the Bhāvānuvāda of
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ-TĪKĀ

and the

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI
(the commentary which illuminates the
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā and which includes excerpts
from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's
RASIKA-RAÑJANA COMMENTARY)

by
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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Dedicated to my Holy Master



*śrī gauḍīya-vedānta-ācārya-kesarī nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa
om viṣṇuṇpāda aṣṭottara-śata*

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD
BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA
GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

*the best amongst the tenth generation
of descendants in the bhāgavata-paramparā
from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu,
and the founder of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti
and its branches throughout the world*

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Observing the Armies I

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā consists of eighteen chapters, which culminate in the message of *bhakti*, or devotion to the Supreme Lord. From Arjuna's behaviour on the battlefield, it seems that he is immersed in lamentation. Kṛṣṇa explains that the eternal function of the soul has nothing to do with the function of body, dynasty and caste, although those who falsely identify the body as the real self cannot understand this. As long as the living entity remains bound by *māyā*, the deluding material energy, and misidentifies his body as his self, he is forced to undergo the miseries of lamentation, delusion, fear and so on. It is therefore imperative that he accept the shelter of a spiritual master who is conversant with the Truth.

CHAPTER 2 – *Sāṅkhya-Yoga*

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When the living entity accepts the shelter of a bona fide *guru*, he realizes his own ignorant condition. He then tries to become free from the illusory traps of the deluding potency by giving

up his own conceptions and respecting the instructions of the spiritual master. The bona fide *guru* is a seer of the Truth, a devotee who has pure, exclusive love for the Lord. Therefore, he is free from the four defects of illusion, error, imperfect senses and deception. When a practitioner of *bhakti* hears instructions from the lotus mouth of the all-merciful spiritual master, he understands the difference between the soul and the material body. He also realizes the ill-effects of sense enjoyment and becomes attracted to hearing the conceptions, characteristics and glories of the sages, whose minds are fixed in transcendence. Then, by the influence of saintly association, an awareness sprouts within his heart of the need to attain conclusive knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

CHAPTER 3 – *Karma-Yoga*

Yoga Through the Path of Action

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When the living entity has heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions, he understands that *karma-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement where the fruit of one's pious action is offered to the Lord, consists of endeavours in service to Him that are performed without selfish desire. If the heart is full of desires for sense enjoyment, accepting the garb of a renunciant is not actual renunciation but hypocrisy, and it can never bring auspiciousness. The living entity should perform his prescribed duty as service to Bhagavān, because performing that duty for sense enjoyment produces no auspicious result. Performance of prescribed duty, such as Vedic sacrifices, can award mundane sense pleasure, but such pleasure is temporary and mixed with distress. Offering the Lord the fruit of one's actions, however, purifies the heart. It is therefore auspicious to abandon negligence of one's prescribed duty as well as abandon sinful acts and the selfishly motivated performance of one's duty, and instead selflessly perform that duty, offering its result to Bhagavān.

CHAPTER 4 – *Jñāna-Yoga*

Yoga Through Transcendental Knowledge

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The Fourth Chapter begins with instructions on *jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge. It first explains that one can only obtain genuine

knowledge of the Truth by receiving the mercy of *śrī gurudeva*, who has seen that Truth. The process of receiving this mercy is to hear from a person in a bona fide disciplic succession. That transcendental knowledge cannot possibly be attained through mundane learning, intelligence or knowledge. This chapter also explains that an incarnation of the Supreme Lord appears in every millennium. The birth and activities of the Lord are divine, and it is foolish and offensive to consider them mundane. One attains this knowledge of the Absolute Truth in the association of a self-realized spiritual master. One gradually hears from him about the unique characteristics of communion with the Lord through such knowledge and its superiority over linking with Him by offering Him the fruit of one's work. A person can easily cross over the ocean of birth and death by taking shelter of authentic knowledge. The practitioner who doubts this cannot make progress. One who lacks this conclusive knowledge of the Truth will become fallen and deviate from the path. He will become trapped again in the cycle of fruitive action.

CHAPTER 5 – *Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga*
Yoga Through Renunciation of Action

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Upon attaining knowledge of the Truth, the practitioner becomes qualified to connect with the Supreme through the renunciation of prescribed duty. At that time, he realizes that real renunciation means to give up attachment to prescribed action and its fruits. For one whose heart is still impure, it is both proper and beneficial to adopt the practice of offering the fruit of one's work to the Lord, remaining detached from both the process and its result, rather than completely renouncing the work itself. Selflessly offering of the results of one's prescribed duty to the Lord bestows the qualification to attain the nature of *brahma*, or God; and those who know God attain peace.

CHAPTER 6 – *Dhyāna-Yoga*
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The practitioner understands from the instructions of the spiritual master who has seen the Truth that one can only meditate on the Supreme Lord when the heart has been purified. A genuine mystic (*yogī*) or renunciant is devoid of

mundane desire, because no one can attain perfection in *yoga* as long as one still desires material enjoyment. It is necessary to regulate eating and recreational activities to attain perfection in *yoga*. This perfection means (1) seeing the Supreme Lord as the indwelling witness in the hearts of all living entities, and (2) realizing that all living entities exist only due to the support and shelter of the Lord. It is also clearly stated in this chapter that a devotee of the Lord is superior to a fruitive worker, an empiric philosopher and a mystic.

CHAPTER 7 – *Vijñāna-Yoga*

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Constant study of these instructions leads one to the firm understanding and realization that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the ultimate limit of the Supreme Absolute Reality and that there is no Absolute Reality other than Him. Only by surrendering exclusively to His lotus feet can one become free from the bondage of the deluding material energy. Four types of people have no qualification to engage in worship of the Supreme Lord because they perform impious acts: the foolish, the lowest among mankind, those whose nature is demonic, and those whose knowledge is covered by illusion. Conversely, four classes of people are endowed with spiritual merit and can therefore engage in worship of Him: the inquisitive, the distressed, those who desire wealth, and those desirous of liberation. In this world, the devotees of the Lord are most rare. One does not attain one's eternal welfare by worshipping various demigods and goddesses.

CHAPTER 8 – *Tāraka-Brahma-Yoga*

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Only those who are exclusively devoted to the Supreme Lord can know *tattvas*, or fundamental spiritual principles, in regard to the Lord's featureless aspect (*brahma-tattva*), fruitive action (*karma-tattva*) the basis of this material manifestation (*adhibhūta-tattva*), etc. One-pointed devotees can easily attain Kṛṣṇa (*Gītā* 8.14). Devotees of the Supreme Lord never take rebirth (*Gītā* 8.16). One can only attain Him by exclusive devotion (*Gītā* 8.22).

CHAPTER 9 – *Rāja-Guhya-Yoga*

Yoga Through the Most Confidential Knowledge

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The king of all knowledge, or the most confidential of all secrets, refers to supremely pure devotional service only. Material nature is not the original cause of the cosmic creation, because its potency to create only comes by the inspiration of the Supreme Lord. It is foolish and offensive to think that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is a human being, or that His body, composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss, is made of five material elements like the body of an ordinary conditioned soul. Genuine saints engage in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with exclusive devotional moods, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally attends to their necessities. It is against the prescribed rules to worship different demigods, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the enjoyer and master of all Vedic sacrifices. The Supreme Person accepts anything that is offered with love by the pure devotee. In the last verse of this chapter, it is concluded that pure devotion is the only means to attain the Supreme Lord.

CHAPTER 10 – *Vibhūti-Yoga*

Yoga Through Appreciating the Opulences of the Supreme Lord

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By sincerely and constantly studying this chapter, one will understand that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the basis of all majesty and all potencies. The entire material universe with all its opulences is just one quarter of His opulence. When one attains knowledge of the Lord's majesty, one can easily understand that everything is directly or indirectly related to Him. He bestows *buddhi-yoga*, or pure intelligence, upon His devotees so that they attain a sound understanding of *tattva*, fundamental philosophical principles. In this way, their ignorance is destroyed and they engage in worship with pure love.

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This chapter reveals that the universal form of the Supreme Lord is external. His personal form is transcendental and human-like. Only devotees whose eyes are anointed with pure love can

see the form of the Lord, the supreme enjoyer of transcendental mellows. He is only attained by the *yoga* of exclusive devotion.

CHAPTER 12 – *Bhakti-Yoga*

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This chapter explains that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who has no source other than Himself, is the Supreme Reality, and that He is the topmost object of the living entity's exclusive worship. One can easily attain Him by pure devotion. Devotees who are endowed with single-pointed devotion are most dear to Him. Those who adhere to the philosophy that the Supreme Lord has no features and that the living entity can become the Lord, receive only misery.

CHAPTER 13 – *Prakṛti-Puruṣa-Vibhāga-Yoga*

Yoga Through Understanding the Distinctions Between
Material Nature and the Enjoyer

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This chapter gives deep insight into material nature and the conscious living entity. Through this discussion, the Supreme Lord bestows a lucid understanding of absolute principles upon His surrendered devotees and thus delivers them from the ocean of the material world. When pure devotion arises in the heart, knowledge and renunciation naturally appear there as a secondary result. However, in order to strengthen one's understanding of the true nature of devotion to Him, it is still necessary to deliberate upon knowledge to attain realization of it. When a devotee attains a clear understanding of absolute principles, he becomes qualified to attain *prema*, or pure loving devotion to the Supreme Lord.

CHAPTER 14 – *Guṇa-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga*

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An analytical study of this chapter leads to the understanding that this material world expands simply by the action and interaction of the three modes of material nature: goodness, passion and ignorance. Practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* can easily cross over these three modes and finally become qualified to attain the Supreme Lord.

CHAPTER 15 – *Puruṣottama-Yoga*

Yoga Through Understanding the Supreme Person

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This material world extends from the lower planetary systems to the higher. Living entities are separated parts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Those who are opposed to Him are bound by the result of their actions and wander in various higher and lower species of life. However, by great fortune, one may attain the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master, and under his direction completely engage in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, knowing Him alone to be the Supreme Person. The devotees' absorption in their worship makes them aware of everything. Consequently, they can easily cross over the ocean of this material world.

CHAPTER 16 – *Daivāsura Sampada-Yoga*

Yoga Through Discerning Divine and Demoniatic Qualities

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This chapter explains the divine and demoniac natures. The living entity who is bewildered by the external, illusory potency of the Supreme Lord is controlled either by divine or demoniac qualities. When one takes shelter of a divine nature, he becomes inclined towards the worship of the Supreme Lord. On the contrary, those who adopt a demoniac nature and become averse to Him go to hell. Those of a demoniac nature proselytize the theory of *māyāvāda*, that everything is illusory, including the Supreme Lord Himself. It is essential to become released from this demoniac tendency. This can be achieved by worshipping the Lord with faith, in the association of pure devotees.

CHAPTER 17 – *Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga*

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This chapter explains the three types of faith. According to the association he keeps and the nature acquired from his previous impressions, a person develops faith in that which is in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance. When the living entity completely takes the association of pure devotees of Hari (the Supreme Lord) then transcendental faith appears in his heart. He can then worship the Lord, who is transcendental. Such a devotee is an actual saint.

CHAPTER 18 – *Mokṣa-Yoga*

The Yoga of Liberation

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This chapter presents the essence of the entire *Gītā*. First, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is identified as the highest Truth among all of His transcendental manifestations, and then the most confidential instruction is given. It is explained that one can attain service to Him, which is full of transcendental mellows, in His supreme abode, by following these practices in sequence:

- (1) Surrendering to Him
- (2) Executing of the nine limbs of *bhakti*
- (3) Accepting the shelter of *bhāva-bhakti*, or pure, transcendental devotion

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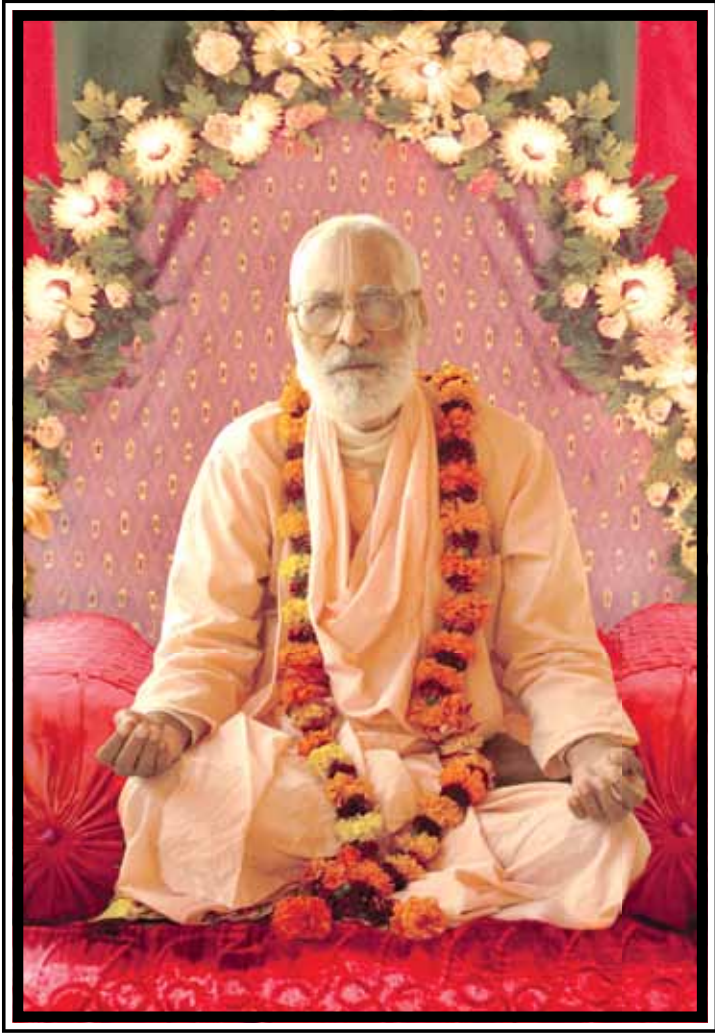


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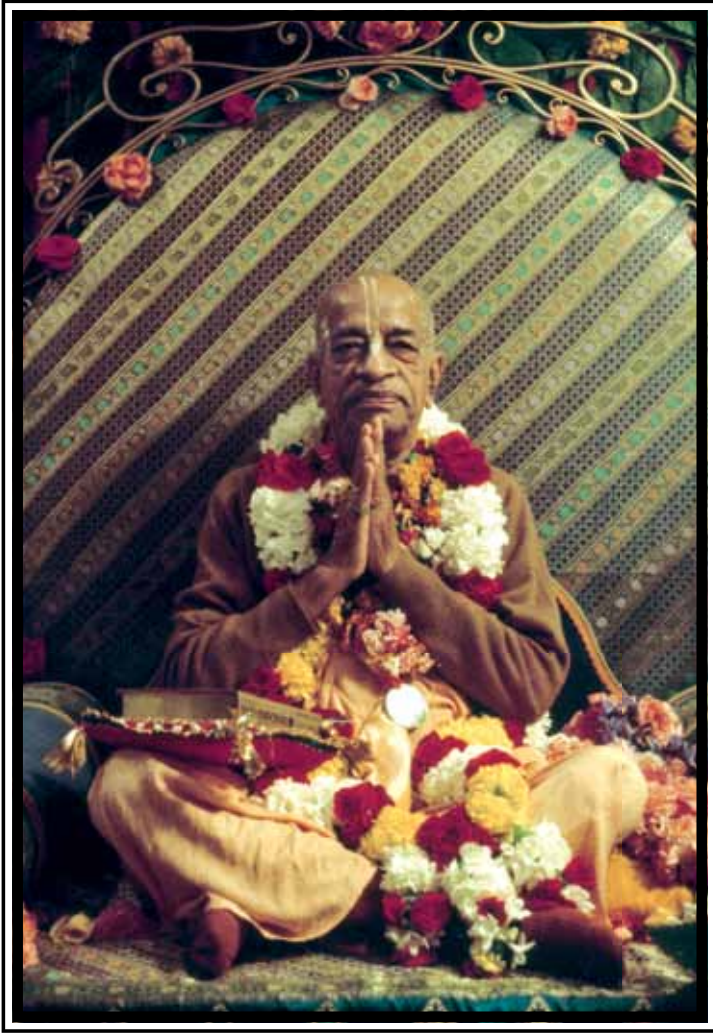
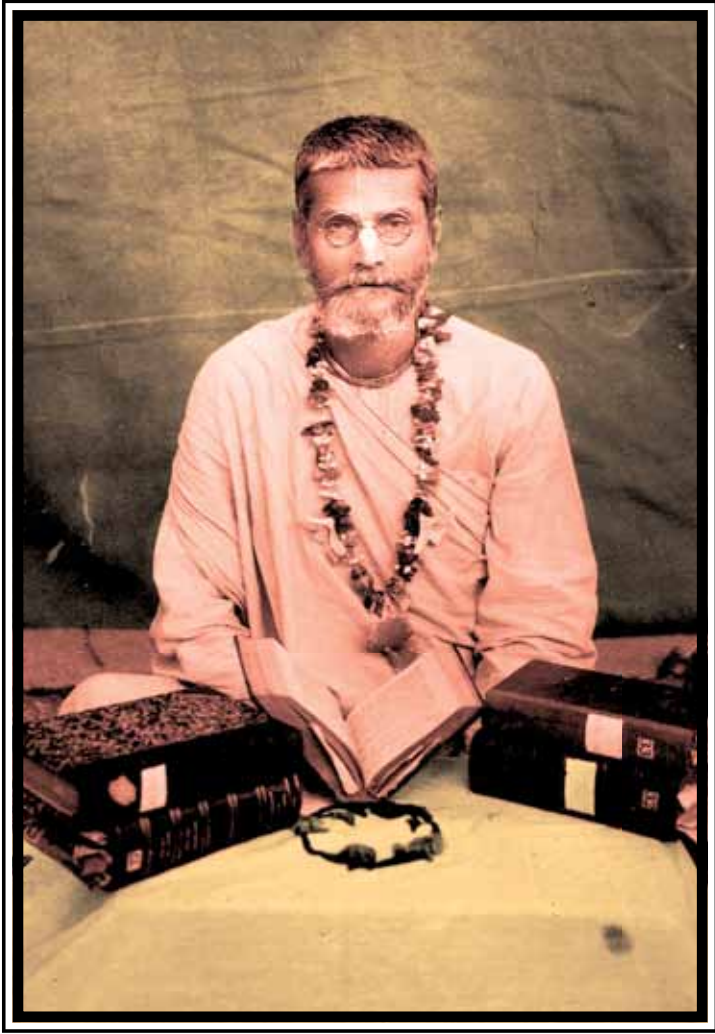


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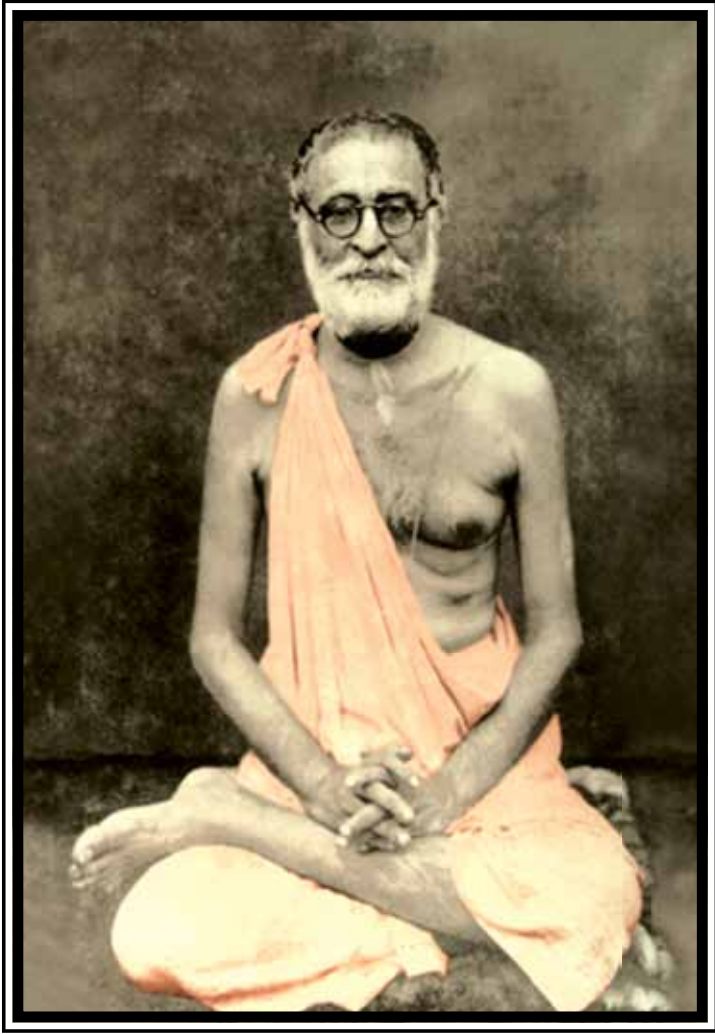




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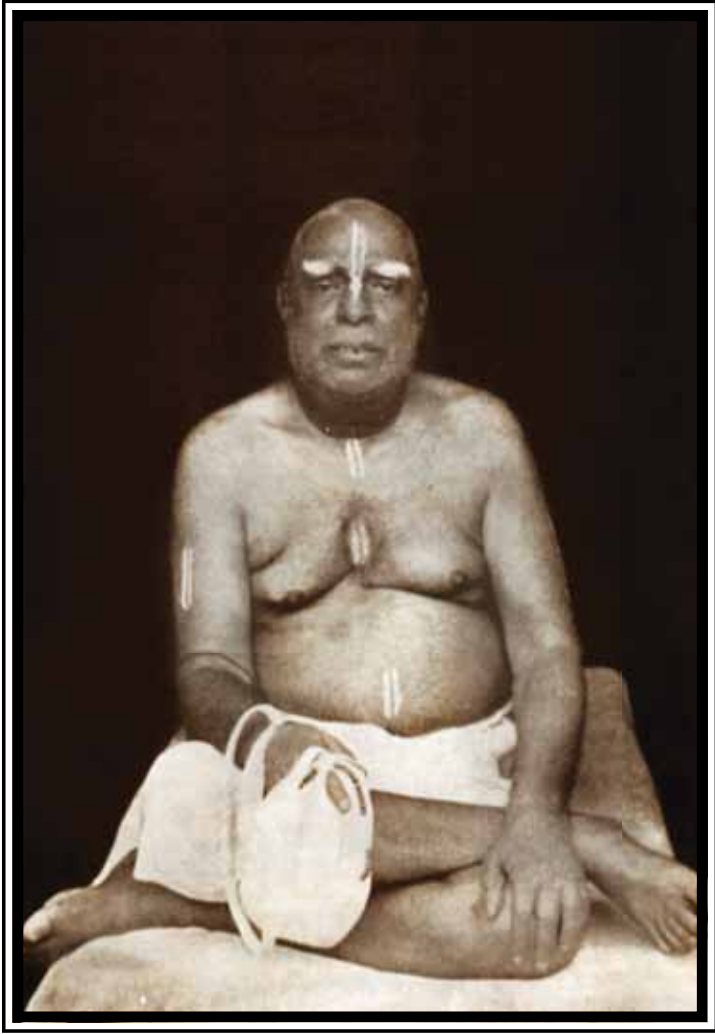




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The Crest Jewel of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas
mahā-mahopādhyāya

ŚRĪLA VIŚVANĀTHA
CAKRAVARTĪ ṬHĀKURA





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Author of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā

ŚRĪLA KṚṢṆA DVAIPĀYANA
VEDAVYĀSA

(bestowing divine vision upon his disciple Sañjaya)





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Sañjaya reveals the events of the battlefield of Kurukṣetra to Dhṛtarāṣṭra Mahārāja.



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On the battlefield, Arjuna receives the instructions
of the Gītā from Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The exact location
in Kurukṣetra
($30^{\circ} 2' \text{ N}$, 76° E)
where Śrīmad
Bhagavad-gītā
was spoken by
Bhagavān Śrī
Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna,
as seen today



Just as the embodied soul gradually passes within this gross physical body from boyhood to youth and to old age, similarly, the soul receives another body at death. An intelligent person is not bewildered by the destruction and rebirth of the body (2.13).



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O mighty-armed Arjuna, the three qualities born of material nature – goodness, passion and ignorance – bind the immutable living entity who dwells within the body (14.5).



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Those whose minds are absorbed in Me and whose lives are wholeheartedly devoted to My service derive great satisfaction and bliss from constantly enlightening one another with the fundamental truth about Me and performing *kīrtana* of My name, form, qualities and pastimes (10.9).



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Always absorb your mind in Me, become My devotee, dedicate yourself to worship of Me and offer obeisances to Me. In this way, with mind and body fully devoted to Me in My service, you will certainly achieve Me (9.34, 18.65).

Foreword

(to the Hindi edition)

PRAYING TO ŚRĪ GURU, the Vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān and begging for their merciful blessings, I proceed to write the foreword to this present edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. In undertaking such an endeavour, the causeless mercy and auspicious blessings of the disciplic succession of spiritual masters in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura are our sole aid and shelter.

Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti published its first edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* on 6 September 1977, by the auspicious desire and blessings of my Śrī Gurupāda-padma, *nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. That edition included the *Gītā-bhūṣaṇa* commentary of the brilliant sun among *vedānta-ācāryas*, Śrī Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇapāda, as well as an elucidating translation entitled *Vidvad-rañjana* by *nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Following that, on 3 October 1990, Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti published an abridged pocket edition, consisting of only the Sanskrit verses and their Bengali translations.

Several editions of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* were published under the editorship of *jagad-guru nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Some included Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇapāda's *Gītā-bhūṣaṇa* commentary, some Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary, and some Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's translations entitled *Vidvad-rañjana* and *Rasika-rañjana*. Later, various editions were published in Bengali by different *mathas*, temples and missions in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. An Assamese edition was published in Tejapura, Assam, and some English editions were published in Calcutta and Tamil Nadu. A Hindi edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* with the commentaries of Śrīla Cakravartī

Ṭhākura or Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇapāda had not yet been made available. Consequently, the Hindi-speaking populace both in India and the whole world was therefore bereft of such an edition of this jewel-like book.

It is for this reason that my Godbrother *pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, the vice-president and general editor of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, is publishing this present edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* with its Sanskrit verses, an *anvaya* (word-for-word), verse translations and the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary of the great preceptor, *śrī-gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-ācārya* Śrī Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. He is also presenting a simple, comprehensible commentary known as *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti will remain eternally grateful and indebted to him for this. By deeply studying this book, the virtuous, intelligent readers will certainly receive supreme benefit and bliss.

At the end of his preface to the *Gītā*, *jagad-guru om viṣṇupāda* Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments,

“Unfortunately, most of the commentaries and Bengali translations of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* published to date are written by the advocates of the doctrine that the living entity and the Supreme Lord are non-different in every respect (*abheda-brahmavāda*). Only a few publications contain commentaries and translations that are in line with pure devotion to Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya and Ānandagiri are full of absolute monism (*abheda-brahmavāda*), or the doctrine that the living entity is non-different from the Absolute Truth. The commentary of Śrīla Śrīdhāra Svāmī, though not full of *brahmavāda*, consists of a scent of the Rudra *sampradāya*’s doctrine of purified non-dualism (*sāmpradāyika śuddhādvaita*). Some statements in the commentary of Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatīpāda support *bhakti*, but its final instruction and essence expound *abheda-brahmavāda*, or monistic liberation. The commentary of Śrī Rāmānujācārya is completely in accordance with *bhakti*, but those who taste pure *bhakti-rasa* cannot derive ever-increasing bliss from it.

“In our country, no commentary was available that follows Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s philosophy of inconceivable oneness and

difference (*acintya-bhedābheda*). Therefore, to facilitate the pure devotees' relish of *rasa* and to benefit faithful people, I took great pains to procure the commentary of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu's devout follower, the most erudite Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Mahāśaya, the crest jewel among devotees'

"I have now published the *Gītā* with this commentary as well as with a Bengali verse translation named *Rasika-rañjana*. The commentary, written by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu, which also follows the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, consists mainly of philosophical conceptions. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary, however, is full of both philosophical conceptions and the mellow of pure love (*prīti-rasa*). I have published the commentary of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura, because his conceptions are simple to comprehend and his Sanskrit language straightforward. The general reader will therefore be able to understand it easily."

Jaḡad-guru Śrīla Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhuṇāda comments,

"Even though there are countless expositions, commentaries, and translations of this book in many languages, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura still composed his *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary, which follows the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava conceptions. He did this especially for the *rasika* Gauḍīya devotees. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is fourth in disciplic succession from Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura and is the guardian and preceptor of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *dharma* in its intermediate period. This verse about him is most famous:

viśvasya nātha-rūpo 'sau
bhakti-vartma-pradarśanāt
bhakta-cakre vartitatvāt
cakravarty ākhyayābhavat

He is known by the name Viśvanātha, the Lord of the universe, because he indicates the path of *bhakti*, and he is called Cakravartī (he around whom a circle, or assembly, turns) because he always remains in the assembly (*cakra*) of pure devotees.

"All Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas know something about Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura. In particular, those who study the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, discuss the *Gītā* and study, teach and deliberate upon the Gauḍīya

scriptures will surely, to some extent, be aware of his transcendental brilliance. Few authors have appeared among the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava preceptors who have written as extensive Sanskrit works and commentaries as Śrīla Cakravartī Mahāśaya.

“In the year 1706, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was very old. He sent his student, *gauḍīya-vedāntācārya*, the highly erudite Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and his disciple, Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva, to a philosophical assembly in Jaipur. Great misfortune had befallen the members of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* there because they had forgotten their *sāmpradāyika* identity and had disregarded Vaiṣṇava Vedānta. To dissipate that misfortune, Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa composed an independent treatise on the *Brahma-sūtra* in accordance with the thoughts of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. In this way he rendered a most distinguished service to the *sampradāya*, which greatly pleased Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura. This was the second of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s great accomplishments in preaching Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. It is also a shining example of an approved rectification performed by a non-seminal *brāhmaṇa* and Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*.”

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā consists of eighteen chapters, which comprise Chapters Twenty-five to Forty-two of the *Bhīṣma-parva* of *Mahābhārata*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s friend Arjuna is the listener, and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the speaker. Before reading *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, it is of utmost importance to know the mutual relationship between Arjuna and Bhagavān and to understand Arjuna’s conception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is not a ‘scripture’ born of imagination, so there is no need of any interpretation of it that is rooted in mundane speculation. Śrī Arjuna, Sañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Janamejaya and the sages headed by Śaunaka never took the *Gītā* to be a metaphor. To say that Sañjaya represents divine vision, that Dhṛtarāṣṭra represents the blind mind, and that both are situated in the one body is simply the result of a sprouting imagination. Conversely, it is natural for a mind that is controlled by the soul to have divine vision, for that mind is capable of controlling the senses.

Generally, people understand ‘*Gītā*’ to refer to *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which was instructed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to His friend Arjuna. Modern-

day bookstores, however, contain titles such as *Gītā-samanvaya* and *Gītā-granthāvalī*, promoting them as great works that embody the very essence of scriptural knowledge. Why is there objection to accepting the excellence and antiquity of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which is spoken by Śrī Bhagavān and which has been adorned with such superlative titles as *sarva-jñāna-prayojikā* (that which employs all knowledge), *sarva-śāstra-sārabhūtā* (the essence of all scriptures) and *tattvārtha-mañjarī* (the flower bud of imports on the Absolute Truth)? In the name of showing individuality and liberality, impersonalists, monists, polytheists and those who endeavour to synthesize spirit and matter, use terms such as *samanvaya* (harmonization, or synthesis) that shamelessly profess everything to be equal. Such persons are forever busy demonstrating their liberal morality through concocted commentaries that endeavour to offer some speculative form of adjustment on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures.

At present, the word *samanvaya* is misused and misinterpreted. True harmony can only be found in Bhagavān. Fabricated conceptions can never be equated with harmony. *Samanvaya-bhāṣyas* (commentaries that claim to present a harmonious conclusion) on the *Gītā* are now found in shops and bookstores, but it is neither concord (*anvaya*) nor synthesis (*samanvaya*) to say that the world is Parameśvara (the Supreme Lord) or that Parameśvara is the world. This infectious disease of the doctrine of 'harmony' is evident in many of the so-called educated elite. It must be opposed and refuted.

Those who pride themselves on their Western education avoid placing their faith in the scripture and investigating true knowledge through it. Rather, they resort to various types of mundane logic to satisfy their tendency for inquiry. Atheistic historians and researchers analyze a scripture using the latest research methods in order to determine its time of composition. Because they fail to accept its factual substance, they are unable to reconcile aspects of the scriptures that contradict their conclusions. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is a part of *Mahābhārata*, yet they say it was added at a later date. This kind of research does not spread the glories of the eternal distinguished culture of sages who

have seen the Truth (*ārya-ṛṣis*); rather, it only confirms the researchers' indifference and disdain toward them. It is not a quest for immortal nectar but the spitting of poison.

Modern educated people fill their speeches and writings with the word 'sectarian' so as to boast their liberality. They forget that the glory of *ārya-dharma*, which is eternal, is sectarianism in its most pure sense. The current of true conceptions that is received through the *guru-paramparā* is termed *sampradāya*, or a disciplic lineage that completely and properly bestows the Supreme Truth. This current has been flowing since time immemorial in the theistic society of India.

The *ārya-ṛṣis* firmly established the system of *sampradāya* on a solid, scientific foundation. The attempt to destroy it began with a fierce attack by those who adhered to atheistic communism, which came from the West. The root cause of such calamity is an erroneous understanding of the word 'sectarian'. Now, many fabricated, narrow-minded sects loudly voice their opposition to the bona fide *sampradāyas*. Unable to pursue the Absolute Truth, they take shelter of opportunism, thinking the frantic dance of their minds to be liberality, or public opinion. Consequently, they are forced to become impersonalists, worshipping *brahma*, the featureless aspect of the Absolute Truth, which is devoid of all potency. The plot to prove that Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Absolute Truth, is featureless is now termed non-sectarian, or *asāmpradāyika*.

It is fashionable to write so-called spiritual or non-sectarian commentaries on the *Gītā* and other scriptures. Regrettably, however, in today's society, non-sectarianism refers to willfulness, opportunism, and lack of inhibition. One should understand that those who reject the realized truths of the *ārya-ṛṣis* – who know past, present and future – and the eternally perfect, exalted personalities, and who assert that their doctrines are spoiled by sectarianism, are in fact attached to impersonalism and materialism. Such people label as non-sectarian the commentaries of political leaders, fruitive workers, empiric philosophers and mystics.

To understand the actual conclusions of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and to philosophically deliberate upon them, one must take shelter of the

instructions of the previous *ācāryas* and follow those instructions. One will then be able to perceive and realize the inner intention of the *Gītā*. A subject becomes easy to understand if the author himself gives an explanation, or commentary, otherwise one's own understanding of the subject will naturally be tainted by the four defects: error, illusion, imperfect sense perception, and deception. Consequently, one cannot possibly understand the intention of the *Gītā* unless one takes shelter of the realized truth imparted by the sages who know past, present and future, and the previous *ācāryas* within the disciplic succession, who are devoid of such faults. There is no other way.

I shall try to present some of the truths that my most worshipful spiritual master, Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, spoke on the subject of the *Gītā*.

“The purpose of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gīta* is not to promote diplomacy or the ethics of a *kṣatriya* but rather to teach complete surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the utmost Supreme Absolute Truth.”

“Arjuna, is the cause of the *Gītā*'s appearance and he can never be bewildered. His bewilderment is an act, solely to facilitate the appearance of the *Gītā*, for he is the eternal associate and friend of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

“Śrī Vyāsadeva says, *pārtho vatsaḥ (Gītā-mahātmya 6)*. From this we can understand that the milk of the *Gītā* was not only intended for Arjuna, who is here compared to a calf.”

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, ‘*mām ekam śaraṇam vraja* – take exclusive shelter of Me’ (*Gītā* 18.66). Here, the word *ekam* indicates that the sole intention of the *Gītā* is to help one surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of all potency.”

“In the *Gītā* (9.31), we see that Bhagavān makes His devotee, Arjuna, declare that His devotee never perishes: *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ pranaśyati*. The purport is that Bhagavān always protects the vows of His devotees in every way, while He slackens His own vows simply upon hearing His devotee's prayers of distress. Therefore, out of His *bhakta-vātsalya* (affection for His devotee) Bhagavān proclaims His devotee's victory.”

“In the *Gītā* (4.9) He says, ‘My birth and activities are divine and full of inconceivable potency.’ ”

“The Vedas have emanated from Īsvara’s breathing, but the words of Śrī *Gītā* have emanated from His lips. The *Gītā* is therefore as transcendental as the Vedas. In this regard, there is no scope for argument.”

“In the *Gītā* (9.11) Bhagavān tells Arjuna, ‘Foolish people, who are bewildered by *māyā*, consider My transcendental form of eternality, knowledge and bliss to be ordinary, like a perishable human body, and thus they slight Me.’ Something that is devoid of form or features is never worshipable. Moreover, absence of features does not constitute transcendence. The forms of Bhagavān and the Vaiṣṇavas are eternal, all cognizant and blissful. They cannot be perceived by the mundane senses and are completely pure and transcendental. They are *nirguṇa-tattva*, completely free from the material modes of nature.”

Jagad-guru Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda writes in the introduction to his commentary:

“*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which consists of eighteen chapters, is celebrated as an Upaniṣad. There are countless expositions, commentaries and translations of this book in many languages. The commentaries of Śrīla Śrīdhara, Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viśvanātha and Śrī Baladeva are most prominent. Those who have taken shelter of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas’ most worshipful Śrī Caitanyadeva are very attached to the commentaries that are approved by His associates. Those who are born in a seminal line of *brāhmaṇas* follow the *smārta-dharma* as propounded by Manu and others. The *Gītā*, however, delineates the system of determining caste according to character, a system that opposes this doctrine. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, ‘Those whose intelligence is plundered by the desire to be freed from distress worship the demigods according to appropriate regulations, being subject to their own natures.’ Why should we take shelter of demigods and not of Adhokṣaja, Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is beyond the purview of the material senses? If one abandons the worship of the transcendental Cupid, Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu, and worships others instead, one’s human intelligence is both lost and destroyed. Until

one is free from all desires, one cannot worship Kāmadeva (the transcendental ever-fresh Cupid).”

In his introduction to his *Rasika-rañjana* commentary on the *Gītā*, jagad-guru Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes,

“The most compassionate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose words always hold true, spoke *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which is an investigation into the essential import of all the Vedas, to His friend, Arjuna, to deliver the entire world. These instructions of the *Gītā* are the only means to deliver the world.

“The *Gītā* is therefore the crown jewel of all Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-sūtra* and *Bhagavad-gītā* are all purely devotional scriptures (*śuddha-bhakti-sāstras*). Those who possess a transcendental nature will certainly take the renounced order upon hearing the *Gītā*, just as Uddhava did. The deep import of the *Gītā* is that a person’s eligibility follows in the wake of his nature. Without the proper eligibility, the conditioned soul cannot possibly attain Bhagavān. Fruitive action (*karma*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and devotion (*bhakti*) have different natures, and thus their identities are also different. For this reason, after due deliberation, the Vedas have been divided into three divisions: *karma-kāṇḍa*, *jñāna-kāṇḍa* and *bhakti-kāṇḍa*. One’s *karma* transforms into *bhakti* once one surpasses the desire to attain religiosity (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) and instead finds joy in the service of Bhagavān. *Bhakti* is therefore the final aim of the living entity’s prescribed duty and also its fruit.

“*Bhakti* is a very profound principle; it is the very life of *jñāna* and *karma* and it fulfils their purpose. That is why the discussion on *bhakti* has been placed in the middle six chapters. By this we see that supremely pure *bhakti* is the final goal of the *Gītā*. The verse, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, found at the end of the *Gītā* (18.66), establishes that surrender to Bhagavān is the most confidential instruction.”

To understand the actual philosophical conclusions and lessons of the *Gītā*, from its auspicious beginning until its final conclusion, we must first surrender to a spiritual master in the line of the foremost

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, because the pure words and teachings of transcendental and eternally perfect personalities are free from error, illusion and so on. In fact, they are our only welfare. The neem, mango, tamarind and *bel* (wood-apple) trees on the banks of the pure Bhāgavatī Gaṅgā grow bitter, sweet and sour fruit, even though they are nourished by the same water. Similarly, due to their natures, the living entities who are enchanted by *māyā*, the deluding material energy, preach different conceptions after studying the same scripture.

One may ask why Bhagavān instructs His dear friend Arjuna to practise *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so forth if they are not the best *sādhana*. The answer is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa also states in the *Gītā* that without *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān, all endeavours in *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are fruitless and meaningless. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has instructed that worship in *anugatya* of the *gopīs* of Vraja (ie. following in their footsteps), is the highest type of worship. “*Aiśvarya śithila preme nahi mora prīta* – love that is enfeebled by *aiśvarya-jñāna* does not satisfy Me” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 3.16). This is Kṛṣṇa’s hidden intention. In the verse *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the source of all divine incarnations, has revealed and proclaimed His sovereignty over the material energy and the demigods, and He has also proclaimed Himself to be the supreme object of worship for all. He is the basis and shelter of the empiric philosophers’ worshipful *brahma*, the Lord’s featureless aspect. He is the non-dual Truth (*advaya-jñāna-tattva*) and He is the one true object (*vāstava-vastu*) – that is, He is one without a second.

The first six chapters of the *Gītā* discuss *karma-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement where the fruit of one’s pious action is offered to the Lord. The last six discuss *jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge. And the middle six discuss *bhakti-yoga*, the path of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord (Bhagavān). From this we understand that Bhakti Mahā-devī is the supreme shelter of *karma* and *jñāna*. Bhakti Mahā-devī was once established as one who gives life to *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and so on in a gathering (in which *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was discussed) at Māyātīrtha

Haridvara, the best among the seven holy places. Without the mercy of Bhakti-devī, neither *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* nor any other process can give the desired result. This is specifically evidenced in the following verses: *bhaktyā mām abhijānanti* (Gītā 18.55), *bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā* (Gītā 8.22), *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.21), *bhaktyā tuṣyati kevalam, bhaktir evainaṁ nayati* (Māthara Śruti), and *na sādhayati mām yogo* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.20).

In the authoritative scriptures, the performance of supremely pure, exclusive devotion (known as *viśuddhā-*, *ananyā-* or *kevalā-bhakti*) is said to be the final instruction for the living entity. From the verse, *satatam kīrtayanto mām* (Gītā 9.14), we understand that worship of Bhagavān is the performance of the nine kinds of devotion, headed by chanting the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta states, “*aprākṛta vastu nahe prākṛta gocara* – transcendental objects are beyond mundane knowledge and the material senses” (Madhya-līlā 9.195). Pride and scholarship are defeated in such an attempt. Bhagavān’s mercy can only be attained by surrender to Him and by offering Him one’s very self. Many people who are intoxicated by their mundane scholarship and pride try to study and teach the meaning of the scriptures, but they only cheat themselves and others. Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke the verse *teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām* (Gītā 10.10), for this reason.

The fundamental principle in regard to Śrī Bhagavān (*bhagavat-tattva*) is realized through *buddhi-yoga* (pure intelligence directed towards the attainment of the Lord), which is bestowed by Bhagavān. Those who try to understand the import of scripture while faithfully taking shelter of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, very easily cross over the ocean of material existence and attain transcendental devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Performance of such devotion is the qualification for *prema*. Thus the words *sarva-guhyatama* (most confidential), determine the supreme subject matter of the *Gītā*, which is *prema*, the fifth goal of life and the final stage of *sādhana-bhajana*.

Through this comparative discussion of the *Gītā*, Śrī Bhagavān has established the supremacy of *bhakti-yoga*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – who delivers the people in the age of Kali – along with His dear associates, has shown the path to search for the most worshipful

Absolute Truth. They have also shown the pinnacle of *sādhana-bhajana*. In this way they have bestowed incalculable benefit upon us. This is their causeless, heartfelt compassion upon all living entities. Throughout the entire world, their conception is therefore supported by wise men and scholars alike.

Śrī Guru-Vaiṣṇava dāsānudāsa –
the servant of the servants
of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas,

Tridaṇḍibhikṣu
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Vāmana
Vyāsa-pūjā of Śrī Śrī Gurupāda-padma
25 February 1997

Introduction

(to the Hindi edition)

ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ is composed by Śrī Śrīmad Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, the universal teacher and an incarnation of Bhagavān. It constitutes eighteen chapters of *Bhīṣma-parva* (Chapters Twenty-five to Forty-two) of his vast epic, *Śrī Mahābhārata*.

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given very valuable and fundamental instructions to His eternal associate and dear friend Arjuna for the benefit of all human beings, to help them cross the ocean of material existence and attain His lotus feet. To enable deluded conditioned souls like us to pass beyond the delusion of the external, material energy (*māyā*), He made His eternal associate, Arjuna, become as if enchanted by *māyā* so that he would ask questions that correspond to the various eligibilities of the deluded living entities. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then answered those questions Himself, thereby dispelling all kinds of doubts and defining the means by which the living entities can be systematically freed from the delusion of *māyā*.

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is also known as *Gītopaniṣad*. It is the essence of all Vedic knowledge and the most significant Upaniṣad in Vedic literature. Those who constantly study this book with faith, under the shelter of the spiritual master, saintly persons and Vaiṣṇavas will be able to ascertain its true import easily. As a result, they will transcend the ocean of material existence and attain transcendental devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this way, they will become eligible to attain pure love for Him. Of this there is not the slightest doubt.

Nowadays, it is observed that the great thinkers and venerated gentlemen of India revere *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Members of all disciplic lineages (*sampradāyas*) also show great honour and faith in the *Gītā*. Even many celebrated politicians have shown faith in this monarch of books, and philosophers from all countries of the world have lauded it profusely.

Since ancient times, many commentaries have been written on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Famous among them are the commentaries of prominent monists (*advaitavādīs*), such as Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, Śrīmad Ānandagiri and Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Most people study and lecture from these commentaries alone. Some people conclude their study of the *Gītā* with the following commentaries: the principle of specialized monism by *viśiṣṭādvaitavādī* Śrī Rāmānujācārya, the principle of purified monism by *śuddhādvaitavādī* Śrīdhara Svāmī, or the principle of pure dualism by *śuddha-dvaitācārya* Śrīman Madhvācārya. Furthermore, at present some people also conclude their study with the interpretations of political personalities like Lokamānya Tilaka, Gāndhījī and Śrī Aravinda. Most people, however, do not receive the good fortune to deeply study the commentary of the proponent of the devotional school of Vedānta established by Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, *śrī gauḍīya-vedāntācārya* Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who is proficient in *acintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta* (the principle of inconceivable difference and non-difference), nor the commentary of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the crest jewel of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava preceptors.

The Seventh Gosvāmī of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* and the best among the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, published in Bengali two editions of the *Gītā* with two different elucidations on its translations, which are based on the import of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's and Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentaries. His explanations are fundamental and full of beautiful conclusions that follow the *rūpānuga* conception and that are conducive to *śuddha-bhakti*. The transcendental benefit bestowed upon mankind by these two great editions is indescribable. Through his elucidations, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura establishes the eternality, universality and supremacy of *bhakti*, thereby bestowing the greatest benefit upon those journeying to the kingdom of *śuddha-bhakti*.

At present, various inauthentic persons are publishing speculative commentaries on the *Gītā*, in which they shamelessly present their imaginary, inconclusive theories about the synthesis of spirit and matter (*cit-jada-samanvayavāda*). They also try to prove that pure devotion, which is eternal, is worthless. In most of these commentaries, either prescribed duty or empiric knowledge in the form of impersonal

*māyāvādis*m is expounded as the sole import of the *Gītā*. By reading and hearing such commentaries, people of delicate faith are being deviated from the path.

The *nigama-sāstras* (Vedas) are very extensive. Some portions of them contain instructions on mundane religiosity (*dharma*), others on prescribed duty (*karma*), others on analytical knowledge (*sāṅkhya-jñāna*) and yet others on *bhagavad-bhakti*, loving devotion to Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What is the mutual relationship between these systems, and when is it one's duty to relinquish one to engage in another? Although a description of such graduated eligibilities is also found in those very scriptures, it is very difficult for living entities born in the age of Kali, whose lives are but short and whose intellects are meagre, to completely study those vast scriptures and ascertain their own qualification. For this reason, a concise, straightforward and scientific investigation is indispensable.

At the end of Dvāpara-yuga, most people became incapable of understanding the true import of the Vedic scriptures and thus began to propagate their own theories. Some declared *karma*, or fruitive action, to be the sole intention of the Vedas, while others declared material enjoyment, analytical knowledge, logic or monism to be its sole intent. In this way, the divergent opinions that arose from their incomplete knowledge began to create affliction in India, just as unchewed foodstuff causes discomfort and pain to the stomach.

At that time the supremely compassionate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra gave the instructions of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* to His dear associate and friend, Arjuna, for the benefit of the living entities of the world. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which is an investigation into the essential import of all the Vedas, is therefore the crest jewel of all Upaniṣads. It describes the mutual relationship between the processes of *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and so on and expounds pure *hari-bhakti* as the supreme goal for the living entities. *Karma-yoga* (the path of spiritual advancement where the fruit of one's pious action is offered to the Lord), *jñāna-yoga* (the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge) and *bhakti-yoga* (the path of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord) are not actually different systems; they are simply the first, second and third steps of the one *yoga* process.

The first stage of that complete *yoga* is called *karma-yoga*, the second, *jñāna-yoga* and the third, *bhakti-yoga*. The Upaniṣads, *Brahma-sūtra*, and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* are completely devotional literatures. They elaborately describe *karma*, *jñāna*, *mukti* and the attainment of *brahma*, but then comparatively deliberate on them and ultimately establish *śuddha-bhakti* as supreme.

Readers of the *Gītā* can be divided in two categories: those possessed of a gross, or superficial, understanding (*sthūla-darśis*) and those possessed of fine discrimination (*sūkṣma-darśis*). The first type makes conclusions based exclusively on the external meaning of the *Gītā*'s statements. The second type, however, is not satisfied with only the external meanings and enquires into the deep, fundamental purport. The external *sthūla-darśis* read the *Gītā* from beginning to end and conclude that it establishes *karma*, because after hearing the entire *Gītā*, Arjuna understands that to fight is beneficial.

The *sūkṣma-darśis*, however, are not satisfied with such a shallow conclusion. They determine either knowledge of the impersonal aspect of the Lord (*brahma-jñāna*) or transcendental devotion (*parā-bhakti*) to be the aim of the *Gītā* and say that Arjuna's engaging in battle is simply an example of adhering to one's own level of eligibility. But this is not the highest essence of the *Gītā*. A man's nature determines his qualification to engage in work (prescribed duty). As he maintains his life accordingly, he gradually obtains knowledge of the Truth. Unless he performs some work, he will have difficulty maintaining himself, and without maintaining himself, it will be difficult for him to ponder the Truth. Therefore, in the primary stage, it is necessary to properly execute one's prescribed duty that is in accordance with one's *varṇa* (caste) and station in life. It is important to know here that of all virtuous action, the *Gītā* only accepts selflessly performed action that is offered to Bhagavān. Such *karma* gradually purifies the heart and bestows knowledge of the Truth. Then, through the performance of devotion, or *bhakti*, Bhagavān is finally attained.

In order to understand *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*'s purport and ultimate subject, one must follow the instructions of the person who spoke it – Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa – who is referred to as Bhagavān, the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, on every page. Out of His causeless mercy, in many parts of the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares Himself to be Bhagavān, the Supreme Absolute Truth:

*ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*
Gītā (10.8)

I am the source of both mundane and spiritual worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this well engage in *bhajana* of Me, with ecstasy in their hearts.

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*
Gītā (7.7)

O conqueror of riches, Dhanañjaya, there is nothing superior to Me. This whole creation is dependent on Me, just as jewels are strung on a thread.

*ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te*
Gītā (9.24)

I am the only master and enjoyer of all sacrifices, but those who do not recognize My transcendental body fall down and repeatedly wander in the cycle of birth and death.

Many other scriptures also state Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be Svayam Bhagavān:

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁśaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28)

All *avatāras* beginning with Rāma and Nṛsimha are the parts, and parts of the parts, of the Supreme Person Bhagavān. However, only Kṛṣṇa is the original Svayam Bhagavān.

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
Brahma-sūtra (5.1)

The Supreme Lord, Īśvara, is Kṛṣṇa; His form is eternal, all-knowing and blissful.

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan mitram paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.32)*

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.*

It is important to know in this regard that of Bhagavān's various incarnations, none have revealed Their Godliness, or *bhagavattā*. In the *Gītā* however, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly makes known His position as the Supreme Lord, and defines surrender and *bhakti* to Him as the supreme spiritual practice (*sādhana*) for all living entities.

Through the principle of *trīsatya*, or an oath thrice affirmed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa establishes His own Godliness and defines devotion to Him as the topmost spiritual practice (*sādhana*) and goal (*sādhya*). He does this with the words *mām eva* (to Me) in the verse “*mām eva ye prapadyante – surrender only to Me*” (*Gītā* 7.24); with the words *mām eva* (to Me) in the verse “*te 'pi mām eva kaunteya – they worship only Me*” (*Gītā* 9.23); and with the words *mām ekam* (to Me alone) in the verse *mām ekam śaraṇaṁ vraja – surrender exclusively to Me*” (*Gītā* 18.66). Moreover, not only Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but even great sages and perfected souls such as Devarṣi Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa confirm this truth, and Arjuna too accepts it from the very beginning. Therefore, anyone who reads or listens to the *Gītā* will approach the Supreme Truth in a mood of acceptance, free from the slightest doubt, that the speaker of the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Each and every one of His teachings are completely true.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has told Arjuna in the verse *bhaktō 'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam* (*Gītā* 4.1-3), “This *Gītā* is eternal. At first, billions of years ago, I gave these instructions to the sun-god, Vivasvān. Vivasvān gave them to Manu, and Manu gave them to Īkṣvāku. This system of yoga thus remained in the world through the disciplic succession (*guru-paramparā*), but that *paramparā* disappeared with the passing of time. You are My exclusive devotee, My dear friend and My direct disciple; I am therefore bestowing this supreme secret upon you.”

It is impossible to comprehend the profound truths of the *Gītā* without being a devotee, for throughout this scripture it is declared that its import cannot be grasped without *bhakti*: “*bhaktiyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho ’rjuna* – it is only through exclusive devotion that My form can be actually seen” (*Gītā* 11.54). The *Gītā* has been spoken only for the devotees of Bhagavān. This is what is meant by the statement “*idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana* – you should never explain this *Bhagavad-gītā* to anyone whose senses are uncontrolled, who is a non-devotee, who is devoid of a serving mood, or who is envious of Me” (*Gītā* 18.67).

The *Gītā* describes three kinds of *sādhakas*, or practitioners of a particular discipline. They are the *jñānī*, the *yogī* and the *bhakta*. In the *Gītā*, the words *jñānī* and *yogī* do not refer to impersonalist *māyāvādīs* who maintain that the Absolute Truth is unmanifest, featureless, formless and devoid of potency. Rather, they refer to *jñānīs* and *yogīs* who are endowed with *bhakti*. In the *Gītā* (7.19), Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly says, “*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate* – the true *jñānī* is one who is surrendered unto Me and who has pure devotion for Me. Such a great soul is very rare.” His definition of a *yogī* in *Gītā* 6.47 is similarly clear: “*yogīnām api sarveṣām mad-gatenāntarātmanā* – he who constantly worships Me with full faith, always thinking exclusively of Me within, is, in My opinion, the topmost of all *yogīs*.”

Therefore, a person who is devoid of *bhakti* is never eligible to hear the *Gītā*. If he is not eligible even to hear it, how can he understand its import? It is necessary to surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet with the knowledge that He is Svayam Bhagavān, and to hear the truths of the *Gītā* from the mouth of a great devotee in a true *guru-paramparā* who has seen the Truth. Unless a person does this, he will not be able to understand the *Gītā*’s import.

According to *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who possesses all majesty and sweetness (*aiśvarya* and *mādhurya*), is the supreme object of worship of the living entities; and *bhakti*, which attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme process and goal. Nevertheless, because ignorant people consider this gross body as ‘I’ and objects related to it as ‘mine’, they remain cheated of their true constitutional nature; they are therefore incapable of correctly understanding the essential truths of *bhakti*.

Because of their gross intelligence, they consider mundane fruitive activity (*karma*) the only reality, and because of their ignorance, they remain engrossed in it. They consequently fall into the clutches of monism or *māyāvāda*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa inspired Arjuna to raise the topics of these types of mundane religiosity. He then established both their insignificance and the supreme eminence of *bhakti*.

Of the eighteen chapters of the *Gītā*, the first six establish the unique features of *karma-yoga*; the last six, the main features of *jñāna-yoga*; and the middle six, the prominent features of *bhakti-yoga*. Thus *bhakti* remains situated in the centre and gives shelter to *karma* and *jñāna*. This is because *karma* and *jñāna* are incapable of bestowing any result without the assistance of Bhakti-devī.

KARMA: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally instructs Arjuna about the necessity of performing one's prescribed duty (*karma*) for the pleasure of Bhagavān. If one does not do so, it becomes the cause of bondage, as stated in *Gītā* 3.9: “*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ... – O son of Kuntī, all actions other than the selfless performance of one's prescribed duty offered to Śrī Viṣṇu are a cause of bondage to this world. Therefore, become free from all desires for the fruits of your actions and perform appropriate action solely for His satisfaction.*” The word *yajñārthāt* in this verse means ‘offered to Śrī Viṣṇu’. Therefore, prescribed duties should be performed solely for the pleasure of Viṣṇu, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in *Gītā* 5.29, “*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasām... – He who knows Me to be the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Controller of all planets and the well-wisher of all living entities attains liberation.*” He also says in *Gītā* 3.30, “*mayi sarvāni karmāṇi sannyasya – all prescribed duties should be performed as an offering to Me.*” Furthermore, in *Gītā* 9.27, He says, “*yat karoṣi... whatever you do, do it for My pleasure; offer it to Me.*” We thus see that Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs living entities who are eligible to perform their prescribed duty, to only perform *niṣkāma-bhagavad-arpita-karma*, selfless work offered to the Supreme Lord. He does not give them the instruction to merely perform their prescribed duty.

Karma usually only refers to prescribed duty that is accompanied by devotion, or *bhakti*. *Karma* in which *bhakti* predominates over *karma*

is known as *karma-miśrā-bhakti* or *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*. Only when the performance of one's prescribed duty is solely for the pleasure of Bhagavān can it truly be termed *karma*, as stated in the verse *tat karma hari toṣaṇam yat* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.49). For this reason, in *Gītā* 11.55, Bhagavān also states, “*mat karma kṛṇ... yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava* – only he who performs *karma* for My pleasure attains Me.”

JÑĀNA: Śrī Kṛṣṇa states that among the four kinds of people who are surrendered to Him, namely, the distressed (*ārtta*), the inquisitive (*jijñāsu*), the seekers of wealth (*arthārthī*), and those in search of knowledge (*jñānīs*), the *jñānīs* are best. What is the nature of the *jñānīs*? *Gītā* 7.17 states, “*teṣāṃ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate* – those *jñānīs* possess exclusive devotion for Him and are always absorbed in Him.”

Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not speaking of *jñānīs* who are impersonalists devoid of *bhakti*. To clarify this, He later says in *Gītā* 7.19, “*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate...* – after many births, the *jñānī* who is endowed with knowledge that everything both conscious and inert is related to Vāsudeva fully takes shelter of Me. Such a great soul is extremely rare.”

The word *jñāna* refers to knowledge that is not predominated by *bhakti*, whereas knowledge that is inclined towards *prema-bhakti* is known as *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*. When one has made some progress in his *sādhana* and gives up *jñāna* due to an abundance of divine love, pure exclusive devotion, or *prema-bhakti*, manifests in his heart.

YOGA: At the end of the Sixth Chapter, Bhagavān highly praises the *yogīs* by stating that they are even superior to the *karmīs* (those who perform their prescribed duty), *tapasvīs* (performers of austerity) and *jñānīs* (those in search of knowledge). He instructs Arjuna to become a *yogī*: *tapasvibhyo dhīko yogī* (6.46). But in *Gītā* 6.47 Bhagavān defines what kind of *yogī*, “*yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntarātmanā* – among all kinds of *yogīs*, the best are those who always faithfully perform *bhajana* to Me with their hearts.” The word ‘Me’ in this verse refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore, when the *Gītā* speaks of the *yogī*, it refers to the *yogī* who worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa in every way. In

the *Gītā*, *yoga* does not refer to *pātāñjala-yoga*, nor does it refer to the activities of *karmīs*, *yogīs*, or performers of dry austerities who are devoid of *bhakti*.

BHAKTI: After bestowing vision of His universal form upon His devotee Arjuna, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells him, “*bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho ’rjuna* – vision of this form of Mine is only possible through exclusive devotion. You are My exclusive *premī-bhakta*, and therefore you have seen it” (*Gītā* 11.54). “Furthermore, in *Gītā* 18.55, He says, “*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti* – only through pure devotion can someone see Me, or know Me in truth, and attain loving service to Me in My abode.”

At the end of the *Gītā*, after giving instructions on the confidential knowledge of the featureless aspect of Godhead (*brahma-jñāna*), the more confidential *paramātma-jñāna*, or *īśvara-jñāna* (knowledge of the localized aspect of the Supreme Lord, Paramātmā) and finally the most confidential *bhagavad-jñāna* (knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* – abandon all varieties of religion and surrender exclusively to Me” (*Gītā* 18.66). In this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna to surrender to Him, giving up all worldly religion. By this, He establishes that *bhakti* is the only means to attain His complete form. Such *bhakti* is of two types: exclusive (*kevala*) and mixed with another process, predominating over it (*pradhānī-bhūta*).

Exclusive devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*) is devoid of the slightest scent of reward-seeking action (*karma*), empiric knowledge (*jñāna*) and so forth, and is completely independent. Devotion that is mixed with another process and predominating over it (*pradhānī-bhūta-bhakti*) is of three kinds: *karma-pradhānī-bhūta* (in which devotion predominates over one’s prescribed duty), *jñāna-pradhānī-bhūta* (in which devotion predominates over knowledge) and *karma-jñāna-pradhānī-bhūta* (in which devotion predominates over a mixture of prescribed duties and knowledge). When *karma* and *jñāna* are devoid of the inclination to perform *bhakti*. they are simply called *karma* and *jñāna* respectively.

Although in some places the *Gītā* gives instructions on devotion that predominates over another process, those same places, also, certainly

indicate exclusive devotion. To know Bhagavān through *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti* or to attain Him by it is very difficult. Therefore, in the *Gītā* (8.14) Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly states that He is easily attained through exclusive devotion (*ananyā-bhakti* or *kevalā-bhakti*): “*ananya-cetāḥ satatam yo mām smarati nityasaḥ, tasyāham sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ* – I am easily attained by those eternal yogīs who, being endowed with exclusive devotion, always remember Me and worship Me.”

Furthermore, in *Gītā* 9.22, Śrī Kṛṣṇa also states how He is controlled by the exclusive loving service of His devotees who are endowed with *ananyā-bhakti*: “*ananyās cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate, teṣām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham* – I Myself provide and maintain the needs of devotees who exclusively worship Me and who are always engaged in *bhakti*.”

In various places throughout the *Gītā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa states that He can be attained only through exclusive devotion: *bhaktiyā labhyas tv ananyayā* (*Gītā* 8.22), *bhajanty ananya-manaso* (*Gītā* 9.13), *bhaktiyā tv ananyayā śakya* (*Gītā* 11.54), and finally, *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja, aham tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ* (*Gītā* 18.66). It is thus verified that *viśuddhā-bhakti*, *ananyā-bhakti*, or *kevalā-bhakti* is the ultimate goal of the living entities.

How should one practise this *ananyā-bhakti*? Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna as follows: “*satatam kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ, namasyantaś ca mām bhaktiyā nitya-yuktā upāsate* – constantly chanting the glories of My names, qualities, form and pastimes, endeavouring with determined vows, and offering obeisances with devotion, they engage in My worship, remaining always connected with Me” (*Gītā* 9.14).

By this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches that *saṅkīrtana* is the best method to worship Him. Here, *saṅkīrtana* means the loud singing of Bhagavān’s names, form, qualities and pastimes. It also alludes to the other limbs of *bhakti*.

Many insolently try to understand the *Gītā* with their material knowledge, and they also instruct others in this way. They do not know, however, that the *Gītā* is transcendental, beyond mundane knowledge, logic and intellect. It is beyond the reach of pride, valour,

heroism and erudition. It can be understood only by the mercy of Bhagavān and bestowed upon one who is surrendered. Therefore, the Śrutis state, “*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo* – the Supreme Lord is not obtained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, or even by much hearing; he is obtained only by one to whom He Himself gives mercy” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.3) and “*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām... dadāmi buddhi-yogam* – upon those who lovingly perform *bhajana* of Me and yearn for My eternal association, I bestow that transcendental knowledge by which they attain Me” (*Gītā* 10.10).

In order to ascertain the meaning of a book, it is necessary to consider six things: (1) its opening statements (*upakrama*), (2) its closing statements (*upasāmhāra*), (3) its repetition of a subject (*abhyāsa*), (4) its extraordinary result of reading it (*apūrvatā phala*), (5) its praise of a subject (*arthavāda*) and (6) its logical arguments that establish a conclusion (*upapatti*). Unless one considers all six elements, a book’s true import remains elusive. Those who deliberate on the *Gītā*, keeping these six limbs of analysis in mind, will easily understand that pristinely pure devotion is its final import. At present, however, ordinary people make conclusions on the meaning of the scriptures according to their own whims to fulfil selfish desires. They do not deliberate on these six limbs of analysis and therefore remain incapable of grasping the author’s real intent.

Nowadays, there is a trend for writers and speakers to make a comparative analysis in the areas of acquired knowledge, the application of that knowledge, science, politics and so on, but all hesitate to compare various religions. They conclude that such a study, which marks one religion as superior and another as inferior, would lead to tension or dispute between communities, throwing society into unrest. Moreover, social and global development would be obstructed. They conclude that to successfully engender harmony it is essential to establish equality and friendship between all people rather than to discuss religious distinctions, and that only when all religions are harmonized is it possible to establish peace and mutual friendship among all. In the field of politics, the comparative study of the differences in doctrine between heads of state is the only reason for inauspiciousness for a country and society. These people think that a comparative study of religion would similarly lead to communal dispute.

Our comment on this is as follows: Just as a comparative study of knowledge and religion is necessary, so is a study of true harmony. What does this mean? Say we place on both sides of a scale, virtue and evil, sentience and insentience, diamond and coal, a thief and a saint, and justice and injustice, and then conclude that they are equal. Where is the deliberation? To declare equality in such cases is nothing less than ignorance and is incapable of causing real harmony. The word *samanvaya* (harmony) is derived from *samyak* (complete) and *anvaya* (sequence). In other words, *anvaya* – the syntax of a sentence, especially in terms of grammar – is known as *samanvaya*. If a sentence is to have *samanvaya* (proper harmony) then the subject, object and verb must be properly placed. The syntax will not be proper if we put the verb in place of the subject, the object in place of the verb, and any other component of the sentence in place of the object. Consequently, if there is no *anvaya* (analysis, or syntax) how will there be any *samanvaya* (harmony)? Proper harmony, or order, leads to coherence, unity and the absence of impediments. Conversely, artificially making everything equal without considering virtue and fault or qualification and disqualification cannot be called harmony. It is not true harmony to try to please everybody in every way by saying that all are equal. To try to please everybody means to please nobody.

At present, certain persons who adhere to the so-called doctrine of harmonization, claim that fruitive action (*karma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), mysticism (*yoga*) and devotion (*bhakti*) – which are all taught in the *Gītā* – are the same. But therein, Bhagavān distinctly establishes the superiority of *jñāna* over *karma*, *yoga* over *jñāna*, and *bhakti* over *yoga*. For living entities deluded by the external energy, the performance of one's prescribed duty with a desire for the fruit (*sakāma-karma*) is described as the best. For those who are more developed, the selfless performance of one's prescribed duty in which the fruit of that duty is offered to the Supreme Lord (*niṣkāma-bhagavad-arpita-karma*) is said to be the best. For *sādhakas* who are even more developed, knowledge of the Truth is described as superior. And ultimately, pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) is described as most excellent of all.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself establishes *bhakti* as the final subject expounded by the *Gītā*. To know this is to properly understand the *Gītā*. It is foolish

to depend on one's limited intelligence to seek a harmony in the *Gītā* other than the scientific, comparative one spoken by Bhagavān. In regard to ascertaining the Absolute Truth, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes knowledge of His impersonal feature (*brahma-jñāna*) as confidential, knowledge of His localized expansion (*paramātma-jñāna*) as more confidential and transcendental devotion to Him (*parā-bhakti*) as most confidential. This is the true *samanvaya* of *Gītā*.

Some modern commentators consider worship of various demigods and goddesses to be equal to the worship of Bhagavān. However, the verse *ye 'py anya-devatā* (*Gītā* 9.23) states that worship of various demigods is unauthorized. Those who worship the demigods attain the planets of the demigods, and after enjoying there, they again return to this world. But those who worship Bhagavān attain loving service to Him in His abode. They never fall from there. This is clearly mentioned in the Vedic scriptures: “*yas tu nārāyaṇam devaṁ brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ* – those who consider Śrī Nārāyaṇa and the demigods headed by Rudra, to be equal are atheists and go to hell.”

Some people incorrectly interpret the verse, “*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmś tathaiva bhajāmy aham* – In whichever way a person serves Me I in turn serve him in that very same way. Everyone follows My path in all respects” (*Gītā* 4.11). They quote this to prove that all people ultimately attain the same abode, regardless of their type of worship. “There are many paths, but their destinations are one.”

But if we carefully deliberate on this verse, we see that this is not what it actually means. Bhagavān is actually saying that He rewards a person according to his surrender to Him: “In accordance with his acts, I shall reward him.” How, then, is it possible for everyone to be the same? The *Gītā* does not state in this or any other verse that one who is surrendered achieves the same result as one who is not. Furthermore, the aim of those who take shelter of Bhagavān is not the same. The fruitive worker takes shelter of Him with a desire to enjoy, the empiric philosopher with a desire for liberation, the mystic with a desire to attain mystic perfections, and devotees with a desire to achieve exclusive loving service to Him. Their desires, practices and aims are all different; therefore, it is not possible that they will achieve the same result.

Most people read this verse's second line, *mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*, and wrongly conjecture that all people are progressing in all ways on the path to Bhagavān. By such thinking, they must also conclude that thieves, dacoits, ruffians and adulterers are all progressing on the same path, but is this correct? No, never. The true meaning of this verse is that *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti* are all paths delineated by Bhagavān. People receive a result appropriate to the path they follow, in accordance with their qualification. One must accept that different paths lead to different results.

There is a clear distinction between the thoughts and practices of Buddhists, *māyāvādīs*, Jains, Śaivites, Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas. It is illogical to say that they all attain the same result and destination, for they all resort to different practices to fulfil their different desires. *Śūnyavādī* Buddhists desire to merge into *nirvāṇa* (the void). *Advaitavādīs* aspire for *brahma-sāyujya* (merging into the effulgence of the Supreme), and Śāktas desire material enjoyment. Śaivites chant “so ’ham – I am Him” or “śivo ’ham – I am Śiva” to attain liberation. Buddhists do not accept the Vedas, whereas *advaitavādīs* do and consider them to be of supra-mundane origin (*apauruṣeya*). Śāktas consider *mahā-māyā* to be the primeval potency (*ādyā-śakti*), whereas Śaivites hold that it is Umāpati Śiva who is the *para-tattva* (the Supreme Absolute Truth). Their conceptions, practices, aims and objects of worship vary; so is it anything but sheer foolishness to say that they all attain the same result? The *Gītā* certainly does not approve of such an opinion.

A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH OF

ŚRĪLA VIŚVANĀTHA CAKRAVARTĪ ṬHĀKURA

The crown jewel of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and the highly exalted preceptor Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is the author of the famous *Sārārtha-varṣinī* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. He appeared in a family of *brāhmaṇas* from the Rāḍhīya community of the Nadiyā district in West Bengal. He was celebrated by the name Hari-vallabha, and he had two older brothers, Rāmabhadra and Raghunātha. During his childhood, he completed his study of grammar in Devagrāma village. He then studied devotional scripture at the home

of his spiritual master in the Śaiyadābāda village of the Murśidābād district. While living in Śaiyadābāda, he wrote *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa* and *Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*. Soon after, he renounced household life and went to Vṛndāvana, where he wrote many other books and commentaries.

In his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, named *Sārārtha-darśinī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has written the following verse at the beginning of the five chapters describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance (*Śrī Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*):

*śrī-rāma-kṛṣṇa-gaṅgā-caraṇānnatvā gurūnuru-premnaḥ
śrīla-narottama-nātha śrī-gaurāṅga-prabhuṁ naumi*

Here, the name 'Śrī Rāma' refers to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's spiritual master, Śrī Rādhāramaṇa; 'Kṛṣṇa' refers to his grand spiritual master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa; 'Gaṅgā-caraṇa' refers to his great grand spiritual master, Śrī Gaṅgā-caraṇa; 'Narottama' refers to his great-great grand spiritual master, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura; and the word *nātha* refers to Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura's spiritual master, Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī. In this way, he offers obeisances to all those in his disciplic succession up to Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Distinguished Service to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya

In his old age, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura spent most of his time in a semi-conscious or internal state, deeply absorbed in *bhajana*. During that time, a debate broke out in Jaipur between the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavas who supported the doctrine of *svakīyāvāda*, or the Lord's pastimes of wedded love. The Vaiṣṇavas from the antagonistic camp [of the Śrī Rāmānuja line] had led King Jaya Singh II of Jaipur to believe that the worship of Śrīmatī Rādhikā with Śrī Govindadeva is not supported by the scriptures. Their contention was that Śrīmatī Rādhikā's name is neither mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* nor in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, and that She was never married to Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to Vedic ritual.

The antagonistic Vaiṣṇavas further objected that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas did not belong to a recognized *sampradāya*, or line of disciplic succession. From time immemorial, there have been four

Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*: the Śrī *sampradāya*, the Brahma *sampradāya*, the Rudra *sampradāya* and the Sanaka (Kumāra) *sampradāya*. In this age of Kali, the principal *ācāryas* of these four *sampradāyas* are, respectively, Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and Śrī Nimbāditya. The Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇavas said that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were outside these four *sampradāyas* and therefore without pure lineage. Further, they argued that because Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas did not have their own commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* (also known as *Vedānta-sūtra*), they could not be following a genuine Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession.

Mahārāja Jaya Singh knew that the prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of Vṛndāvana were followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and he summoned them to Jaipur to take up the challenge of the Śrī Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇavas. The elderly Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura was fully absorbed in the transcendental bliss of *bhajana*, so he sent his student Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to address the Jaipur assembly. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *vedānta-ācārya* Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the crown of the assembly of learned scholars and the greatest among exalted teachers of Vedānta, left for Jaipur accompanied by Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's disciple Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva.

The caste *gosvāmīs* had forgotten their own connection with the Madhva *sampradāya* and disrespected the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' doctrinal view, saying it has no connection with Vedānta. This caused considerable disturbance to the true Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. But Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa used irrefutable logic combined with powerful scriptural evidence to prove the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to be a pure Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, called the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, coming in the line of Śrī Madhvācārya. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra and other previous *ācāryas* also accepted this as fact. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas accept *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the genuine commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. For this reason, no one in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* had written a separate commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

The name of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the personification of the pleasure-giving potency (*hlādinī-śakti*) and the eternal beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is mentioned in various Purāṇas. Throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, particularly the Tenth Canto in connection with the description of the

Lord's Vṛndāvana pastimes, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is referred to indirectly and discreetly. Only *rasika* and *bhāvuka* devotees conversant with the conclusions of scriptures can understand this confidential mystery.

In the learned assembly in Jaipur, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa refuted the arguments and doubts of the opposing party, and they were silenced by his presentation. He established that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the disciplic succession from Śrī Madhvācārya. Despite his victory, however, the contesting party did not accept the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to be of pure Vaiṣṇava lineage because the Gauḍīyas had no commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa therefore composed the famous Gauḍīya commentary, *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. Once again the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda commenced in the temple of Śrī Govindadeva, and the validity of the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* was firmly established.

It was only on the authority of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa was able to write *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya* and prove the connection of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas with the Madhva *sampradāya*. There should be no doubt in this regard. This accomplishment of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, performed on behalf of the *sampradāya*, will be recorded in golden script in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Re-establishing the Doctrine of Parakīyā

When a slight decline in the influence of the six Gosvāmīs took place in Śrī Vṛndāvana, a controversy arose around the doctrines of wedded love (*svakīyāvāda*) versus paramour love (*parakīyāvāda*). To dispel misconceptions regarding *svakīyāvāda*, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura wrote *Rāgavartma-candrikā* and *Gopī-premāmṛta*, both of which are replete with scriptural philosophical conclusions. Thereafter, in his *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on the verse *laghutvam atra yat proktam*, of *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (1.21), he showed that the theory of *svakīyāvāda* was fallacious, and he established the conception of *parakīyā*, with scriptural evidence and irrefutable arguments. Further, in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he gave strong support to *parakīyā-bhāva*.

Certain scholars opposed the conclusions of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura on worship in the mood of *parakīyā*. When he defeated them with

superior erudition and sound reasoning they resolved out of envy to kill him. They knew that Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura used to circumambulate Śrī Vṛndāvana early each morning, so they hid in a dark, dense grove and waited for him to walk by. As his adversaries watched him approach, he suddenly disappeared, and in his place, a beautiful young girl of Vraja appeared, picking flowers with some of her friends.

The scholars asked the girl, “Dear child, just a moment ago a great devotee was coming this way. Did you see where he went?” The girl replied that she had seen him, but that she did not know where he had gone. Her astonishing beauty, gentle smile, graceful manner and sidelong glances captivated the scholars. Their hearts melted, and all the impurities in their minds were vanquished. They asked the girl who she was, and she replied, “I am a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. She is presently at Her in-laws’ house at Yāvaṭa, and She sent me here to pick flowers.” Having spoken thus, the girl disappeared, and in her place the scholars saw Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura once again. They fell at his feet and prayed for forgiveness, and he forgave them all. There are many such astonishing occurrences in the life of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

In this way, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura refuted the theory of *svakīyā* and established the truth of pure *parakīyā* – an achievement of great import for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura not only protected the integrity of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *dharma*, but he also re-established its influence in Śrī Vṛndāvana. Anyone who evaluates this accomplishment will be struck with wonder at his uncommon genius. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have composed the following verse in praise of his extraordinary work:

viśvasya nātharūpo 'sau
bhakti-vartma-pradarśanāt
bhakta-cakre vartitatvāt
cakravarty ākhyayābhavat

He is known by the name Viśvanātha, lord of the universe, because he indicates the path of *bhakti*; and he is known as Cakravartī, or he around whom the circle or assembly turns, because he always remains within the assembly (*cakra*) of pure devotees. Therefore, his name is Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

In about 1754, on the fifth day of the light phase of the moon in the month of Māgha (January–February), when Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was around a hundred years old, he left this material world in Vṛndāvana, deeply absorbed in internal consciousness. His *samādhi* stands today next to the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda in Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana.

Below is a list of his books, commentaries and prayers, which comprise a storehouse of incomparable wealth of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotional literature:

- (1) *Vraja-rīti-cintāmaṇi*;
- (2) *Camatkāra-candrikā*;
- (3) *Prema-samputa* (*Khaṇḍa-kāvya* – a poetic work which displays only partial characteristics or ornamentation or poetry);
- (4) *Gītāvalī*;
- (5) *Subodhinī* (*Alaṅkāra-kaustubha ṭikā*);
- (6) *Ānanda-candrikā* (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī ṭikā*);
- (7) *Ṭikā* on *Śrī Gopāla-tāpanī*;
- (8) *Stavāmṛta-laharī* ('Waves of Nectarean Prayers', included in which are the following:
 - (1) *Śrī Guru-tattvāṣṭaka*, (16) *Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍāṣṭaka*,
 - (2) *Mantra-dāṭṭ-guror-aṣṭaka*, (17) *Jagan-mohanāṣṭaka*,
 - (3) *Parama-guror-aṣṭaka*, (18) *Anurāga-vallī*,
 - (4) *Parāṭpara-guror-aṣṭaka*, (19) *Śrī Vṛndā-devyaṣṭakam*,
 - (5) *Parama-parāṭpara-guror-aṣṭaka*, (20) *Śrī Rādhikā-dhyānāmṛta*,
 - (6) *Śrī Lokanāthāṣṭaka*, (21) *Śrī Rūpa-cintāmaṇi*,
 - (7) *Śrī Śacīnandanāṣṭaka*, (22) *Śrī Nandīśvarāṣṭaka*,
 - (8) *Śrī Svarūpa-caritāmṛta*, (23) *Śrī Vṛndāvanāṣṭaka*,
 - (9) *Śrī Svapna-vilāsāmṛta*, (24) *Śrī Govardhanāṣṭaka*,
 - (10) *Śrī Gopāla-devāṣṭaka*, (25) *Śrī Saṅkalpa-kalpa-druma*,
 - (11) *Śrī Madana-mohanāṣṭaka*, (26) *Śrī Nikuñja-virudāvalī*
(*Virut-kāvya*, laudatory poetry),
 - (12) *Śrī Govindāṣṭaka*,
 - (13) *Śrī Gopināthāṣṭaka*,
 - (14) *Śrī Gokulānandāṣṭaka*, (27) *Surata-kathāmṛta*,
 - (15) *Svayam-bhagavad-aṣṭaka*, (28) *Śrī Śyāma-kuṇḍāṣṭaka*)
- (9) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta-mahākāvya*;
- (10) *Śrī Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*;

- (11) *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kiraṇa*;
 (12) *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*;
 (13) *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*;
 (14) *Aiśvarya-kādambinī* (unavailable);
 (15) *Śrī Mādhurya-kādambinī*;
 (16) *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu ṭīkā*;
 (17) *Dāna-keli-kaumudī ṭīkā*;
 (18) *Śrī Lalita-mādhava-naṭaka ṭīkā*;
 (19) *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ṭīkā* (incomplete);
 (20) *Brahma-saṁhitā ṭīkā*;
 (21) *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā*;
 (22) *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Sārārtha-darśinī-ṭīkā*.



The present [Hindi] edition of *Bhagavad-gītā* includes the following features: the original *devanāgarī* verse, the transliteration, the *anvaya* (word-for-word), the verse translation, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary, its *bhāvānuvāda* (a translation that takes into consideration specific subtleties) and the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*, which has been written by this poor and lowly servant.

The *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary is not simple or easy to understand, unless one has some knowledge of Sanskrit. I have written *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti* in line with the thoughts of the Śrī Rupānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in order to make Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary simpler and easier to understand. May the merciful readers forgive me for my impudent act.

My worshipful Godbrother, *parivrājakācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, is the present *ācārya* and president of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and he is a dear and intimate servant of Śrī Gurupāda-padma. He is very attached to the topmost knowledge (*bhakti*). By his mercy, he has repeatedly encouraged and directed this worthless servant to fulfil the innermost intentions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's associates by publishing a natural, easy and comprehensive edition of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, along with the commentaries of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura. I humbly pray at his lotus feet that he bestow his blessings upon me. In this way, I may fulfil Śrīla Gurudeva's inner desire, offering

this *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* into his lotus hands, which includes his dear *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary.

I am specifically indebted to *aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhārati Mahārāja and *aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrī Rūpa Siddhānti Mahārāja. Both were surrendered at the lotus feet of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa-jagad-guru aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, and they have benefitted the world unlimitedly by translating and publishing a Bengali edition of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary and the *Rasika-rañjana bhāṣya* of the Seventh Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I have systematically studied this edition and have quoted some portions from it herein. I offer my prostrated obeisances at the lotus feet of these two *śikṣā-gurus* of mine, time and again. May they be pleased with me.

I am completely confident that readers who are hankering for *bhakti* will receive this book well and with all honour, and that faithful readers will enter into the realm of *śuddha-bhakti* after studying it. We hope that our spiritually astute readers will mercifully forgive any mistakes and discrepancies that may have occurred in the course of compiling this book in a short time, and that they will oblige us by accepting its very essence.

Finally, in a mood of distress, I pray at the lotus feet of my most worshipful *śrī guru-pāda-padma, nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the concentrated embodiment of Bhagavān's compassion. May he shower profuse mercy and blessings upon me, so that this poor, lowly servant will attain increasing qualification to serve his innermost desire.

Praying for a particle of the mercy
of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,
the humble and insignificant,

Tridaṇḍibhikṣu

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

Vyāsa-pūjā of Śrī Śrī Gurupāda-padma

25 February 1997

Preface

(to the Third English Edition)

THIS EDITION of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is a translation of the Hindi edition presented by of our most beloved Śrīla Gurudeva, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*. It contains a translation of the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīka* (commentary that is a shower of essential meanings), which was composed by the eminent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura*. That commentary is further elucidated by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja in his own purport, the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti* (that which illuminates *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī*). He often concludes his exposition with excerpts from the charming commentary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura named *Rasika-rañjana* (that which gives joy to those expert in relishing transcendental mellows).

During his manifest pastimes in this world, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the speaker of the *Gītā*, demonstrated in His life and precepts the very pinnacle of devotion, which naturally comprises the zenith of the *Gītā*'s teachings. Because Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is Śrīman Mahāprabhu's intimate devotee, he is qualified to reveal the deeper imports of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's message therein. To give the reader insight into the intricacy, depth and beauty of the conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has employed the traditional style of *pūrva-pakṣa*, meaning 'objection and resolution of doubt', which creates a continuous flow of questions and answers, thus linking all of the *Gītā*'s verses like jewels strung on a necklace. His purports therefore possess the uniqueness of revealing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's inner intention in instructing Arjuna. And they also reveal the doubts that arose in the mind of Arjuna that prompted his questions. The reader is therefore privy to the intimacy of their conversation and is more able to comprehend the reason for the succession of verses.

Moreover, in his commentary, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has revealed that the very essence of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is the four seed verses known as *catuh-śloki-gītā* (*Gītā* 10.8–11). He explains that within these four verses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestows *bhakti-yoga* characterized by spontaneous devotion, which is His exceptional grace upon the living entities. This essence also flows throughout the *Gītā*'s other key verses. It would not be possible to discern this without his guidance or the revelation of esteemed Gauḍīya commentators like him.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's dedication to disseminating the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His intimate followers such as Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is unsurpassed. His renowned and endearing speciality (*vaiśiṣṭya*) is his inherent unalloyed devotion to the most refined Gauḍīya conceptions in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, which signifies his perfect alignment with his noble preceptors. It is not possible for him to leave such conceptions for a fraction of a moment, and therefore, it follows that they suffuse all of his *Gītā* purports.

This edition has only come about by the causeless mercy of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Only if they are pleased will we deem our efforts a success. We humbly beg our respected readers to overlook any errors and be patient with any shortcomings in our endeavour to present the words of such illustrious Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

Aspiring to serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas

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Śrī Nandotsava (23 August 2011)

The Publishing Team Of The Third Edition

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Prelude

to the Mahābhārata War

KING ŚĀNTANU was a famous and influential emperor in the Kuru dynasty and he was most chivalrous and religious. His wife, Gaṅgādevī, gave birth to a son named Bhīṣma, who was a personal expansion of the eighth Vasu. However, she disappeared after the birth of the child due to particular circumstances. Later, while the king was on a hunting expedition, he saw an incomparably beautiful princess named Satyavatī at the home of Dāsarāja, the king of the Niṣādas. This princess had actually been born of the semen of Uparicara Vasu from the womb of a fish, and the king of Niṣāda had nourished and nurtured her as if she were his own daughter.

Mahārāja Śāntanu asked the king for permission to marry Princess Satyavatī, and Dāsarāja consented on the condition that the child born from her womb would be the sole heir to Śāntanu's kingdom. Mahārāja Śāntanu, however, did not accept this condition and returned to his capital. When Prince Bhīṣma heard about this, he wanted to fulfil his father's desire. He therefore took a great vow to remain a lifelong *brahmacārī*, to ensure that Satyavatī's son would indeed succeed the kingdom. Śāntanu was thus able to marry Satyavatī. In return he gave Bhīṣma the boon that he could die according to his own desire. Satyavatī bore Mahārāja Śāntanu two sons, Citrāṅgada and Vicitravīrya.

After Mahārāja Śāntanu's death, Bhīṣma made Citrāṅgada successor to the throne, but Citrāṅgada died untimely, and Vicitravīrya ascended the throne. Vicitravīrya, had two wives – Ambikā and Ambālikā – yet he died at a young age, without fathering any children. Mother Satyavatī was doubly distressed, because the death of her sons left the dynasty with no heir. She summoned her first son, the great sage Vedavyāsa, simply by remembering him. To protect the dynasty, on her instruction and with Bhīṣma's approval, Vedavyāsa begot sons by Vicitravīrya's wives. Ambikā bore Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Ambālikā bore Pāṇḍu, and the maidservant of Vicitravīrya bore the saintly Śrī Vidura.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind from birth, so his younger brother Pāṇḍu was crowned king. Mahārāja Pāṇḍu was a chivalrous and influential emperor, endowed with all good qualities. He had five sons, of whom Yudhiṣṭhira was the eldest. Of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's one hundred sons, Duryodhana was the eldest. By the influence of time, King Pāṇḍu died while all the princes were quite young, so Grandfather Bhīṣma enthroned Dhṛtarāṣṭra and made him responsible for protecting the kingdom until the princes grew older.

When the five Pāṇḍavas and the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra headed by Duryodhana reached maturity, a great conflict arose concerning who would succeed the royal throne. King Dhṛtarāṣṭra favoured his sons and wanted Duryodhana to be king by fair means or foul. However, the highly religious Grandsire Bhīṣma could not allow this, being pressured from other respected personalities and citizens. Duryodhana, who was born from a portion of Kali, was extremely wicked and irreligious by nature, and he wanted to be the sole monarch, without opposition. To this end, he made various conspiracies to kill the Pāṇḍavas, all with the secret consent of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Despite repeated requests by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, Grandsire Bhīṣma, Guru Droṇācārya, the saintly Vidura and others, Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not give the Pāṇḍavas their due half of the kingdom. However, for external show, he crowned Yudhiṣṭhira crown-prince of Hastināpura and sent him to Vāraṇāvat, where Duryodhana planned to kill all the Pāṇḍavas by setting fire to a newly-built palace. Dhṛtarāṣṭra approved of this heinous plan but, by the will of the Supreme Lord, the Pāṇḍavas were somehow saved.

In due course of time, the Pāṇḍavas married Draupadī. When Duryodhana discovered that they were still alive, he consulted his father again and invited them to Hastināpura. On the order of Grandsire Bhīṣma and other elders, and at the request of the subjects, the Pāṇḍavas were given sovereignty of Khāṇḍavaprastha (Indraprastha). There, with the assistance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the demon named Maya, the Pāṇḍavas constructed a wonderful palace and city. Within a short time they conquered all the mighty kings of India and performed a great *rājasūya-yajña*.

King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana became extremely jealous of the Pāṇḍavas as a result of the opulence and success of this *yajña*, and they conspired to defeat them in a gambling match. They took the Pāṇḍavas' entire kingdom, and forced them into twelve years of exile, and then for one more year, they had to live incognito. After this prolonged ordeal, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana still did not return the Pāṇḍavas their kingdom. As the Pāṇḍava's ambassador, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself went to Hastināpura and conveyed their request that Duryodhana should at least give them five villages. Duryodhana, however, remained unmoved and would not compromise. He told Kṛṣṇa, "What to speak of five villages, I will not even give the Pāṇḍavas enough land to hold the tip of a needle, unless they defeat me in battle."

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared in order to establish religion, to protect the saintly persons and to annihilate the demons. In the course of the Mahābhārata Battle, He used Arjuna and Bhīma as instruments to assist Him in His plan to relieve the enormous burden weighing heavily upon the Earth.

CHAPTER ONE



Sainya-Darśana

Observing the Armies

VERSE I

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—
धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca –
dharma-kṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca – King Dhṛtarāṣṭra said; *dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre* – in the religious place named Kurukṣetra; *samavetāḥ* – assembled; *yuyutsavaḥ* – desiring to fight; *māmakāḥ* – my sons (headed by Duryodhana); *pāṇḍavāḥ* – the sons of Pāṇḍu (headed by Yudhiṣṭhira); *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *kim* – what?; *akurvata* – did they do; *sañjaya* – O Sañjaya.

King Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya, what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, having assembled at the sacred land of Kurukṣetra, desiring to fight?

THE BHĀVĀNUVĀDA OF ŚRĪLA VIŚVANĀTHA CAKRAVARTĪ ṬHĀKURA'S SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ ṬĪKĀ (the innermost intention of the commentary named 'the shower of essential meanings')

gaurāmśukaḥ sat-kumuda-pramodī svābhikhyayā gos tamaso nihantā
srī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-sudhā-nidhir me mano 'dhitiṣṭhan sva-ratim karotu

*prācīna-vācaḥ suvicārya so 'ham ajño 'pi gītāmṛta-leśa-lipsuḥ
yateḥ prabhor eva mate tad atra santaḥ kṣamadhvaṁ śaraṇāgatasya*

May Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who dispelled the darkness of the Earth by distributing His own name (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); who increases the bliss of the lotus-like devotees; who is the storehouse of the nectar of love of Godhead; and who is that person who bestows the most elevated relationship of divine amorous love (*unnatojjvala-rasa*), perform His playful pastimes in my heart. Although I am ignorant, while deliberating on the thoughts expressed by the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and by following the conclusions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the crest jewel of all those in the renounced order, I have become greedy to taste a drop of nectar in the form of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore, saintly persons should forgive this surrendered soul.

Śvayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth in human-like form. He is the ultimate objective of all scriptures, and He appeared as the son of Śrī Vasudeva, in Śrī Gopāla-purī. He is supremely inconceivable and beyond the perception of the material senses, yet He becomes visible to the eyes of common men through the medium of His internal potency, *yogamāyā*. He imparted the instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā*, thus delivering the souls bewildered by this material world, who were drowning in the ocean of birth and death. He submerged them in the great ocean of transcendental love of Godhead by bestowing upon them a taste of His sweetness, beauty and other qualities. He appeared in this world, being bound by His promise to protect the saintly persons and annihilate the demonic classes. Yet, on the pretext of removing the burden of the Earth, He in fact awarded supreme protection in the form of liberation to the miscreants, to those who were antagonistic towards Him, and to the souls drowning in the miseries of this vast ocean of material existence, which is compared to Kumbhīpāka, a hellish planet where sinful persons are cooked in boiling oil.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed *Bhagavad-gītā* so that after His disappearance from this world, the conditioned souls, who have been influenced by ignorance since time immemorial and completely bound by lamentation, illusion and so forth, could be delivered. Furthermore

to uphold His glories that are found in the scriptures and which are sung by saintly personalities, He directed these instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* to His very dear associate Arjuna, who had voluntarily accepted a veil of lamentation and illusion.

This *Bhagavad-gītā* has three divisions:

- (1) *Karma-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement where the fruit of one's pious action is offered to the Lord
- (2) *Jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge
- (3) *Bhakti-yoga*, the path of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord (Śrī Bhagavān)

In the eighteen chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the ultimate goal of life by revealing the purport of the Vedas and the eighteen types of knowledge. In the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *karma-yoga* is taught; in the last six chapters, *jñāna-yoga* is instructed; and in the six chapters placed between them, *bhakti-yoga*, which is more confidential and rare than the other two types of *yoga*, is taught. This *bhakti-yoga* is also the very life of both *karma* and *jñāna*. Without devotion, *karma* and *jñāna* are fruitless. Only when combined with devotion are they partly acceptable.

Devotion, or *bhakti*, is of two types: exclusive devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*) and devotion that is prominent but not yet pure, being mixed with another process (*pradhānī-bhūtā*). Exclusive devotion is in itself independent and supremely powerful, and it does not require any assistance from *karma* and *jñāna*. It is therefore described as extremely potent, possessed of nothing other than the desire to please Kṛṣṇa (*akiñcanā*), unalloyed, or one-pointed (*ananyā*), and so on. However, in the practice of *pradhānī-bhūtā bhakti*, it remains mixed with *karma* and *jñāna*. This will be examined later in depth.

To explain the nature of Arjuna's lamentation and illusion, the speaker of the *Mahābhārata*, Śrī Vaiśampāyana, a disciple of Vyāsadeva, is reciting the *Bhīṣma-parva* section of the *Mahābhārata* to his listener, Janamejaya. He begins with the words *dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca* (Dhṛtarāṣṭra said). Dhṛtarāṣṭra is asking his minister Sañjaya, "O Sañjaya, what did

my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, having assembled on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, desiring to fight?”

Here a question arises. Dhṛtarāṣṭra has mentioned that his sons and the Pāṇḍavas have assembled with the sole purpose of fighting. It is therefore certain that they will fight. What, then, is his intention in asking, “What did they do?” The reply is that Dhṛtarāṣṭra says *dharma-kṣetre*, ‘the land of *dharma*, or religion’. In the Śrutis, the body of literature that was directly manifest from the Supreme Lord and which has been heard from authorities, it is said “*kurukṣetram deva-yajanam* – Kurukṣetra is the sacrificial arena of the demigods.” Therefore, this land is famous for nourishing religious principles. Thus, by its influence, the anger of irreligious persons like Duryodhana and others can be subdued, and they may become inclined to follow and accept religion. The Pāṇḍavas are already religious by nature. Therefore, when their discrimination awakens and they understand that the killing of one’s friends and relatives is improper, both parties may agree to a peaceful settlement.

Outwardly Dhṛtarāṣṭra is showing that he will be pleased with such a peace treaty, but internally he is feeling great unhappiness. He considers that if they negotiate a truce, the presence of the Pāṇḍavas will continue to remain an impediment for his sons.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra is thinking, “The warriors on my side, like Bhīṣma and Droṇa, cannot be conquered, even by Arjuna. Therefore, since our victory is certain, it will be beneficial to fight.” His internal sentiments, however, are not discernible to others.

Here, by the component *kṣetra* in the term *dharma-kṣetre* (the land of religion), Sarasvatī-devī, the goddess of learning, is indicating a special meaning. Religion, or the embodiment of religion, Yudhiṣṭhira, and his associates are like plants of rice, and their maintainer, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is like a farmer. The various kinds of assistance Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave to the Pāṇḍavas is likened to watering the crop and making an embankment around the field. The opposing party, the Kauravas, headed by Duryodhana, are like blackish weeds that grow in the rice field. As black weeds are uprooted from the rice field, similarly Duryodhana, along with the other members of his family, the Kauravas, will be uprooted from this land of religion.

THE SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI (the explanation that illuminates the commentary named *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī*) by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I offer my most humble obeisances unto Śrī Gurudeva, who with the torchlight of transcendental knowledge has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrī-śrīmad-bhakti-prajñāna-keśava iti nāmine
ati-martya-caritrāya svāśritānām ca pāline
jīva-duḥkhe sadārttāya śrī-nāma-prema-dāyine*

I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is so dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this world. He is a completely divine personality who nurtures with great affection those who have taken shelter of him. Aggrieved upon seeing the suffering of those souls who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he bestows upon them the holy name, along with pure love of Godhead.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktisiddhānta sarasvatīti nāmine*

I offer my obeisances unto *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, who is so dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda nāmine
gaura-śakti-sva-rūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te*

I offer my obeisances unto Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is the foremost of the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī (the *rūpānuga* devotees) and the embodiment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's own internal potency.

*viśvasya nātha-rūpo 'sau bhakti-vartma-pradarśanāt
bhakta-cakre varttitvāt cakravarty-ākhyayābhavat*

Because he illuminates the path of devotion for the whole world (*viśva*), he is known as Viśvanātha. And because he has attained the foremost position among the community of devotees, he is known as Cakravartī. Hence his name as Viśvanātha Cakravartī has become significant.

The greatly learned Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is an eminent spiritual master in the preceptorial line descending from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. As a great scholar of the Vedānta and the crest jewel of devotees who relish the bliss of devotional sentiments, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has compiled an invaluable commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* named *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī*, which is pregnant with essential meanings. This commentary was written in Sanskrit and previously, was only translated into Bengali. Consequently, the Hindi speaking audience has been completely deprived of reading this invaluable treasure. Thus, for the comprehensive welfare of faithful persons, I am translating the commentary into Hindi.

The style and sentiment of the commentary are extremely deep and enriched with established philosophical conclusions (*siddhānta*). To make the translation simple and comprehensible, I thought it necessary to write a further explanation to illuminate the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary. This explanation is called the *Prakāśikā-vṛtti*. This arduous task is not possible without the mercy of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas and of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura himself. Therefore, first of all, in a mood of great desperation, I pray at their lotus feet for their mercy and blessings.

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is the essence of all Śrutis, Upaniṣads and Purāṇas. Based on the authoritative evidence of the Vedic literature received through the disciplic succession, it is concluded that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the son of the King of Vraja, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who has no source other than Himself. He is the embodiment of all spiritual nectarean mellows (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*). He is complete with all potencies (*sarva-śaktimān*) and He is the non-dual Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna-para-tattva*). Among His unlimited potencies, three are prominent: the internal potency (*cit-śakti*), the marginal potency (*jīva-śakti*) and the external potency (*māyā-śakti*). By the will of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the entire spiritual realm –

Vaikuṅṭha, Goloka and Vṛndāvana – are transformations of His internal potency. All spirit souls (*jīvas*) are a transformation of His marginal potency, and the material creation is a transformation of His external potency.

Spirit souls are of two types: liberated and bound. The liberated souls are eternally engaged in relishing the bliss derived from serving the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha, Goloka and the various other spiritual realms. They never become bound in this material world, the prison house of illusion, and therefore, they are called eternally liberated. Sometimes, by the will of the Lord, they appear in this illusory world as His associates for the sole purpose of bestowing welfare to the people. The other type of spirit soul is devoured by illusion since time immemorial. As a result of being bound, these *jīvas* are being burned by the three types of miseries while wandering endlessly in the cycle of birth and death.

By the influence of His inconceivable potency, which makes the impossible possible and vice versa, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is an ocean of compassion, created ignorance in the heart of His eternally liberated associate Arjuna. It was on the pretext of dispelling this illusion that He spoke this scripture, *Bhagavad-gītā* – which establishes knowledge of the self – solely for the deliverance of all *jīvas* under the grip of illusion, or *māyā*. The subject ultimately established in *Bhagavad-gītā* is pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. By adhering to the pure devotion shown in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, souls under the influence of illusion can become established in their pure constitutional position and can be engaged in service to the Lord. Aside from this, there is no other path by which conditioned souls can attain auspiciousness.

On the basis of concrete evidence and invincible arguments from the scriptures, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and other prominent preceptors in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession have clearly established that the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā* is not devoid of potency, nor is He devoid of variety, form, or transcendental qualities such as mercy. The individual soul is never the Supreme, and even in the liberated stage he can never become so. Even after attaining liberation, the soul will remain a pure minute spiritually conscious entity. However, at that time he is said to be an eternal associate of Bhagavān.

In the Vedic *mantras*, it is proven that the Supreme Controller and the individual soul both have knowledge, both are knowers, both are the enjoyers, both are the doers, and both possess a pure spiritual ego. Therefore, there is no difference between them from the perspective of fundamental truth, or *tattva*. However, because the individual living entity, the *jīva*, is an atomic conscious spirit, his knowledge is limited and he can be overpowered by the deluding potency (*māyā*). Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller, is always the master of this potency. Although there is no difference between Him and the *jīva* on the basis of *tattva*, the perception of a difference is real. This perception of difference is called *vaiśiṣṭya*, meaning ‘possessed of a speciality’, or ‘having specific distinguishing characteristics’. Just as the sun and the sun’s rays are simultaneously one with yet different from each other, being the possessor of attributes and the attribute respectively, similarly, the Supreme Lord and the individual soul are also one with and different from each other. This is firmly proven in the Vedas. Since this relationship of simultaneous oneness and difference is beyond the material intellect, it is only intelligible with the help of the scriptures, and therefore it is called *acintya*, or inconceivable. This inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference of the Supreme and the living entity is the subject matter of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Although it is accepted that the Absolute Truth Śrī Kṛṣṇa is simultaneously one with and different from the living entity and the material world, which are both transformations of His various potencies, actually it is the perception of the difference between them which is eternal, not the perception of oneness. Knowledge of the individual soul (*jīvātmā*), the Supreme Soul (*Paramātmā*), the abode of this Supreme Soul, and the means to attain the Supreme Soul has been delineated in appropriate places in this *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Although material action performed according to scriptural regulations (*karma*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and devotion to the Supreme Lord (*bhakti*) have been explained as the three means to attain *brahma*, really *bhakti-yoga* is the only means to achieve Śrī Bhagavān [that is, to achieve one’s constitutional position as His eternal servant]. The preliminary stage of *bhakti-yoga* is called *karma-yoga*. When there is

further progress, the intermediate stage is called *jñāna-yoga*, and in its mature and elevated stage it is called *bhakti-yoga*. In itself, material action performed according to scriptural regulations (*karma*) is not a direct practice to attain Bhagavān; rather it is only a means to be able to practise *bhakti*. *Karma-yoga* mixed with *bhakti* is called *bhagavad-arpita-karma* (offering the fruits of one's activities to Bhagavān) and is described in the Vedas. When the heart becomes purified by following the process of offering the fruits of one's activities to Bhagavān, then true knowledge of spirit and non-spirit appears within the heart. The processes of attaining transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*) and offering the fruit of one's pious action to the Lord (*karma*) are worthless when devoid of devotional sentiments for the Lord.

When knowledge of the Absolute Truth appears, exclusive devotion also manifests within the heart. When this devotion attains maturity, pure love for God, or *prema*, manifests in the heart of the *jīva*. *Prema* is the only means by which one can have direct realization of Bhagavān and attain Him. This is the deep secret of *Bhagavad-gītā*. One cannot achieve liberation merely by attaining knowledge of Bhagavān's impersonal feature. Only when the acquirement of knowledge (*jñāna*) is mixed with the moods of devotion to the Supreme Lord can one obtain as an extraneous result liberation in one of its four different forms. The four types of liberation are obtaining the same bodily features as the Lord (*sārūpya*), living on the same planet as the Lord (*sālokya*), possessing opulence equal to that of the Lord (*sārṣṭi*) and associating with the Lord (*sāmīpya*). One can attain loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His supreme abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana by performing exclusive devotion as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. When one attains this abode, there is no possibility of coming back to the material world. For the living entities, the ultimate goal is to achieve this loving service.

Bhakti is of two types: (1) exclusive (*kevala*) and (2) mixed with another process but remaining prominent (*pradhānī-bhūtā*). *Kevalā-bhakti* is also called *ananyā* (wherein one is devoid of any other desire except for Kṛṣṇa's happiness), *akiñcanā* (wherein Kṛṣṇa is one's sole possession), *viśuddha* (completely pure) and *nirguṇa* (free from the contamination of the three modes of material nature).

When the process of devotion is paramount but mixed with another process, it is of two types: *karma-pradhānī-bhūtā*, in which material action performed according to scriptural regulation is mixed with *bhakti*, and *jñāna-pradhānī-bhūtā*, where acquiring knowledge is mixed with *bhakti*. By performing *bhakti* mixed with *karma*, one achieves purity of heart and knowledge of fundamental spiritual principles (*tattva-jñāna*). By performing *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna*, one achieves liberation.

Only when *bhakti* mixed with *karma* is aimed at attaining knowledge of fundamental spiritual principles is it called *karma-yoga*. And only when *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna* is aimed at attaining exclusive devotion is it known as *jñāna-yoga*. Both *jñāna* and *karma* are only steps to *bhakti*. Without *bhakti*, they are worthless.



Bhagavad-gītā, also called the *Gītapaniṣad*, is composed of eighteen chapters, which appear as Chapters Twenty-five to Forty-two in the *Mahābhārata's Bhīṣma-parva*. It has three divisions, each consisting of six chapters. The first division explains that the individual soul (*jīvātmā*) is a part (*aṁśa*) of Īśvara, the Supreme Controller, and by his constitutional position he can acquire the eligibility to render service to Bhagavān, who is the *aṁśī* (whole). The middle six chapters explain the principle of pure devotional service, the topmost means of attaining pure love for Bhagavān. This is the supreme object to be achieved. The third and final part defines conclusive knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

The subject matter of the *Gītā* is exclusive devotion, which is like a wish-fulfilling jewel. This jewel has been safely kept inside *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is likened to a treasure chest. The base of this chest is worship of the Supreme Lord by working without attachment to the fruits of one's activities (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*), the lid is spiritual realization through transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) and the treasure is devotion to the Supreme Lord (*bhakti*). Only those who have staunch faith, who are fixed in religious principles, who have good character and who are in control of their senses are qualified to study this literature. In order to more completely understand this

subject matter, an explanation, or *bhāvanuvāda*, of the commentary is given.

For the proper flow of the book, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa has included in the first twenty-seven verses phrases such as *dḥṛtarāṣṭra uvāca* or *sañjaya uvāca*. They should be accepted as the introductory part of the *Gītā*. Just as a piece of salt when mixed with the salty ocean completely dissolves to become one with the ocean, these introductory words composed by Śrī Vedavyāsa have similarly become one with the great ocean of *Bhagavad-gītā* spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Arjuna: Arjuna is an eternal associate of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is completely impossible for him to fall into a state of lamentation and delusion. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.7) it is said “*yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām... – devotion unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is transcendental to material nature, at once appears in the hearts of those who with great faith hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is filled with the topics of His sweet pastimes, and thus destroys lamentation, illusion and fear.*”

How, then, is it possible that the greatest devotee Arjuna, an eternal associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who serves Him as a dear friend, can be in a state of illusion and lamentation? Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa arranged for His eternally liberated associate Arjuna, who appeared in this world with the Lord, to fall into illusion for the sake of the souls afflicted with grief and delusion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says “*teṣām ahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu-samsāra-sāgarāt – I deliver them from the ocean of material existence*” (*Gītā* 12.7).

Through the medium of questions and answers with Arjuna, who is apparently bewildered, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has defined the real nature of the fundamental truth of Himself, as well as the fundamental truth of the soul, the abodes of His incarnations, the material energy, devotion to Him, and so forth.

While commenting on the verse, “*sarva-dharmān parityajya – abandon all varieties of religion*” (*Gītā* 18.66), Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying: “*tvām avalambyaiva śāstram idam loka-mātram evopadeṣṭāmi – having made you the instrument, I am delivering this message of Bhagavad-gītā for the benefit of every soul.*” Apart from this, in his commentary on

the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* called *Sārārtha-darśinī*, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the verse *yogīndrāya namaḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.13.21). He says that the description in the *Gītā* of Arjuna's bewilderment, in which he behaves like someone of this world, is for the sake of others. In fact, because Arjuna is an eternal associate of Bhagavān, there is not even a tinge of this illusory world in him, what to speak of his being overwhelmed by lamentation and delusion. But perfected saints, who are very merciful and highly expert in performing activities for the welfare of all souls, give beneficial instructions by making a particularly famous personality an instrument. This is seen throughout the scriptures. Such is the position of Arjuna.

Eighteen Types of Knowledge: There are four Vedas: *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva* – and six limbs of the Vedas (*vedāṅgas*): *śikṣa* (phonetics), *chandas* (metre), *vyākāraṇa* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotiṣa* (astronomy) and *kalpa* (ritual). Then there are other types of knowledge such as *mīmāṃsā* (which ascertains fundamental philosophical truths through analytical examination), *nyāya* (techniques of logic), *dharma-śāstra* (religiosity), *Purāṇa* (Vedic histories), *āyur-veda* (study of medicine), *dhanur-veda* (science of weaponry), *gāndharva-veda* (singing and dancing) and *artha-śāstra* (science of gaining wealth). These are the eighteen types of knowledge, as mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*aṅgāni vedaś catvāro mīmāṃsā nyāya-vistarah
dharma-śāstraṃ purāṇaṃ ca vidyā hy etāṃ caturdaśaḥ
āyur-vedo dhanur-vedo gāndharvās ceti te trayah
artha-śāstraṃ caturtham ca vidyā hy aṣṭādaśaiva tāḥ*

Kurukṣetra: Śrīla Vyāsadeva has referred to the battlefield of Kurukṣetra as the land of religion (*dharma-kṣetra*). This has a hidden meaning. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.22.4), this land is named Kurukṣetra after King Kuru. The section of the *Mahābhārata* called *Śalya-parva* relates the following story:

Once, when Kuru Mahārāja was ploughing this land, Indra, the king of the demigods, appeared there and asked him, “For what purpose are you ploughing this land?” Kuru Mahārāja answered, “I am doing this so that those who give up their bodies here may

attain the heavenly planets.” Upon hearing this, Indra ridiculed him and returned to the heavenly planets, and the king again began ploughing with great enthusiasm. Again and again Indra returned to deride and deliberately disturb the king, yet Kuru Mahārāja remained unperturbed and continued his work. Finally, on the insistence of other demigods, Indra became pleased with Kuru Mahārāja and gave him the benediction that whoever gives up his body or is killed in battle on this land will certainly attain the heavenly planets. For this reason this land, known as *dharma-kṣetra*, was chosen for the battle.

Also, in the *Jāvālopaniṣad* (1.2), Kurukṣetra is described as a *yajña-sthālī*, a place for the demigods and all living entities to perform sacrifice. One attains the heavenly planets and even the topmost planet of Lord Brahmā by performing sacrifice at this place. Also it is written in the *Sat-Patha Brāhmaṇa*, “*kurukṣetraṁ deva-yajanam āsa tasmād āhuḥ kurukṣetraṁ deva-yajanam* – the demigods performed worship of the Lord in Kurukṣetra; therefore, sages have named this place *deva-yajanam*.” The phrase *dharma-kṣetra* is composed of two words, *dharma* and *kṣetra*. The word *kṣetra* indicates land for cultivation. When a farmer waters the rice field, a type of weed called *śyāmā* grass also grows along with the rice plants. This grass looks exactly like the rice plant, and it grows by taking the water used for the rice field, thereby covering the rice plants. Eventually, the rice plants dry up. Therefore, an expert farmer uproots these weeds because they are harmful to the rice crop. In the same way, in this land of Kurukṣetra, Bhāgavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa maintained and nourished Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the personification of religion, along with his associates, by annihilating those who were anti-religious, pseudo-religious and irreligious, such as Duryodhana and others.

The land between the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī is known as Kurukṣetra. At this place, both the great sage Mudgala and Pṛthu Mahārāja performed austerities. Śrī Paraśurāma performed sacrifices at five different places in this land, after annihilating the warrior class. Previously this *kṣetra* was known as Samanta Pañcaka but later became famous as Kurukṣetra, named after Mahārāja Kuru.

Sañjaya: Sañjaya was the son of a charioteer named Gavalgama. He was completely conversant with the conclusions of all scriptures,

and he was generous and dedicated to religious principles. Because of these virtuous qualities, Grandsire Bhīṣma appointed him and Vidura as Dhṛtarāṣṭra's royal ministers. Sañjaya was considered to be a second Vidura and was also an intimate friend of Arjuna. By the mercy of Śrī Vyāsadeva he had received divine vision and was thus able to narrate all the events of the war to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. This enabled him to view the battle of Kurukṣetra from within the distant royal palace in Hastināpura. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira also described Sañjaya as a sweet-speaking well-wisher of everyone, who had a peaceful temperament and who was always satisfied and impartial. He was fixed in moral conduct and was never agitated by others' ill behaviour. Because he always remaining unbiased and fearless, his speech was fully consistent with religious principles.

VERSE 2

सञ्जय उवाच—

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

sañjaya uvāca –

*dr̥ṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānikam vyūḍham duryodhanas tadā
ācāryam upasaṅgamyā rājā vacanam abravīt*

sañjayaḥ uvāca – Sañjaya said; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – after surveying; *tu* – and; *pāṇḍava-anīkam* – the army of the Pāṇḍavas; *vyūḍham* – fully arrayed in military formation; *duryodhanaḥ* – King Duryodhana; *tadā* – then; *ācāryam* – his teacher (Droṇācārya); *upasaṅgamyā* – approached; *rājā* – king; *vacanam* – words; *abravīt* – spoke.

Sañjaya said: O King, after surveying the Pāṇḍava army arrayed in military formation, Duryodhana approached his *guru* Droṇācārya and spoke the following words.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After understanding the intention of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sañjaya confirmed that there would definitely be a war as Dhṛtarāṣṭra desired. But knowing that the result would be contrary to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's

expectations, Sañjaya is speaking these words beginning with *dṛṣtvā* etc. Here, the word *vyūḍham* means ‘the arrangement of the Pāṇḍava army into a strategic formation’. Thus King Duryodhana, who felt fear within himself, spoke nine verses, beginning with *paśyitām* in the next verse.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Unfortunately, apart from Dhṛtarāṣṭra being blind since birth, he was also bereft of both religious and spiritual vision. Thus, at the time of the Mahābhārata War, he became overwhelmed with lamentation and illusion. Due to the influence of the *dharma-kṣetra*, his son Duryodhana might return half of the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. Fearing this, he became dejected.

Sañjaya, being highly religious and a visionary, could sense the internal feelings of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Although Sañjaya knew that the result of this battle would not be in Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s favour, he very intelligently hid this information, and while pacifying Dhṛtarāṣṭra, he said, “Duryodhana is not going to compromise with the Pāṇḍavas. Rather, after seeing the extremely strong arrangement of the Pāṇḍava army, he is personally approaching Droṇācārya, his *guru* in military science, to inform him of the actual situation.”

Duryodhana had two motives for approaching the *ācārya*. First, he was fearful upon seeing the formidable arrangement of the Pāṇḍava army. Second, on the pretext of giving his *guru* due respect, he wanted to display his political expertise, by which he was certainly qualified in all respects for the post of king. This is verified here by his diplomatic behaviour. This is the essence of the verse: *sañjaya uvāca* etc.

Duryodhana: Among the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī, Duryodhana was the eldest. At the time of his birth, there were various bad omens which caused many saintly persons such as Vidura to fear that Duryodhana would be the cause of the destruction of the Kuru dynasty. According to the *Mahābhārata*, Duryodhana took birth from a part (*aṁśa*) of Kali. He was sinful, cruel and a disgrace to the Kuru dynasty. At the time of his name-giving ceremony, the family priests and other learned astrologers, seeing the indications of his future, gave him the name Duryodhana, one who fights against the injunctions of religious warfare. Finally, after receiving a hint

from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma killed him in such a way that would make one's hair stand on end.

Vyūha: It is said in *Śabda-ratnāvalī*, “*samagrasya tu sainyasya vinyāsaḥ sthāna-bhedaḥ sa vyūha iti vikhyāto yuddheṣu pṛthivībhujām* – a *vyūha* is the formation of a military phalanx, arranged by an expert king in such a way that it is impenetrable by opponents from any direction, thereby assuring victory in battle.”

Droṇācārya: Droṇācārya taught the science of weaponry and warfare to the sons of both Pāṇḍu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was the son of the great sage Bharadvāja. Because he was born from a *droṇa*, a water-pot, he became famous by the name Droṇa. Just as he was a great teacher of weaponry, he was similarly expert in the knowledge of Veda and *vedāṅga* (auxiliary portions of the Vedas). After pleasing Mahārṣi Paraśurāma, Droṇācārya learned from him the secrets of the science of archery and other sciences. Since he had the benediction that he could die at the time of his own choosing, no one could kill him. After being insulted by his childhood friend, King Drupada of Pāñcāla, Droṇācārya went to Hastināpura to earn a livelihood. Impressed by Droṇa's qualifications, Grandsire Bhīṣma appointed him as the *ācārya*, one who teaches by example, to instruct and train Duryodhana, Yudhiṣṭhira and the other princes. Arjuna was his most dear disciple. In the battle of Kurukṣetra, King Duryodhana, by polite persuasion and diplomacy, appointed Droṇācārya as commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army, after Bhīṣma was no longer in the battle.

VERSE 3

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

*paśyaitāṃ pāṇḍu-putrāṇām ācārya mahatīm camūm
vyūḍhām drupada-putreṇa tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā*

paśya – behold; *etām* – this; *pāṇḍu-putrāṇām* – of the sons of Pāṇḍu (the Pāṇḍavas); *ācārya* – O teacher; *mahatīm* – great; *camūm* – army; *vyūḍhām* – arranged in a military phalanx; *drupada-putreṇa* – Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of Drupada; *tava* – your; *śiṣyeṇa* – by the disciple; *dhī-matā* – intelligent.

O my teacher, behold this great army of the Pāṇḍavas, arranged in a military phalanx by your intelligent disciple Dhṛṣṭadyumna, son of Drupada.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: With these words Duryodhana is implying, “Dhṛṣṭadyumna, the son of Drupada, is indeed your disciple. He has taken birth only to kill you. Although you knew this, you continued to give him military training. This certainly exposes your dull intelligence.”

Here, Duryodhana has used the word *dhīmatā*, or ‘intelligent’, for Dhṛṣṭadyumna. This has a deep meaning. Duryodhana wants Droṇācārya to realize that, although Dhṛṣṭadyumna is Droṇācārya’s enemy, Dhṛṣṭadyumna personally learned from Droṇācārya how to kill him. In this way, he is very intelligent. Just to arouse the anger of his teacher, Duryodhana diplomatically remarks, “Now see his great intelligence as the fruits of his training are utilized.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: Dhṛṣṭadyumna: Drupada, the king of Pāñcāla, performed a sacrifice with the desire to beget a son who would kill Droṇācārya. From the fire of the sacrifice, a boy appeared holding armour and weapons. At the same time a voice from the sky predicted that this son of Drupada would kill Droṇa. The *brāhmaṇas* named this heroic looking boy Dhṛṣṭadyumna. He learned the science of archery from Droṇācārya, who was extremely benevolent. Although Droṇācārya knew that one day Dhṛṣṭadyumna would kill him, still, with great effort, he trained him in weaponry. Thus Ācārya Droṇa was killed by his own disciple in the Mahābhārata War.

VERSES 4-6

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

*atra śūrā maheṣvāsā bhīmārjuna-samā yudhi
yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca drupadaś ca mahā-rathaḥ
dhr̥ṣṭa-ketuś cekitānaḥ kāśi-rājaś ca vīryavān
puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca śaibyaś ca nara-puṅgavaḥ
yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta uttamaujāś ca vīryavān
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca sarva eva mahā-rathāḥ*

atra – present; *śūrāḥ* – heroes; *mahā-iṣu-āsāḥ* – great bowmen; *bhīma-arjuna* – to Bhīma and Arjuna; *samāḥ* – equal; *yudhi* – in battle; *yuyudhānaḥ* – Sātyaki; *virāṭaḥ* – the king of Virāṭa; *ca* – and; *drupadaḥ* – Drupada; *ca* – also; *mahā-rathaḥ* – the great chariot fighter; *dhr̥ṣṭa-ketuḥ* – Dhṛṣṭaketu; *cekitānaḥ* – Cekitāna; *kāśirājaḥ* – Kāśirāja, the king of Kāśi (Vārāṇasī); *ca* – and; *vīryavān* – heroic; *puruḥjit* – Puruḥjit; *kuntibhojaḥ* – Kuntibhoja; *ca* – and; *śaibyaḥ* – Śaibhya; *ca* – and; *nara-puṅgavaḥ* – the best of men; *yudhāmanyuḥ* – Yudhāmanyu; *ca* – and; *vikrāntaḥ* – achiever of victory; *uttamaujāḥ* – Uttamaujā; *ca* – and; *vīryavān* – heroic; *saubhadraḥ* – Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra; *draupadeyāḥ* – the sons of Draupadī; *ca* – and; *sarve* – all; *eva* – these; *mahā-rathāḥ* – warriors who can fight against huge opposition.

Present in this army are mighty bowmen, such as Sātyaki, King Virāṭa and the great warrior Drupada, who are equal in combat to Arjuna and Bhīma. Also present are Dhṛṣṭaketu and Cekitāna, the heroic king of Kāśi, Puruḥjit, Kuntibhoja, the most valiant Śaibya, and other noble men, such as the victorious Yudhāmanyu, the heroic Uttamaujā and Abhimanyu, as well as Pratibindhya and the other sons of Draupadī. All of these are *mahārathīs* who can fight against huge opposition.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here the word *maheṣvāsāḥ* means that all these great warriors carry strong bows that cannot be broken by the enemy. The word *yuyudhāna* refers to Sātyaki. *Saubhadraḥ* refers to Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra, and *draupadeyāḥ* indicates the sons of the five Pāṇḍavas born from Draupadī, who are headed by Pratibindhya.

The characteristics of a *mahārathī* are now described. One who can fight alone against unlimited warriors is known as an *atirathī*.

Among great warriors who are expert in warfare, one who can fight against ten thousand bowmen single-handedly is called a *mahārathī*. One who can only fight with a single person is known as a *yoddhā*, and one who requires assistance to defeat a single opponent is called an *ardharathī*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Yuyudhāna: Yuyudhāna is another name for the heroic Sātyaki. He was a very dear servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, extremely valiant and an *atirathī* among the commanders-in-chief of the Yādava army. He learned the secrets of weaponry from Arjuna. In the Mahābhārata conflict, he fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

Virāṭa: Virāṭa was the pious king of the land of Matsya. The Pāṇḍavas spent one year incognito under his shelter. His daughter Uttarā later married Abhimanyu, the famous son of Arjuna. Virāṭa was killed in the Mahābhārata War along with his sons Uttara, Sveta and Śaṅkha.

Drupada: Drupada was the son of Pṛṣata, the king of Pāñcāla. Since Mahārāja Pṛṣata and Maharṣi Bharadvāja, the father of Droṇācārya, were friends, Drupada and Droṇācārya were also friends in their childhood. Later, when Drupada became king, Droṇācārya approached him for financial help, but Drupada did not properly respect him. Droṇācārya could not forget this disrespect. When Arjuna completed his education in warfare, Droṇācārya asked Arjuna to capture Drupada and offer him at Droṇa's feet, as *guru-dakṣiṇā*, an offering to one's *guru*. Arjuna followed his order. Droṇācārya took half of Drupada's kingdom and then released him. To avenge this insult, Drupada performed a fire sacrifice in which Draupadī and Dhṛṣṭadyumna appeared from the fire.

Cekitāna: Cekitāna was a Yādava in the dynasty of Vṛṣṇi. He was a very chivalrous *mahārathī* and was one of the commanders-in-chief of the Pāṇḍava army. In the Mahābhārata War, he met his death at the hands of Duryodhana.

Kāśirāja: Kāśirāja was the king of Kāśī (present day Vārāṇasī). He was born from a part of the demon named Dīrghajihva. A valiant and courageous hero, he fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

Purujit and Kuntibhoja: Purujit and Kuntibhoja were brothers of Kuntī, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, and were thus the maternal uncles of the Pāṇḍavas. In the Mahābhārata War, they were killed by Droṇācārya.

Śaibya: Śaibya was the father-in-law of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. His daughter Devikā was married to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja. He is known as *nara-puṅgava*, the best of men, and was recognized as a powerful, heroic warrior.

Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujā: The valiant, powerful blood-brothers Yudhāmanyu and Uttamaujā were princes of the Pāncāla kingdom. At the end of the Mahābhārata War, they were killed by Aśvatthāmā.

Saubhadra: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sister, Subhadrā, was married to Arjuna. The heroic Abhimanyu was born from her womb, and therefore he is known as Saubhadra. He received training in weaponry from his father, Arjuna, and from Śrī Balarāma. He was an exceptionally chivalrous hero and a *mahārathī*. At the time of the Mahābhārata War, he was sixteen years old. In the absence of Arjuna, Abhimanyu alone was able to penetrate the *cakra-vyūha*, a special wheel-shaped military formation that had been arranged by Droṇācārya. Trapped in the formation, he was unjustly killed by the combined efforts of seven *mahārathīs*, including Droṇa, Kṛpācārya and Karṇa.

Draupadeya: Draupadī gave birth to a son from each of the five Pāṇḍavas. Their names were Pratibindhya, Sutasoma, Śrutakarmā, Śatānika and Śrutasena. Collectively, they were known as Draupadeya. Their fathers were Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva respectively. At the end of the Mahābhārata war, Aśvatthāmā, desiring to please his friend Duryodhana, murdered these five princes at night as they slept.

In addition to the names of the warriors mentioned by Duryodhana, there were many other *mahārathīs* in the army of the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana has referred to all of them by using the words *sarva eva*.

VERSE 7

अस्माकन्तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥

*asmākan tu viśiṣṭā ye tān nibodha dvijottama
nāyakā mama sainyasya samjñārtham tān bravīmi te*

asmākam – of our (army); *tu* – also; *viśiṣṭāḥ* – outstanding (warriors); *ye* – who; *tān* – those (names); *nibodha* – be informed; *dvija-uttama* – O best of the twice-born; *nāyakāḥ* – leaders; *mama sainyasya* – of the soldiers; *samjña-artham* – for your understanding; *tān* – those; *bravīmi* – I am mentioning; *te* – to you.

O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, for your information I shall also mention the names of my army's most excellent heroes.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, the word *nibodha* means 'please understand', and *samjñārtham* means 'for true knowledge'.

VERSES 8-9

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिर्जयद्रथः ॥ ८ ॥
अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

*bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karṇaś ca kṛpaś ca samitiñjayaḥ
aśvatthāmā vikarṇaś ca saumadattir jayadrathaḥ
anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā mad-arthe tyakta-jīvitāḥ
nānā-śastra-praharaṇāḥ sarve yuddha-viśāradāḥ*

bhavān – your good self (Droṇācārya); *bhīṣmah* – Grandfather Bhīṣma; *ca* – and; *karṇaḥ* – Karṇa; *ca* – and; *kṛpaḥ* – Kṛpācārya; *ca* – and; *samitiñjayaḥ* – always victorious in battle; *aśvatthāmā* – Aśvatthāmā; *vikarṇaḥ* – Vikarṇa; *ca* – also; *saumadattiḥ* – Bhūrīśravā, the son of Somadatta; *jayad-rathaḥ* – the king of Sindhu, Jayadratha; *anye* – other (than those mentioned before) *ca* – also; *bahavaḥ* – many; *śūrāḥ* – heroes; *mat-arthe* – for my sake; *tyakta-jīvitāḥ* – (bound by a vow) to give up their life; *nānā* – many; *śastra* – weapons; *praharaṇāḥ* – beautifully equipped with; *sarve* – all of them; *yuddha-viśāradāḥ* – expert in warfare.

In my army, there are heroes like your good self (Droṇācārya), Grandfather Bhīṣma, Karṇa, Kṛpācārya who is ever-victorious in battle, Aśvatthāmā, Vikarṇa, Bhūriśravā (the son of Somadatta) and Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu. There are many other heroes who are prepared to give up their lives for my sake. All are equipped with varieties of weapons and are expert in warfare.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here the word *saumadattiḥ* refers to Bhūriśravā. *Tyakta-jīvitāḥ* denotes a person who is determined to do whatever is required of him, having properly realized that he will be greatly benefited whether he survives or not. In the *Gītā* (11.33) Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, all these persons have already been killed by Me; you need only become an instrument.” In accordance with this statement, Sarasvatī-devī made the word *tyakta-jīvitāḥ* come from the mouth of Duryodhana, indicating that his army had already been destroyed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Kṛpācārya: In the lineage of the great sage Gautama, there was a saint by the name of Śaradvān. Once, after seeing the beautiful heavenly damsel Jānapadī, his semen spontaneously fell on a clump of forest grass. This semen became divided in two parts, from which a boy and a girl were born. The girl was named Kṛpī and the boy, Kṛpa. Kṛpa later became renowned as a great warrior. Śaradvān Ṛṣi personally endowed Kṛpa with expertise in the science of archery and other arts. Kṛpa was exceedingly valiant and pious. In the battle of Mahābhārata he fought on the side of the Kauravas. After the battle, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira appointed him to train Prince Parīkṣit.

Aśvatthāmā: Kṛpī, the sister of Kṛpācārya, was married to Droṇācārya. From her womb, Aśvatthāmā was born. Aśvatthāmā was a combination of portions of Lord Śiva, of the God of death, Yama, and of lust and anger. He learned the scriptures and the science of weaponry from his father Droṇācārya. He also accepted the responsibility of being the last commander-in-chief of the Kauravas in the battle of Mahābhārata. He murdered the five sons of Draupadī while they were in deep sleep, having mistaken them for the five Pāṇḍavas. In retaliation, the Pāṇḍavas insulted him severely and forcibly removed a jewel that

was a part of his forehead. After this insult, he burned with anger and attempted to kill the unborn Parikṣit Mahārāja, who was the sole heir to the Pāṇḍava dynasty. He targeted his *brahmāstra* weapon at the child in the womb of Uttarā, the wife of Abhimanyu. However, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is always affectionate to His devotees, invoked His weapon named Sudarśana *cakra* to protect Mahārāja Parikṣit in the womb.

Vikarṇa: Vikarṇa was one of the one hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He was killed by Bhīmasena in the Mahābhārata War.

Somadatta: Somadatta was the son of Bāhlikā and the grandson of King Pratīka of the Kuru dynasty. In the battle of Mahābhārata he was killed by Sātyaki.

Bhūriśravā: Bhūriśravā was the son of King Somadatta in the dynasty of the moon (*candra-vamśa*). He was a highly courageous and famous king. In the Mahābhārata conflict, he was killed by Sātyaki.

Śastra: A weapon such as a sword that is used to kill others in hand-to-hand combat.

Astra: A weapon such as an arrow that is released at the enemy.

VERSE 10

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

aṣaryāptam tad asmākaṁ balam bhīṣmābhirakṣitam
ṣaryāptam tv idam eteṣāṁ balam bhīmābhirakṣitam

aṣaryāptam – incompetent; *tad* – that; *asmākaṁ* – our; *balam* – strength; *bhīṣma* – by Grandsire Bhīṣma; *abhirakṣitam* – well protected; *ṣaryāptam* – is competent; *tu* – but; *idam* – this; *eteṣāṁ* – their (Pāṇḍavas); *balam* – military strength; *bhīma* – by Bhīma; *abhirakṣitam* – well protected.

The strength of our forces, although protected by Bhīṣma, is not sufficient. On the other hand the army of the Pāṇḍavas, under the careful protection of Bhīma, is fully competent.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, the word *aṣaryāptam* means ‘incompetent’ or ‘insufficient’. That is, the Kauravas are not competent and do not

have sufficient strength to fight with the Pāṇḍavas. *Bhīṣmābhirakṣitam* means, 'Although our army is well-protected by Grandsire Bhīṣma, who is endowed with extremely fine intelligence and expertise, both in weaponry and knowledge of scriptures, the strength of this force is still insufficient because Bhīṣma is inclined towards both sides.' *Paryāptam bhīṣmābhirakṣitam* means, 'But the army of the Pāṇḍavas, though protected by Bhīma, who is less intelligent (less expert in the science of weaponry and scriptural knowledge), is competent to fight with us.' It is indicated by these statements that Duryodhana is feeling deeply apprehensive.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Grandsire Bhīṣma is an unparalleled hero. He received a boon from his father that he could die at the time of his own choosing and therefore he is unconquerable. Although he is fighting on the side of Duryodhana, he is fully affectionate toward the Pāṇḍavas and does not want them to be killed. Because he is concerned for the welfare of both sides, the army led by him will not be able to fight with expertise in the battle. Moreover, Bhīṣma cannot use his full strength to fight against the Pāṇḍavas. Therefore, the army under his command is described as incompetent, or insufficient. On the other side, Bhīma, who is not as great a hero as Bhīṣma, will use his full strength to ensure victory for his side. Thus the army under his leadership has been described as competent, or sufficient.

VERSE II

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathā-bhāgam avasthitāḥ
bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi

ayaneṣu – at the entry points; *ca* – and; *sarveṣu* – all; *yathā-bhāgam* – in the assigned positions; *avasthitāḥ* – situated; *bhīṣmam* – unto Grandsire Bhīṣma; *eva* – surely; *abhirakṣantu* – protect in every respect; *bhavantaḥ* – you; *sarve* – all; *eva hi* – certainly.

Therefore, you must all remain in your strategically assigned positions at the entry points and give protection to Grandsire Bhīṣma in every respect.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Duryodhana is saying, “Therefore, all of you (Droṇa and others) must be careful.” For this purpose only, he tells them, “Divide yourselves among all the phalanx entrances and do not leave your assigned areas in the battle. In this way, Bhīṣma will not be killed from behind while fighting the enemy, because right now, Bhīṣma’s strength is our very life.”

VERSE 12

तस्य सञ्जनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥१२॥

tasya sañjanayan harṣam kuru-vṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ
siṃha-nādam vinadyoccaiḥ śaṅkham dadhmau pratāpavān

tasya – his (Duryodhana); *sañjanayan* – causing; *harṣam* – joy (in the heart); *kuru-vṛddhaḥ* – elder Kuru; *pitāmahaḥ* – the Grandsire (Bhīṣma); *siṃha-nādam* – with a sound like a lion’s roar; *vinadya* – vibrating; *uccaiḥ* – very loudly; *śaṅkham* – conch-shell; *dadhmau* – he blew; *pratāpavān* – the valiant.

Then Grandsire Bhīṣma, the valiant elder of the Kuru dynasty, loudly blew his conch-shell, making a sound like the roar of a lion, thus delighting the heart of Duryodhana.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Grandsire Bhīṣma became very pleased to hear Duryodhana’s glorification of him in front of Droṇācārya. Producing a sound like the roar of a lion, the elderly Kuru Bhīṣma blew his conch-shell, to remove Duryodhana’s fear and make him cheerful.

VERSE 13

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥१३॥

***tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca paṇavānaka-gomukhāḥ
sahasāivābhyahanyanta sa śabdaś tumulo 'bhavat***

tataḥ – thereafter; *śaṅkhāḥ* – conch-shells; *ca* – and; *bheryaḥ* – buffalo horn bugles; *ca* – and; *paṇava-ānaka* – varieties of small drums and *mṛdaṅgas*; *gomukhāḥ* – trumpets; *sahasā* – suddenly; *eva* – indeed; *abhyahanyanta* – were sounded; *saḥ* – that; *śabdaḥ* – sound; *tumulaḥ* – tumultuous; *abhavat* – was.

Thereafter, conch-shells, bugles, kettledrums, small drums, horns, trumpets and various other instruments were suddenly sounded simultaneously, creating a tumultuous, fearsome sound.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The purpose of this verse beginning with the word *tataḥ* is simply to express that both sides displayed their enthusiasm for war immediately thereafter. Here, *paṇava*, *ānaka* and *gomukhāḥ* refer to the small drum, the *mṛdaṅga*, and various horns and trumpets, respectively.

VERSE 14

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥

*tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś caiva divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ*

tataḥ – thereafter; *śvetaiḥ* – with white; *hayaiḥ* – horses; *yukte* – being yoked; *mahati* – on a great; *syandane* – chariot; *sthitau* – situated; *mādhavaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pāṇḍavaḥ* – Arjuna; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *divyau* – divine; *śaṅkhau* – conch-shells; *pradadhmatuḥ* – blew.

Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Dhanāñjaya (Arjuna), situated on an excellent chariot drawn by white horses, blew their divine conch-shells.

VERSE 15

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥

***pāñcajanyaṁ hṛṣīkeśo devadattam dhanañjayaḥ
pauṇḍram dadhmau mahā-śaṅkham bhīma-karmā vṛkodaraḥ***

pāñcajanyaṁ – the conch-shell named Pāñcajanya; *hṛṣīka-īśaḥ* – Hṛṣīkeśa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses); *deva-dattam* – the conch-shell named Devadatta; *dhanañjayaḥ* – Arjuna (the collector of great wealth); *pauṇḍram* – named Pauṇḍra; *dadhmau* – blew; *mahā-śaṅkham* – the massive conch-shell; *bhīma-karmā* – the performer of Herculean, or fearsome tasks; *vṛka-udaraḥ* – Bhīmasena, who has a digestion like that of a *vṛka* (wolf).

Hṛṣīkeśa Śrī Kṛṣṇa blew His conch-shell known as Pāñcajanya; Dhanañjaya blew his conch known as Devadatta; and Bhīma, the performer of Herculean tasks, blew his great conch known as Pauṇḍra.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VRṬTI: Pāñcajanya: After completing His education in the *āśrama* of His *guru*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa requested His *guru* and his wife to accept some *guru-dakṣiṇā*, a gift traditionally offered to the teacher upon the completion of one's studies. For their *guru-dakṣiṇā*, His teacher and his wife asked that their son, who had drowned in the ocean, be returned to them alive and well.

Upon inquiring from the presiding deity of the ocean, Varuṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa discovered that His *guru*'s son had been swallowed by an ocean-dwelling demon named Pāñcajanya. Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed Pāñcajanya, but He did not find the boy inside the demon's belly. From there, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to the abode of the dead, named Mahākālapurī, from where He took His *guru*'s son and presented him to His *guru* as *dakṣiṇā*, a token of gratitude offered to one's spiritual master.

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted as His conch the external limb (shell) from the body of the Pāñcajanya demon, His conch is known as Pāñcajanya.

VERSE 16

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

*anantavijayaṁ rājā kuntī-putro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ
nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau*

ananta-vijayam – the conch named Anantavijaya (meaning limitless victory); *rājā* – the king; *kuntī-putraḥ* – the son of Kuntī; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ* – Yudhiṣṭhira; *nakulaḥ* – Nakula; *sahadevaḥ* – Sahadeva; *ca* – and; *sughoṣa-maṇipuṣpakau* – the conches named Sughoṣa and Maṇipuṣpaka.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, blew the conch named Anantavijaya. Nakula blew the Sughoṣa conch and Sahadeva blew the conch known as Maṇipuṣpaka.

VERSES 17–18

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥
द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥

*kāśyaś ca parameṣvāsaḥ śikhaṇḍī ca mahā-rathaḥ
dhṛṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca sātyakiś cāparājitaḥ
drupado draupadeyāś ca sarvaśaḥ pṛthivī-pate
saubhadraś ca mahā-bāhuḥ śaṅkhān dadhmuh pṛthak pṛthak*

kāśyaḥ – the king of Kāśī; *ca* – and; *parama-iṣu-āsaḥ* – the excellent wielder of arrows; *śikhaṇḍī* – Śikhaṇḍī; *ca* – also; *mahā-rathaḥ* – the great chariot fighter; *dhṛṣṭadyumnaḥ* – Dhṛṣṭadyumna; *virāṭaḥ* – Virāṭa; *ca* – and; *sātyakiḥ* – Sātyaki; *ca* – and; *aparājitaḥ* – the unconquerable; *drupadaḥ* – Drupada; *draupadeyāḥ* – the sons of Draupadī; *ca* – and; *sarvaśaḥ* – all; *pṛthivī-pate* – Dhṛtarāṣṭra, O lord of the Earth; *saubhadraḥ* – Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā; *ca* – also; *mahā-bāhuḥ* – mighty-armed; *śaṅkhān* – conch-shells; *dadhmuh* – blew; *pṛthak pṛthak* – distinctly, one by one.

O king of the Earth, Dhṛtarāṣṭra! That great archer the king of Kāśī; the *mahārathī* Śikhaṇḍī; Dhṛṣṭadyumna; the king of Virāṭa; the unconquerable Sātyaki; King Drupada; the sons of Draupadī;

and Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadrā, all one by one distinctly sounded their respective conch-shells.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Pāñcājanya and others are the names of conches belonging to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and various warriors on the battlefield. *Aparājitaḥ* means 'one who cannot be defeated by anyone', or 'one who is adorned with a bow'.

VERSE 19

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलोऽभ्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

*sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām hṛdayāni vyadārayat
nabhaś ca pṛthivīm caiva tumulo 'bhyanunādayan*

saḥ – that; *ghoṣaḥ* – sound; *dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām* – of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons; *hṛdayāni* – the hearts; *vyadārayat* – shattered; *nabhaḥ* – in the sky; *ca* – and; *pṛthivīm* – on the earth; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *tumulaha* – tumultuous; *abhi-anu-nādayan* – reverberating.

Reverberating throughout the earth and sky, the tumultuous sound of those conches shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

VERSE 20

अथ व्यवस्थितान्द्रष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ।
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ॥ २० ॥

*atha vyavasthitān dr̥ṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapi-dhvajaḥ
pravṛtte śastra-sampāte dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ
hr̥ṣīkeśam tadā vākyaṁ idam āha mahī-pate*

atha – thereupon; *vyavasthitān* – situated; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – seeing; *dhārtarāṣṭrān* – the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *kapi-dhvajaḥ* – (Arjuna) whose flag was marked with Hanumān; *pravṛtte* – while about to embark; *śastra-sampāte* – in releasing his arrows; *dhanuḥ* – bow; *udyamya* – taking up;

pāṇḍavaḥ – Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu; *hṛṣīkeśam* – unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses; *tadā* – then; *vākyaṃ* – words; *idam* – these; *āha* – spoke; *mahī-pate* – O King.

O King, after seeing your sons in military array, Kapi-dhvaja Arjuna raised his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows. He then spoke the following words to Śrī Hṛṣīkeśa (Kṛṣṇa).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: **Kapi-dhvaja:** Kapi-dhvaja is a name for Arjuna that denotes the presence of the mighty monkey (*kapi*) Hanumān on the flag (*dhvaja*) of Arjuna’s chariot. Arjuna was very proud of his skill in archery. Once, he was strolling on the bank of a river carrying his Gāṇḍīva bow. There he saw an old monkey. Paying obeisances to him, Arjuna asked, “Who are you?”

The monkey politely replied, “I am Hanumān, servant of Śrī Rāma.”

Arjuna then asked, “Are you the servant of the same Rāma, who, unable to make a bridge of arrows over the ocean, employed monkeys to build a bridge of stones? It was only then that His army could cross the ocean. If I had been there at that time, I would have built such a strong bridge of arrows that the entire army could have easily crossed over.”

Hanumān replied very politely, “But your bridge would not have endured the weight of even the weakest monkey in Śrī Rāma’s army.”

Arjuna said, “I am going to make a bridge of arrows over this river and you may cross it with as heavy a load as you can carry.”

Hanumān then expanded himself into a huge form and jumped towards the Himālayan mountains. He returned with heavy stones tied to every hair on his body. As soon as he placed one foot on the bridge, it started to quiver, but surprisingly enough, it did not break.

Arjuna trembled in fear. Remembering his worshipable deity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he prayed, “O Lord! The honour of the Pāṇḍavas is in Your hands.”

When Hanumān put the full weight of both his feet on the bridge, he was astonished to find that it did not break. If the bridge did not break, it would be a matter of great shame for him. Within his heart, Hanumān remembered his worshipable Lord, Śrī Rāmacandra. Meanwhile, his glance fell below the bridge, where he saw not water

flowing but streams of blood. Hanumān immediately jumped off the bridge and peered below it. “Oh! What is this?” he cried. “My worshipable Lord, Śrī Rāmacandra, is personally supporting the bridge of sharp arrows on His back!” He at once fell at the lotus feet of Śrī Rāmacandra.

At this same moment, Arjuna saw the Lord not as Śrī Rāma but as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Both Hanumān and Arjuna lowered their heads in shame before their worshipable Lord, who said, “There is no difference between these two forms of Mine. I, Kṛṣṇa, in the form of Śrī Rāma, come to establish the bounds of morality and proper religious conduct (*maryādā*), and in this very form of *hīlā-puruṣottama* Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord who enjoys transcendental pastimes, I am the personification of the nectar of all *rasas*. From today onwards, you, who are both My servants, should become friends. In a battle in the near future, the mighty Hanumān, situated on the flag of Arjuna’s chariot, will give him protection in all respects.”

For this reason, Hanumān graced the flag of Arjuna’s chariot in the battle of Mahābhārata. Arjuna thus received the name Kapi-dhvaja, or one who has a monkey on his flag.

VERSES 21-23

अर्जुन उवाच—

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१ ॥

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

arjuna uvāca -

senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'cyuta

yāvad etān nirikṣe 'ham yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān

kair mayā saha yoddhavyam asmin raṇa-samudyame

yotsyamānān avekṣe 'ham ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ

dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher yuddhe priya-cikīrṣavaḥ

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *senayoḥ* – armies; *ubhayoḥ* – of the two; *madhye* – in the midst; *ratham* – chariot; *sthāpaya* – please place; *me* – my; *acyuta* – O infallible one; *yāvat* – until; *etān* – of all these; *nirīkṣe* – will examine; *aham* – I; *yoddhu-kāmān* – desiring battle; *avasthitān* – arrayed (on the battlefield); *kaiḥ* – with which (fighters); *mayā* – with me; *saha* – together; *yoddhavyam* – shall have to fight; *asmin* – in this; *raṇa-samudyame* – in this military struggle; *yotsyamānān* – those who wish to fight; *avekṣe aham* – I wish to see; *ye* – who; *ete* – all those; *atra* – here; *samāgatāḥ* – have assembled; *dhārtarāṣṭrasya* – son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *durbuddheḥ* – for the evil-minded; *yuddhe* – the fight; *priya* – well being; *cikīrṣavaḥ* – who desire.

Arjuna said: O Acyuta, let me see all those heroes who are standing here desiring to fight and with whom I shall have to combat in this battle. Let me look upon those who have assembled here desiring the welfare of the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Kindly situate my chariot in the midst of these two armies.

VERSES 24–25

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पाथ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरूनिति ॥ २५ ॥

sañjaya uvāca –

evam ukto hṛṣīkeśo guḍākeśena bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye sthāpayitvā rathottamam

bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ sarveṣāṃ ca mahīkṣitām
uvāca pārtha paśyaitān samavetān kurūn iti

sañjayaḥ uvāca – Sañjaya said; *evam* – thus; *uktaḥ* – addressed; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *guḍākeśena* – by the conqueror of sleep (Arjuna); *bhārata* – O descendent of Bharata; *senayoḥ* – armies; *ubhayoḥ* – of the two; *madhye* –

in the midst; *sthāpayitvā* – having situated; *ratha-uttamam* – celestial chariot; *bhīṣma* – Grandsire Bhīṣma; *droṇa* – Droṇācārya; *pramukhataḥ* – in the presence; *sarveṣām* – of all; *ca* – also; *mahī-kṣitām* – the kings of the Earth; *uvāca* – He said; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā (Arjuna); *paśya* – behold; *etān* – these; *samavetān* – assembled; *kurūn* – Kurus; *iti* – thus.

Sañjaya said: O Bhārata (King Dhṛtarāṣṭra), having thus been addressed by Guḍākeśa (Arjuna), Hṛṣīkeśa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) drew the excellent chariot into the midst of both armies in the presence of all the kings and prominent personalities like Bhīṣma and Droṇa. He then said: O Pārtha, just behold this assembly of Kurus.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Hṛṣīkeśa means ‘the controller of all the senses’. Although Kṛṣṇa is Hṛṣīkeśa, when He received orders from Arjuna, He became controlled by Arjuna’s sense of speech alone. *Aho!* Bhagavān is controlled only by *prema*. Guḍākeśa consists of two words, *guḍā* and *akeśā*. *Guḍā* refers to *guḍa*, very sweet, unrefined sugar. Just as *guḍā* only exhibits sweetness, similarly Bhagavān exhibits the sweet taste of His own affection. *Akeśā* refers to the manifestations of the Lord who preside over the modes of nature, called *guṇa-avatāras*: Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Maheśa. *A* indicates Viṣṇu, *ka* Brahmā, and *īsa* indicates Mahādeva (Śiva). How can these parts, or *guṇa-avatāras*, manifest their majesty before Arjuna, considering that, out of *prema*, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of all incarnations, obeyed his orders? Instead, they consider their lives to be successful by manifesting the sweetness of their affection towards Arjuna, who is therefore known as Guḍākeśa (one who receives sweet affection from the three *guṇa-avatāras*). Indeed, Bhagavān Mahāviṣṇu, who is the Lord of the transcendental world, once admitted to Arjuna, “I only brought the sons of the *brāhmaṇa* here with a desire to see both you and Kṛṣṇa” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.89.58).

Guḍākā also means ‘sleep’, and one who has control over sleep is called Guḍākeśa. It is not surprising that the same Arjuna, by whose *prema* even Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of *māyā*, becomes controlled, conquered just one ordinary function of illusion called sleep. This is its hidden meaning.

Bhīṣma-droṇa-pramukhataḥ means ‘in front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa’, and *sarveṣāṃ mahīkṣitām* means ‘in front of all the other kings also’.

VERSE 26

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान् पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
 आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन् पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ।
 श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ॥ २६ ॥

*tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthaḥ pitṛn atha pitāmahān
 ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā
 śvaśurān suhṛdaś caiva senayor ubhayor api*

tatra – in that place; *apaśyat* – saw; *sthitān* – situated; *pārthaḥ* – Arjuna, son of Prthā (Kuntī); *pitṛn* – the parental uncles; *atha* – thereafter; *pitāmahān* – grandfathers; *ācāryān* – teachers; *mātulān* – maternal uncles; *bhrātṛn* – cousins; *putrān* – sons; *pautrān* – grandsons; *sakhīn* – friends; *tathā* – also; *śvaśurān* – fathers-in-law; *suhṛdaḥ* – well-wishers; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *senayoḥ* – armies; *ubhayoḥ* – between the two; *api* – also.

There, from the midst of both armies, Arjuna saw his paternal uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, nephews, grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law, sons and well-wishers.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna saw the sons and grandsons of Duryodhana and many others.

VERSE 27

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धूनवस्थितान् ।
 कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥

*tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ sarvān bandhūn avasthitān
 kṛpayā parayāviṣṭo viśīdann idam abravīt*

tān – those; *samīkṣya* – after seeing; *saḥ* – he; *kaunteyaḥ* – Arjuna, the son of Kuntī; *sarvān* – all; *bandhūn* – relatives and friends; *avasthitān* –

standing near; *kṛpayā* – by compassion; *parayā* – by great; *āviṣṭaḥ* – overcome; *viśīdan* – lamenting; *idam* – thus; *abravīt* – spoke.

Seeing all his friends and relatives standing near him on the battlefield, the son of Kuntī, Arjuna, lamenting and overwhelmed with compassion for them, spoke thus.

VERSE 28

अर्जुन उवाच—

दृष्ट्वेमान् स्वजनान् कृष्ण युयुत्सून् समवस्थितान् ।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥ २८ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*dr̥ṣṭvēmān svajanān kṛṣṇa yuyutsūn samavasthitān
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṁ ca pariśuṣyati*

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – after seeing; *imān* – all these; *sva-janān* – kinsmen; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *yuyutsūn* – desiring battle; *samavasthitān* – assembled; *sīdanti* – are slackening; *mama* – my; *gātrāṇi* – limbs; *mukham* – mouth; *ca* – and; *pariśuṣyati* – is drying up.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, seeing all my kinsmen assembled here eager for battle, I feel my limbs weakening and my mouth becoming dry.

VERSE 29

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।
गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात् त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ॥ २९ ॥

*vepathuś ca śarīre me roma-harṣaś ca jāyate
gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt tvak caiva paridahyate*

vepathuḥ – trembling; *ca* – and; *śarīre me* – in my body; *roma-harṣaḥ* – standing of bodily hairs; *ca jāyate* – is taking place; *gāṇḍīvam* – my bow called Gāṇḍīva; *sraṁsate* – is slipping; *hastāt* – from the hand; *tvak* – skin; *ca* – also; *eva* – certainly; *paridahyate* – is burning.

My body is quivering and my hairs are standing on end. My Gāṇḍīva bow is slipping from my hand and my skin is burning.

VERSE 30

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ।
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ॥ ३० ॥

*na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva ca me manaḥ
nimittāni ca paśyāmi viparītāni keśava*

na – not; *ca* – also; *śaknomy* – am able; *avasthātum* – to remain standing; *bhramati* – to reel; *iva* – appears; *ca* – and; *me* – my; *manaḥ* – mind; *nimittāni* – portents; *ca* – also; *paśyāmi* – I am seeing; *viparītāni* – inauspicious; *keśava* – O Keśava.

O Keśava, I am unable to remain standing. My mind is reeling and I am seeing inauspicious omens.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *nimitta* in this verse indicates a purpose, just as in the sentence “I live here for the purpose (*nimitta*) of gaining wealth.” Arjuna is saying, “Winning the battle and attaining the kingdom will not bring me happiness [our purpose, *nimitta*]. Rather, it will be a cause of distress and sorrow.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Keśava: Here the devotee Arjuna is revealing the feelings within his heart by addressing Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Keśava. “Despite killing prominent demons such as Keśī, You always maintain Your devotees. In the same way, please remove the lamentation and delusion from my heart, and maintain me.”

In defining the word Keśava, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives a further confidential meaning that is only for one who is expert at relishing pure, transcendental *rasa*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained that the word Keśava means “*keśān vayate saṁskārotīti* – because He arranges the hair (*keśa*) of His beloved, Kṛṣṇa is called Keśava.”

VERSE 31

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ।
न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ॥ ३१ ॥

*na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi hatvā svajanam āhave
na kāṅkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca*

na – not; *ca* – also; *śreyaḥ* – auspiciousness; *anupaśyāmi* – I see; *hatvā* – by killing; *sva-janam* – own relatives; *āhave* – in battle; *na* – nor; *kāṅkṣe* – do I desire; *vijayaṁ* – victory; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *na* – nor; *ca* – as well; *rājyaṁ* – kingdom; *sukhāni* – pleasures; *ca* – also.

O Kṛṣṇa, I do not see how anything auspicious can arise from killing my own kinsmen in battle. Nor do I desire victory, the resulting kingdom, or even happiness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Śreyo na paśyāmiti* means 'I do not see anything auspicious'. The renunciants who have attained perfection in *yoga* and the heroes who are killed in battle both attain the celestial sun planet. From this statement it appears that a person who is killed in battle attains auspiciousness, but one who kills receives no such pious result. One may question this by saying that a person who kills and is victorious in battle will certainly receive both fame and the pleasure of sovereignty over a kingdom; therefore it is beneficial for Arjuna to fight. In answer to this, Arjuna says, "*na kāṅkṣe* – I do not desire this."

VERSES 32-34

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ।
येषामर्थं काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ॥ ३२ ॥

तइमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ।
आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैवच पितामहाः ॥ ३३ ॥

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ।
एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ॥ ३४ ॥

*kim no rājyena govinda kim bhogair jīvitena vā
 yeṣām arthe kāṅkṣitam no rājyam bhogāḥ sukhāni ca
 ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāms tyaktvā dhanāni ca
 ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrās tathāiva ca pitāmahāḥ
 mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā
 etān na hantum icchāmi ghnato 'pi madhusūdana*

kim – what use?; *naḥ* – for us; *rājyena* – by a kingdom; *govinda* – O Govinda; *kim* – what use?; *bhogaiḥ* – by (experiencing) pleasures; *jīvitena* – by having life; *vā* – or even; *yeṣām* – for whose; *arthe* – sake; *kāṅkṣitam* – are desired; *naḥ* – by us; *rājyam* – kingdom; *bhogāḥ* – enjoyment; *sukhāni* – all pleasures; *ca* – also; *te* – they; *ime* – they; *avasthitāḥ* – present here; *yuddhe* – in warfare; *prāṇān* – lives; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *dhanāni* – riches; *ca* – also; *ācāryāḥ* – teachers; *pitarāḥ* – fathers; *putrāḥ* – sons; *tathā* – as well; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *pitāmahāḥ* – grandfathers; *mātulāḥ* – maternal uncles; *śvaśurāḥ* – fathers-in-law; *pautrāḥ* – grandsons; *śyālāḥ* – brothers-in-law; *sambandhinaḥ* – relatives; *tathā* – as well; *etān* – these (people); *na* – not; *hantum* – to kill; *icchāmi* – I do not wish; *ghnataḥ* – slain; *api* – even; *madhusūdana* – O slayer of the Madhu demon.

O Govinda! Of what use to us is a kingdom, enjoyment or even life itself, when those for whom we desire them – teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives – are all standing before us in battle array, ready to give up their lives and wealth? Therefore, O Madhusūdana, even if they kill me, I still do not wish to kill them.

VERSE 35

अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ।
 निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान् नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ॥ ३५ ॥

*api trailokya-rājyasya hetoḥ kim nu mahī-kṛte
 nihatyā dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana*

api – even; *trai-lokya* – of the three worlds; *rājyasya* – the kingdom; *hetoḥ* – for the sake of; *kim nu* – what to speak of; *mahī-kṛte* – the sake of the Earth; *nihatya* – by killing; *dhārtarāṣṭrān* – the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *naḥ* – for us; *kā* – what; *prītiḥ* – happiness; *syāt* – will there be; *janārdana* – O Janārdana.

O Janārdana, if we kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra – even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds, what to speak of this Earth – what joy shall we receive?

VERSE 36

पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ।
तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् सबान्धवान् ।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३६ ॥

pāpam evāśrayet asmān hatvaitān ātatāyinaḥ
tasmān nārhā vyaṁ hantum dhārtarāṣṭrān sa-bāndhavān
svajanam hi katham hatvā sukhinaḥ syāma mādharma

pāpam – sin; *eva* – certainly; *āśrayet* – will cling; *asmān* – to us; *hatvā* – having killed; *etān* – these; *ātatāyinaḥ* – aggressors; *tasmāt* – therefore; *na* – not; *arhāḥ* – befitting; *vyaṁ* – for us; *hantum* – to slay; *dhārtarāṣṭrān* – the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *sa-bāndhavān* – along with their relatives; *svajanam* – our kinsmen; *hi* – indeed; *katham* – how?; *hatvā* – having killed; *sukhinaḥ* – happy; *syāma* – will we be; *mādhava* – O Mādhava.

O Mādhava, sin will take shelter of us because of killing all these aggressors. Therefore, it is improper to kill Duryodhana and our other relatives. How can we be happy by slaying our own kinsmen?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to the scriptures, there are six types of aggressors: (1) those who set fire to the house, (2) those who give poison, (3) those who attack with deadly weapons, (4) those who steal one's wealth, (5) those who usurp one's land and (6) those who abduct

one's wife. Arjuna argues, "You may say, 'O Bhārata, immediately upon seeing these six types of aggressors one should kill them without consideration, because, according to the injunctions of scripture, such killing is proper and no sin is incurred'. In reply I would say, 'By killing those assembled here, we will certainly incur sin.'"

There is a reason behind Arjuna's logic. According to *artha-śāstra*, scriptures on the science of political economy, it is proper to kill an aggressor. The injunctions of *artha-śāstra*, however, are less important than *dharma-śāstra*, the injunctions of the scriptures on proper codes of conduct. As Yājñavalkya Ṛṣi states, "Know *dharma-śāstra* to be superior to *artha-śāstra*." For this reason Arjuna said, "According to the scriptures on morality, we will certainly incur sin by killing *ācāryas* and others. Furthermore, we will not even derive any mundane pleasure from it." For this reason, Arjuna is using phrases such as *svajanam*, which means 'one's own relatives'.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: According to the Smṛtis, the supplementary Vedic literatures, no sin is incurred by killing six types of aggressors. But by the statement of the Śrutis, which were directly manifest from the Supreme Lord and which have been heard from authorities, the injunction not to kill any living entity is established (*mā himsyāt sarva-bhūtāni*). Whenever there seems to be a contradiction between Śruti and Smṛti, the statements of the Śrutis are accepted as superior. This is the instruction of the scripture. Similarly, the path provided by scriptures on proper codes of conduct (*dharma-śāstra*) should be considered superior to scriptures on the science of political economy (*artha-śāstra*). By following this logic, Arjuna feels that although the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra are the aggressors, sin will be incurred by killing them.

Here, we also see another speciality in the character of Arjuna. At the end of the battle of Mahābhārata, Arjuna tied Aśvatthāmā as one would tie up an animal, and for the offence of killing his son and the sons of his brothers, the other Pāṇḍavas, he cast him at the feet of his wife Draupadī, who was weeping. Being generous and liberal, she said that Aśvatthāmā, the son of their *guru*, should be forgiven. Bhīma, on the other hand, said that he should be killed immediately. Arjuna,

finding himself in a dilemma, looked towards Kṛṣṇa, who said, “A *brāhmaṇa* is not deserving of the death sentence, even if he has fallen from his status. On the other hand, one who approaches with weapons with the intention of making a lethal attack must certainly be killed.” Understanding Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s inner intention, Arjuna cut the hair of that unqualified *brāhmaṇa* Aśvatthāmā, forcibly removed the gem from his forehead and expelled him from the camp.

The internal feeling of Arjuna is that no one can be happy by engaging in sin, whatever the situation may be. Such a person cannot even receive worldly happiness, what to speak of transcendental pleasure. Adherence to the Vedas, the Smṛtis, the injunctions of saintly behaviour and self-satisfaction are the four characteristics of religiosity. Fighting against one’s kinsmen is an activity that is contrary to both the Vedas and saintly behaviour and brings with it feelings of guilt.

VERSES 37-38

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३७ ॥

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३८ ॥

yadyapy ete na paśyanti lobhopahata-cetasah
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ mitra-drohe ca pātakam

katham na jñeyam asmābhiḥ pāpād asmān nivarttitum
kula-kṣaya-kṛtaṁ doṣaṁ prapaśyadbhir janārdana

yadi api – even though; *ete* – they; *na paśyanti* – do not see; *lobha* – by greed; *upahata* – are afflicted; *cetasah* – whose hearts; *kula-kṣaya* – in the destruction of the dynasty; *kṛtam* – incurred; *doṣam* – the fault; *mitra-drohe* – in treachery to friends; *ca* – and; *pātakam* – the sin; *katham* – why?; *na jñeyam* – should not consider; *asmābhiḥ* – we; *pāpāt asmāt* – from this sin; *nivarttitum* – to desist; *kula-kṣaya* – the destruction of the dynasty; *kṛtam* – in performing; *doṣam* – the crime; *prapaśyadbhiḥ* – who can see; *janārdana* – O Janārdana.

O Janārdana, the intelligence of Duryodhana and others has been polluted by greed to attain the kingdom. Thus, they are unable to see the faults that arise from destroying the dynasty, or the sin incurred by betraying their friends. But since we are in knowledge of these faults, why do we not consider the situation and refrain from such improper acts?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna asks, “Alas! Why are we still inclined to engage in this battle?” To answer his own question, he speaks this verse beginning with the words *yady apy*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Arjuna considers that in this battle there are teachers such as Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya, maternal uncles such as Śalya and Śakuni, family elders such as Bhīṣma, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and relatives and kinsmen such as Jayadratha. Scripture forbids turning against such persons: “*ṛtvik-purohitācārya-mātulātithi-samśriteḥ bāla-vṛddhāturair vaidya-jñāti-sambandhi-bāndhavaiḥ* – you should not quarrel with one who performs sacrifice on your behalf, a family priest, a teacher, a maternal uncle, a guest, those who are dependents, like young children, the elderly and relatives.”

“But I have to fight with these very persons.” Thus, Arjuna expressed his unwillingness to fight with his own kinsmen, who now stood before him. Arjuna contemplates, “Why are they determined to fight with us?” and concludes that they have become overpowered by their petty, selfish interests. They have thus lost their ability to discriminate between what is beneficial and what is not beneficial, between religion and irreligion. As a result, they have forgotten the sinful reactions that are incurred by destroying one’s own dynasty. “We have no selfish motives, so why should we engage in such an abominable and sinful act?”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣinī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the First Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

VERSE 39

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ३९ ॥

kula-kṣaye praṇaśyanti kula-dharmāḥ sanātanāḥ
dharme naṣṭe kulam kṛtsnam adharmo 'bhibhavaty uta

kula-kṣaye – by destroying a dynasty; *praṇaśyanti* – are utterly destroyed; *kula-dharmāḥ* – the religious traditions of the dynasty; *sanātanāḥ* – the ancient; *dharme* – virtue; *naṣṭe* – lost; *kulam* – the family; *kṛtsnam* – the whole; *adharmāḥ* – sin; *abhibhavaty* – overpowers; *uta* – also.

When a dynasty is destroyed, the ancient religious traditions of the family, handed down through countless generations, are also destroyed. Upon the destruction of these virtuous traditions, the entire dynasty becomes overcome by irreligion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Sanātanāḥ* refers to those principles that have descended through the dynasty from a remote time.

VERSE 40

अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ ४० ॥

adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa praduṣyanti kula-striyaḥ
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya jāyate varṇa-saṅkaraḥ

adharma – irreligion; *abhibhavāt* – due to having become predominant; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *praduṣyanti* – are polluted; *kula-striyaḥ* – ladies of the family; *strīṣu* – when the womanhood; *duṣṭāsu* – become corrupted; *vārṣṇeya* – O descendent of Vṛṣṇi; *jāyate* – are born; *varṇa-saṅkaraḥ* – indiscriminate intermingling of the castes (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*) resulting in uncared for progeny.

O Kṛṣṇa, when a dynasty is overpowered by irreligion, the women of that dynasty become degraded. O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, when women become degraded and unchaste, the result is unwanted progeny.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: It is irreligion which causes them to engage in unchaste activities.

VERSE 41

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४१ ॥

*saṅkaro narakāyaiva kula-ghnānām kulasya ca
patanti pitaro hy eṣām luṭṭa-piṇḍodaka-kriyāḥ*

saṅkaraḥ – impure progeny; *narakāya* – take to hell; *eva* – certainly; *kula-ghnānām* – for the destroyers of the dynasty; *kulasya* – for the dynasty; *ca* – also; *patanti* – fall down; *pitaraḥ* – the ancestors; *hi* – indeed; *eṣām* – for them; *luṭṭa* – having been stopped; *piṇḍa-udaka-kriyāḥ* – their offerings of sanctified food and water.

The generation of such impure progeny certainly takes both the destroyers of the dynasty and the dynasty itself to hell. Indeed, their forefathers, being bereft of oblations of sanctified food and water, must also suffer the same fate.

VERSE 42

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४२ ॥

*doṣair etaiḥ kula-ghnānām varṇa-saṅkara-kāraakaiḥ
utsādyante jāti-dharmāḥ kula-dharmās ca śāśvatāḥ*

doṣaiḥ etaiḥ – by these faults; *kula-ghnānām* – of the destroyers of the dynasty; *varṇa-saṅkara* – impure progeny; *kāraakaiḥ* – causing; *utsādyante* – sink into oblivion; *jāti-dharmāḥ* – religious occupation according to birth; *kula-dharmāḥ* – the system of *varṇāśrama* and the family tradition; *ca* – and; *śāśvatāḥ* – the eternal.

Due to the evil deeds of these destroyers of the dynasty, the teachings of religious principles, which accord with timeless family traditions, sink into oblivion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Utsādyante* means 'they become lost'.

VERSE 43

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४३ ॥

*utsanna-kula-dharmāṇām manuṣyāṇām janārdana
narake niyatam vāso bhavatīty anuśuśruma*

utsanna – have been abolished; *kula-dharmāṇām* – whose family traditions; *manuṣyāṇām* – of such men; *janārdana* – O Janārdana; *narake* – in hell; *niyatam* – always; *vāsaḥ* – residence; *bhavati* – becomes; *iti* – thus; *anuśuśruma* – I have heard from authorities.

O Janārdana (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), I have heard through disciplic succession that those who are devoid of the religious principles of their dynasty suffer in hell for an unlimited period of time.

VERSE 44

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४४ ॥

*aho bata mahat-pāpam kartum vyavasitā vayam
yad rājya-sukha-lobhena hantum svajanam udyatāḥ*

aho – alas; *bata* – how lamentable; *mahat* – great; *pāpam* – sin; *kartum* – to do; *vyavasitāḥ* – being determined; *vayam* – we; *yad rājya-sukha-lobhena* – on account of greed for royal happiness; *hantum* – to slay; *sva-janam* – our own kinsmen; *udyatāḥ* – are prepared.

Alas! How regrettable it is that we are determined to engage in this great sin. Driven by greed for royal happiness, we are prepared to slay our own kinsmen.

VERSE 45

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४५ ॥

*yadi mām apratikāram aśastram śastra-pāṇayaḥ
dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyuṣtan me kṣemataram bhavet*

yadi – if; *mām* – me; *apratikāram* – unresisting; *aśastram* – unarmed; *śastra-pāṇayaḥ* – those with weapons in hand; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* – the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *raṇe* – on the battlefield; *hanyuḥ* – may kill; *ta* – that; *me* – to me; *kṣemataram* – more auspicious; *bhavet* – would be.

Even if the fully-armed sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were to kill me unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield, to me that would be more auspicious.

VERSE 46

सञ्जय उवाच—
एवमुक्त्वार्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ ४६ ॥

sañjaya uvāca –
*evam uktvārjunaḥ saṅkhye rathopastha upāviśat
viśṛjya sa-śaram cāpam śoka-samvigna-mānasaḥ*

sañjayaḥ uvāca – Sañjaya said; *evam uktvā* – having thus spoken in this manner; *arjunaḥ* – Arjuna; *saṅkhye* – in the midst of the battlefield; *rathapastha* – upon the chariot; *upāviśat* – sat down; *viśṛjya* – throwing aside; *sa-śaram* – along with his quivers of arrows; *cāpam* – his bow; *śoka* – by lamentation; *samvigna* – distressed; *mānasaḥ* – his mind.

Sañjaya said: Having spoken these words in the midst of the battlefield, Arjuna, his mind distracted by lamentation, cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *San̄khye* means ‘in the battle’ and *rathopasthe* means ‘on the chariot’.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣinī-tīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the First Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER TWO



Sāṅkhya-Yoga

Yoga Through Distinguishing the
Soul from the Body

VERSE 1

सञ्जय उवाच—

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् ।

विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

*sañjaya uvāca –
tam tathā kṛpayāviṣṭam
aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam
viṣīdantam idam vākyaṃ
uvāca madhusūdanaḥ*

sañjayaḥ uvāca – Sañjaya said; *tam* – unto him (Arjuna); *tathā* – thus; *kṛpayā* – with compassion; *āviṣṭam* – overwhelmed; *aśru-pūrṇa* – full of tears; *ākula* – restless; *ikṣaṇam* – eyes; *viṣīdantam* – the lamenting; *idam* – these; *vākyaṃ* – words; *uvāca* – spoke; *madhu-sūdanaḥ* – the slayer of demon Madhu.

Sañjaya said: Śrī Madhusūdana thus spoke these words to the lamenting Arjuna, who was overwhelmed with compassion and whose restless eyes were full of tears.

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

*śrī bhagavān uvāca –
kutaḥ tvā kaśmalam idaṁ viṣame samupasthitam
anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrtti-karam arjuna*

śrī-bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; *kutaḥ* – whence?; *tvā* – to you; *kaśmalam* – delusion; *idaṁ* – this; *viṣame* – in these adverse circumstances; *samupasthitam* – come; *anārya* – by one who is not on the path of spiritual advancement; *juṣṭam* – practised; *a-svargyam* – does not lead to heaven; *a-kīrtti* – infamy; *karam* – the cause of; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Arjuna, what is the cause of your delusion at this crucial hour? This is not at all proper for an Āryan. It will neither enhance your reputation nor lead you to the heavenly planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this Second Chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra delineates the symptoms of liberated persons. He removes the darkness caused by lamentation and delusion by first giving the wisdom to discriminate between matter and spirit (the self).

Kaśmalam means ‘delusion’, *viṣame* means ‘at this crucial moment’ or ‘at the crisis of battle’, *kutaḥ* means ‘what is the cause?’ And *upasthitam* means ‘it has taken shelter in you’. The word *anārya-juṣṭam* implies that this action would not be appreciated by noble or respectable persons, and *asvargyam-akīrtti-karam* means that this action is unfavourable for the attainment of both mundane and transcendental happiness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Dhṛtarāṣṭra was pleased to know that even before the battle began, religious sentiments had suddenly awakened within Arjuna’s heart. Arjuna was expressing aversion to facing the battle by adhering to the principle of non-violence. He considered it to be the supreme form of religion (*ahiṁsā paramo dharmah*). Dhṛtarāṣṭra deliberated as follows: “It would be greatly fortuitous for us if this battle does not take place, because my sons would then be permanent sovereigns of the kingdom, without any obstacle.” However, he still inquired as to what happened next.

Saṅjaya, who was endowed with fine intelligence, could understand Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s inner motive; thus he very expertly detected the inference of the blind king and crushed his hopes. He said, “Even after seeing

Arjuna in such a condition, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has not neglected him. Rather, He will instill into the heart of Arjuna that same natural propensity to subdue the miscreants with which He subdued the miscreant Madhu and other demons, and through Arjuna, He will arrange the death of all your sons. Therefore, do not harbour any hope of attaining the kingdom without a battle.”

Sañjaya continued describing to Dhṛtarāṣṭra the statements of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “To fight is the nature and religious duty of the *kṣatriya* class. Why, at this time of battle, are you becoming averse to your prescribed duty? By engaging in this battle, liberation, the heavenly planets and fame will be attained. To refuse to fight this religious war, as is the practice of non-Āryans, or uncivilized persons, is unfavourable for these higher attainments. Furthermore, it destroys material happiness and fame.”

VERSE 3

क्लैब्यं मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ ३ ॥

klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitat tvayy upapadyate
kṣudram hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa

klaibyam – impotency; *mā sma gamaḥ* – do not take to; *pārtha* – O Pārtha, son of Pṛthā, or Kuntī; *na* – not; *etat* – this; *tvayī* – unto you; *upapadyate* – appropriate; *kṣudram* – petty; *hṛdaya* – of heart; *daurbalyam* – weakness; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *uttiṣṭha* – arise; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the enemy.

O Pārtha, do not behave like a eunuch. It does not befit you. Abandon this petty weakness of heart, O chastiser of the foe, and arise to do battle.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here the word *klaibyam* means ‘impotence in the form of timidity in one’s *dharmika* duty’. Kṛṣṇa is saying, “O Pārtha, although you are the son of Pṛthā, you are being a coward.” For this purpose, Śrī Bhagavān uses the words *mā-smagamaḥ* – do not be a coward. He is saying, “Such impotence befits a *kṣatriya* of the lowest order, but you are My friend; therefore, in no way does it befit you. You, Arjuna, may say, ‘O Kṛṣṇa, do not doubt me, thinking that I lack

courage. I am enthusiastic to fight. Rather, please understand that from a religious point of view, my decision not to fight is a sign of discretion, so as to show respect to my *gurus* such as Bhīṣma and Droṇa; and it is a symptom of my compassion for the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who are weak and about to die from the wounds caused by my weapons.’ My answer to this is *kṣudram* – this is not discrimination and compassion but rather, lamentation and delusion. Both reveal weakness of mind. Therefore, O Parantapa, abandon this weakness of heart, and stand up and fight.” *Para* refers to enemies and *tāpa* to causing pain.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān said, “For *kṣatriyas* who are brave and situated in their prescribed religious duty, to be cowardly in battle is not befitting or glorious. Having been born of Pṛthā from a portion of Indra, the king of the demigods, you are as brilliant and powerful as he. Besides this, since I am *mahā-maheśvara*, the Supreme Controller, and you are My friend, you are very influential. Therefore, such cowardice does not become you. If you claim that such behaviour is not cowardice but wisdom and compassion, then I say this is not so. That is not wisdom and compassion; it is lamentation and delusion born from weakness of mind. Wisdom and compassion do not give rise to delusion. From your previous statement, *na ca śaknomy avasthātum bhramatīva ca me manaḥ* (*Gītā* 1.30), it is clear that your mind is becoming deluded.”

It is appropriate to mention here that once, being greatly pleased by the service of Kuntī, the sage Durvāsā gave her a boon in the form of a *mantra* by which she could summon any demigod to appear before her and fulfil her desires. On the order of Mahārāja Pāṇḍu, Kuntī chanted that *mantra* to call Yamarāja, the god of religion; Vāyu, the wind-god; and Indra, the lord of all demigods. As a result, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma and Arjuna, respectively, were born. Through the twin Aśvinī-kumāras, Pāṇḍu’s second wife Mādri gave birth to Nakula and Sahadeva.

VERSE 4

अर्जुन उवाच—

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।

इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥४॥

*arjuna uvāca –
katham bhīṣmam aham saṅkhye droṇam ca madhusūdana
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi pūjārḥāv arisūdana*

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *katham* – how?; *bhīṣmam* – against Grand sire Bhīṣma; *aham* – I; *saṅkhye* – in battle; *droṇam* – Droṇācārya; *ca* – and; *madhusūdana* – O Madhusūdana; *iṣubhiḥ* – with arrows; *pratiyotsyāmi* – shall fight against; *pūjā-arḥāu* – worthy of my worship; *arisūdana* – slayer of the enemy.

Arjuna said: O Madhusūdana, slayer of the enemy, how can I fight with arrows in battle against Grandfather Bhīṣma and Droṇācārya, who are my worshipful superiors?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In answering the question as to why he is not fighting, Arjuna claims that according to the scriptures that deal with morality, it brings inauspiciousness to violate the honour of a worshipable personality. “Therefore, I shall not fight.” To support his action he speaks this verse beginning with *katham*. Kṛṣṇa may say, “Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others are fighting against you, so can you not fight back?” Arjuna may answer, “What You say is true. However, I cannot fight against them because I consider them to be worshipful. It is therefore right that I not fight them. Is it proper for me to angrily pierce with sharp arrows those persons at whose feet I desire to lovingly offer flowers? No, it is not proper.”

By addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Madhusūdana, Arjuna is giving moral instruction to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “O dear friend, You have also killed enemies in battle, but You have not killed Your *guru*, Sāṅdīpani Muni, nor Your relatives, the Yadus. If You say that Madhusūdana (the killer of Madhu) means that *madhus* (enemies) are Yadus (your relatives), then no, this is not so. Madhu was Your enemy (*ari*), therefore I have addressed You as Arisūdana, the killer of enemies. That is, the demon named Madhu was Your enemy. I am saying this only.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Sāṅdīpani Muni was a famous sage belonging to the dynasty of the great sage Kaśyapa. He lived in the city of Avanti, the present-day Ujjain. While the spiritual

masters of the whole universe, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, were enacting Their human-like pastimes in order to set an example for others, They accepted Sāṅdīpani Muni as Their instructing spiritual master (*śikṣā-guru*). While living in his *āśrama*, They performed the pastime of learning the sixty-four arts in sixty-four days. In his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has indicated that Sāṅdīpani Muni was a Śaivite, a follower of Lord Śiva. Why, then, did Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva accept him as Their *guru*? In answer to this, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that if They had accepted a Vaiṣṇava *guru*, he would have immediately recognized Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Kṛṣṇa's pastime of learning would not have taken place. Therefore, these two brothers intentionally went to the devotee of Lord Śiva, Sāṅdīpani Muni, son of the renowned Yogamāyā-Paurṇamāsī of Vraja. Madhumaṅgala and Nāṅdīmukhī, the famous friends of Kṛṣṇa, are the son and daughter of Sāṅdīpani Muni.

VERSE 5

गुरून्हत्वा हि महानुभावान्
 श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
 हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव
 भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥५॥

gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān
śreyo bhoktum bhaikṣyam apīha loke
hatvārtha-kāmāns tu gurūn ihaiva
bhuñjīya bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān

gurūn – superiors; *ahatvā* – by not killing; *hi* – certainly; *mahā-anubhāvān* – great personalities; *śreyah* – more auspicious; *bhoktum* – to maintain my life; *bhaikṣyam* – even by begging; *apī* – even though; *iha loke* – in this world; *hatvā* – by killing; *artha-kāmān* – motivated by wealth; *tu* – but; *gurūn* – superiors; *iha* – in this world; *eva* – certainly; *bhuñjīya* – one has to enjoy; *bhogān* – sense enjoyments; *rudhira* – with blood; *pradigdhān* – tainted.

It would be better to maintain my life in this world by begging than to kill these great personalities who are my *gurus*. Even though motivated by material gain, they remain my superiors. After killing them, any worldly enjoyment I might attain will be smeared with their blood.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna is saying to Kṛṣṇa, “You may ask how I will maintain my life if I do not desire to accept my own kingdom. My answer is that it is better for me to eat food acquired by begging, an act condemned for *kṣatriyas*, than to kill my superiors. Even though such an act may bring defamation, I will not be beset with spiritual inauspiciousness. It is not proper to abandon my *gurus* simply because they are following the proud and irreligious Duryodhana, who is unable to discriminate between what is duty and what is not.

“If You say that it is recommended in the scriptures on morality (*Mahābhārata Udyoga-parva*) to reject the *guru* if he is proud, unable to discriminate between good actions and bad and engaged in abominable activities, then my reply is, *mahānubhāvān*: ‘Where is the possibility of these defects in such great personalities as Bhīṣma and Droṇa, who have conquered lust, time and so forth?’ It may then be argued that man is a servant of wealth, but wealth is not the servant of anyone. This is confirmed in Bhīṣma’s statement to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja: ‘O Mahārāja, it is true that I am bound by the wealth of the Kauravas.’ Thus, if You say that Bhīṣma’s reputation as a *mahānubhāvān*, or great personality, has already been ruined by his admitting to being desirous of wealth, then I must reply, ‘Yes, this is true.’ Still, if I kill them, I will only feel distress. For that reason I am using words such as *arthakāmān* (desirous of wealth). I can enjoy this wealth after killing all of the Kauravas, who are very greedy for it, but that wealth will be tainted with their blood.

“In other words, despite their greed for wealth, they will always be my superiors. I will become a traitor by killing them, and any pleasure derived from that will be adulterated with sinful deeds.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Being inattentive to Kṛṣṇa’s words due to being overpowered by grief and delusion, Arjuna once

more asserted, “What to speak of my own family members and relatives, I consider it an extremely inauspicious and sinful act to kill my *gurus* who are standing before me in this battle array – Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, my most worshipful Grandsire Bhīṣma and others – just for the sake of this petty material kingdom. The chance of attaining a place in the higher planets is completely lost for one who kills such superiors. Therefore, I consider it better to maintain my life in this world by begging.”

It is stated in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*:

*upādhyāyaḥ pitā jyeṣṭha-bhrātā caiva mahī-patiḥ
mātulaḥ śvasuras trātā mātāmaha-pitāmahau
bandhur jyeṣṭhaḥ pitṛvyaś ca puṁśyete guravaḥ smṛtāḥ*

That person who gives instruction on the Vedas, as well as one’s father, elder brother, king, maternal uncle, father-in-law, protector, maternal grandparents, paternal grandparents, relatives and those who are elderly, are all considered one’s superiors.

Śrī Droṇācārya and Kṛpācārya were born in high-class *brāhmaṇa* families. Besides possessing knowledge of the science of archery, they were also scholars of the Vedas and the scriptures dealing with morality (*dharma-sāstras*), and they were also religious by nature. Arjuna saw them as his *gurus*. Droṇācārya, who had foreseen the possibility of war, made Arjuna vow that if for any reason they came face to face in battle, Arjuna must fight against him.

Grandfather Bhīṣma, the son of King Śāntanu and Gaṅgā-devī, remained a lifelong celibate. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.22.19), he was a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, extremely chivalrous, in control of his senses, generous, conversant about the Absolute Truth, and always true to his vows. Even death was under his control. He is prominent among the twelve *mahājanas*, or authorities on devotional service to the Supreme Lord:

*svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo balir vaiyāsakir vayam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.3.20)

These twelve authorities are Lord Brahmā, Nārada, Śambhu, the four Kumāras, Kapila, Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Yamarāja.

Thus Bhīṣma, who knew the Absolute Truth and was therefore the spiritual master of the whole world, was Arjuna's teacher in the same category as Droṇācārya. Even though he supported the Kauravas in their fight against the Pāṇḍavas, who were devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he is Kṛṣṇa's very dear devotee, and he always acts only for His pleasure. Bhīṣma is counted among the *jñānī-bhaktas*. He said to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, "What can I do? I am completely bound by the wealth of the Kauravas. Although it is not my desire, I have to fight on their side. But I give you this benediction: you will be victorious in the battle."

Here, even though Grandsire Bhīṣma externally appears to be greedy for wealth and dependent on others, he is in fact the master of his senses and supremely independent. Therefore, to glorify him, in the present verse, Śuddha-Sarasvatī, the transcendental knowledge potency, has combined the two words *hi* and *mahānubhāvān* into *himahānubhāvān*. *Hima* indicates ice or snow. That which destroys *hima* is called *himahā* (sun or fire), and *anubhāvān* means 'one who has the capability'. Therefore, a person who is extremely powerful like the sun or fire is *himahānubhāvān*. The powerful sun and fire can burn all impure objects without becoming contaminated themselves. They always remain pure. Similarly, Bhīṣma is *himahānubhāvān*, a greatly powerful person. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.29) that the sun or fire can burn all pure and impure objects and is thus known as *sarva-bhuk*, that which can consume everything without becoming impure itself. Similarly, even if a pure and powerful person appears to transgress the principles of religion, he remains completely free from all defects.

Someone may say that the powerful Bhīṣma committed no injustice by taking the side of the Kauravas and fighting the Pāṇḍavas. One may question, however, how Kṛṣṇa's topmost devotee could pierce the body of his worshipable Lord with sharp arrows? Is this a symptom of his *bhakti*? In answer it is said:

- (1) To allure the demons, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made His great devotee Mahādeva Śaṅkara (Lord Śiva) preach the theory of illusion called *māyāvāda*.

Māyāvāda is nothing but covered Buddhism and it is against the principles of the Vedas. From an external perspective, Mahādeva's preaching does not seem to be *bhakti*, but from the transcendental perspective, it is *bhakti*, because Mahādeva simply carried out the order of Bhagavān.

- (2) Just as the great devotee Śaṅkara took the side of Bāṇāsura and fought against Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, similarly Bhīṣma took the side of the Kauravas against Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Where, then, is the question of his *bhakti* becoming lost?
- (3) To relieve Mother Earth from the burden of demonic forces, Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to annihilate their power in the Mahābhārata conflict and re-establish religious principles. If Grandfather Bhīṣma and *gurus* like Droṇācārya had not assisted the opposing demoniac side, then the battle at Kurukṣetra would never have been possible. Therefore, by the personal will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is omniscient, Kṛṣṇa's bewildering spiritual potency, named *yogamāyā*, inspired the heart of Bhīṣma with wicked tendencies to fight on the side of the opposing party. Thus Bhīṣma performed this act for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.
- (4) In his commentary on a verse from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that in the Mahābhārata War, by the will of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a demoniac mood entered Grandsire Bhīṣma's heart. Imbued with that mood, he aimed sharp arrows at Kṛṣṇa; otherwise, it would have been impossible for a pure devotee like Bhīṣma to act in such a way.
- (5) The great devotee Grandsire Bhīṣma teaches ordinary devotees in the stage of practice (*sādhakas*) that even if a great personality like him accepts the food, water or association of materialistic persons, his mind will become contaminated and he will lose his discrimination.
- (6) Śrī Bhagavān understood that Jaya and Vijaya wanted to satisfy Him by fulfilling His desire to fight. He therefore inspired the four Kumāras to visit Him and, in order to infuse inimical thoughts into the hearts of Jaya and Vijaya, He intentionally inspired the four Kumāras to curse them. This curse was just a pretence, because there is no possibility of any anger existing in Vaikuṅṭha, what

to speak of a curse. In fact, for the satisfaction and pleasure of Śrī Bhagavān, Jaya and Vijaya personally begged to have an inimical mood, and by doing so, there was no diminution in their *bhakti*.

Had Grandsire Bhīṣma shown any symptom of desiring to kill Kṛṣṇa instead of pleasing Him, he would have fallen from his position as a devotee forever. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Grandsire Bhīṣma offered the following prayer glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*yudhi turaga-rajo-vidhūmra-viṣvak-
kaca-lulita-śramavāry-alanḱṛtāsye
mama niśīta-śarair vibhidyamāna-
tvaci vilasat-kavace 'stu kṛṣṇa ātmā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.9.34)

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives a very *rasika* description of Grandsire Bhīṣma's devotional mood. He says that Bhīṣma perceives that just as the dust raised from the hooves of the cows in Vraja decorates the charming face of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and increases His beauty and sweetness, in the same way the dust raised from the hooves of the horses on the battlefield also increases Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty and sweetness. There is nothing ugly in a beautiful object. Although dust in itself is not beautiful, when it falls on the soft, lotus-like face of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it enhances His beauty and charm. When Kṛṣṇa ran towards Bhīṣma carrying the wheel of a chariot, His hair was dishevelled. Bhīṣma was then reminded of how Kṛṣṇa's hair looks when, upon returning from cow-grazing, He runs behind the lowing cows as they quickly move toward their sheds. In this verse, the words *śrama-vāri* mean that due to Kṛṣṇa's forceful exertion of running towards Bhīṣma on the battlefield, drops of perspiration fell from His lotus-like face and beautiful limbs. To Bhīṣma, they appeared to be like the perspiration drops caused by Kṛṣṇa's exertion in the amorous war of cupid.

Kṛṣṇa's running at Bhīṣma is also a manifestation of His mood of affection for His devotees. [Kṛṣṇa broke His own vow that He would not fight in order to keep Bhīṣma's vow that he would make Śrī Kṛṣṇa take up weapons against him.] Grandsire Bhīṣma observes, "The

reddish marks appearing on the limbs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which are bruised and cut by my sharp arrows, look like the love-bites made by the teeth of a passionate lover absorbed in passionate battle with her beloved.” Although a young beloved may behave haughtily with her lover, whom she loves millions of times more than her own life, by marking him with her nails and teeth, she cannot be said to be devoid of love. Similarly, Bhīṣma’s madness in *vīra-rasa* (the chivalrous mellow) is not an indication that he is devoid of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *raso vai saḥ* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1), meaning that He embodies the nectar of all mellows (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*). In order to fulfil Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s desire to taste feelings of chivalry (*vīra-rasa*), Bhīṣma, one of His prominent devotees, took the side of the Kauravas and wounded the limbs of Śrī Bhagavān. In this way Bhīṣma fulfilled Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s desire and thus pleased Him.

In *Śrī Mahābhārata* it is seen that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa took a vow to not use any weapon in the battle. On the other hand, Bhīṣma, His devotee, took a vow that if he could not induce Kṛṣṇa to take up weapons, he could not be considered the son of Mahārāja Śāntanu. Bhagavān, who is affectionate to His devotees (*bhakta-vatsala*), broke His own vow to protect Bhīṣma’s pledge:

*sva-nigamam apahāya mat-pratijñām
ṛtam adhikartum avapluto rathasthaḥ
dhṛta-ratha-caraṇo ’bhyayāc caladgur
harir iva hantum ibham gatottariyaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.9.37)

Grandsire Bhīṣma says, “I offer my obeisances again and again unto Śrī Bhagavān, who is particularly affectionate to His devotees. In order to protect my vow, He broke His own promise, jumping from the chariot, taking a wheel in His hand and running towards me with great speed.”

Although he took the side of the opposing party, Grandfather Bhīṣma is a pure devotee. Of this there is not even the slightest doubt. From the character of Bhīṣmadeva, we learn that whatever he does is favourable for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and assists in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

His profound character is beyond any mundane reasoning. However, if a conditioned soul imitates Bhīṣma and engages in prohibited action or commits offenses while making a show of being a *guru*, he can never be considered a bona fide *guru*. Bhagavān Rṣabhadeva has said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.18):

*gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj jananī na sā syāt
daivam na tat syān na patiṣ ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum*

That *guru* is not a *guru*, that father is not a father, that mother is not a mother, that demigod is not a demigod and that relative is not a relative who cannot protect us from the clutches of death, cannot bestow eternal life upon us and cannot protect us from the ignorance of *māyā*, which keeps us engrossed and bound in this material existence of birth and death.

Only a great personality who is thoroughly expert in the imports of the scriptures, who is endowed with realization of the Absolute Truth, and who is detached from this material world is qualified to be a *guru*. Bali Mahārāja rejected Śukrācārya for this reason, because Śukrācārya was opposed to the principles of *bhakti*. Thus, it is the injunction of the scriptures to reject such an unqualified *guru*. There is no sin or fault in not surrendering to, or not following, an unqualified *guru*, nor indeed in rejecting him.

In a *svayamvara*, a test of prowess to win the hand of a king's daughter, lifelong celibate Bhīṣma won the three daughters of the king of Kāśī (present-day Vārāṇasī) – Ambā, Ambikā and Ambālikā. He arranged the marriage of Ambikā and Ambālikā to his brother Vicitravīrya. The first girl, Ambā, insisted on marrying Bhīṣma, but he had taken a vow of lifelong celibacy and thus rejected her request. Not finding any other solution, Ambā approached Paraśurāma, Bhīṣma's spiritual master in the science of weaponry. Paraśurāma called Bhīṣma and ordered him to marry Ambā, but Bhīṣma remained resolute. At this, Paraśurāma told him either to marry her or fight with him. Bhīṣma accepted the fight while speaking the following words:

*guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya parityāgo vidhīyate*

Mahābhārata Udyoga-parva (179.25)

A *guru* who is engrossed in sense gratification, who is a fool with no ability to discriminate between proper and improper behaviour, and who is following a path that is devoid of pure devotion is a false *guru*. One should immediately reject him.

A devotee as great as Bhīṣma cannot perform any activity opposed to the principles of *bhakti*, and Paraśurāma is an incarnation of Bhagavān. Considering the vow of Bhīṣma to be righteous, Paraśurāma accepted defeat in this fight, which would have continued indefinitely because they were evenly matched.

VERSE 6

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस
तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥६॥

*na caītaḥ vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*

na – not; *ca* – and; *etat* – this; *vidmaḥ* – I know; *katarat* – which; *naḥ* – for us; *garīyaḥ* – is better; *yad vā* – whether; *jayema* – we may conquer; *yadi* – whether; *vā* – or; *naḥ* – us; *jayeyuḥ* – they may conquer; *yān* – whom; *eva* – certainly; *hatvā* – by killing; *na jijīviṣāmaḥ* – we do not desire to live; *te* – they; *avasthitāḥ* – are standing (ready for battle); *pramukhe* – before us; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ* – those who are on the side of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

I do not know what is better for us – to conquer them or to be conquered by them. Even after killing them, we will not desire to live. Yet they have taken the side of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and now stand before us on the battlefield.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna is speaking the verse beginning with *na caitad* while considering, “In fighting against our *gurus*, I do not know whether we will be victorious or defeated. Moreover, I do not even know whether it is better for us to win or lose.” Here, Arjuna is considering two perspectives and so speaks about the possibility of both his victory and his defeat. He is saying, “For us, the result of victory is equal to defeat.” Thus he is using the words *yān eva*, etc.

VERSE 7

कार्पण्यदाषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयःस्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥७॥

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ

ṛcchāmi tvām dharmasammūḍha-cetāḥ

yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me

śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām praṇanam

kārpaṇya – of spiritual weakness; *doṣa* – by the fault; *upahata* – being overpowered; *sva-bhāvaḥ* – my chivalrous nature; *ṛcchāmi* – am asking; *tvām* – You; *dharmā* – about virtue; *sammūḍha* – bewildered; *cetāḥ* – in heart; *yac* – what; *śreyaḥ* – auspicious path; *syāt* – may be; *niścitaṁ* – certain; *brūhi* – tell; *taṁ* – that; *me* – to me; *śiṣyaḥ* – disciple; *te* – Your; *aham* – I; *śādhi* – please instruct; *mām* – me; *tvām* – unto You; *praṇanam* – surrendered.

I, who have become overwhelmed by cowardice, having put aside my natural heroic nature and having become bewildered about how to ascertain my true duty, am requesting You to tell me clearly what is auspicious for me. I am Your disciple and have taken shelter of You; therefore, kindly bestow pertinent instruction upon me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa may ridicule Arjuna by saying, “Although you are a *kṣatriya*, you have decided to wander here and there and beg on the basis of your own deductive understanding of

the scriptures. What, then, is the use of My speaking further?” In anticipation of this, Arjuna begins this verse with *kārpaṇya*. “To give up the natural characteristic of chivalry is cowardly (*kārpaṇyata*). The principles of *dharma* are very subtle, and therefore, I find them bewildering. Please tell me with certainty what is auspicious for me.”

Arjuna tells Kṛṣṇa, “You may say that I am proud of my scholarship and that if I refute Your statements, how can You instruct me. I assure You that I am Your disciple, and from now on I will not refute Your statements unnecessarily.”

VERSE 8

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्
 यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
 अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं
 राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥८॥

na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād
yac chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām
avāpya bhūmāv asapatnam ṛddham
rājyaṁ surāṇām api cādhipatyam

na – not; *hi* – certainly; *prapaśyāmi* – I do see; *mama* – my; *apanudyāt* – it it can be removed; *yac* – which; *śokam* – lamentation; *ucchoṣaṇam* – is drying up; *indriyāṇām* – of the senses; *avāpya* – after attaining; *bhūmau* – on the Earth; *asapatnam* – unrivalled; *ṛddham* – prosperous; *rājyam* – kingdom; *surāṇām* – over the demigods; *api* – even; *ca* – also; *ādhipatyam* – sovereignty.

Even if we attain an unrivalled and prosperous kingdom on Earth, with sovereignty over the demigods, I do not see any way to dispel this lamentation, which is drying up my senses.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa may say, “You do not have a reverential attitude towards Me. Rather, you have a friendly mood. How can I accept you as My disciple? You should take shelter of personalities such as Śrī Vyāsadeva, whom you revere.” Anticipating this, Arjuna is speaking the

present verse beginning with the words *na hi*. “In the three worlds, I do not find anyone other than You who can dispel my lamentation. I do not consider even Bṛhaspati to be more intelligent than You. Therefore, since I am overwhelmed with grief, whose shelter can I take other than Yours? Just as the intense heat of the summer season dries up small ponds, similarly, this grief is drying up my senses.”

Kṛṣṇa may also say, “Although you are overwhelmed with grief, you should still fight. When you win the battle, you will become absorbed in enjoying the pleasure of your kingdom and be freed from this grief.” Arjuna therefore replies with the utterance beginning with *avāpya*. “Even if I attain the unrivalled kingdom of the Earth or sovereignty over the demigods in the heavenly planets, still my senses will remain as dry as they are now.”

VERSE 9

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥९॥

sañjaya uvāca –

*evam uktvā hṛṣīkeśam guḍākeśaḥ parantapaḥ
na yotsya iti govindam uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha*

sañjayaḥ uvāca – Sañjaya said; *evam* – thus; *uktvā* – having spoken; *hṛṣīkeśam* – to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *guḍākeśaḥ* – Arjuna; *parantapaḥ* – slayer of the enemies; *na yotsya* – I shall not fight; *iti* – thus; *govindam* – unto Govinda; *uktvā* – saying; *tūṣṇīm* – silent; *babhūva ha* – he became.

Sañjaya said: After speaking these words, Guḍākeśa (Arjuna), the subduer of his foes, said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “O Govinda, I shall not fight,” and fell silent.

VERSE 10

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥१०॥

*tam uvāca hṛṣīkeśaḥ prahasann iva bhārata
senayor ubhayor madhye viṣḍantam idam vacaḥ*

tam – to him (Arjuna); *uvāca* – spoke; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *prahasann* – smiling; *iva* – as if; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bhārata; *senayoḥ* – of the armies; *ubhayoḥ* – of both; *madhye* – in the midst; *viṣḍantam* – to the one afflicted by lamentation; *idam* – these; *vacaḥ* – words.

O descendant of Bhārata (Dhṛtarāṣṭra), at that time, Hṛṣīkeśa Śrī Kṛṣṇa, apparently smiling in the midst of both armies, spoke the following words to the grieving Arjuna.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: To ridicule His friend Arjuna, who is in *sakhya-bhāva*, Kṛṣṇa shows him that it is improper to be aggrieved in this way, thus drowning him in an ocean of embarrassment. Śrī Kṛṣṇa remarks, “Oh, you are quite devoid of discrimination.” Yet Arjuna has accepted the position of Kṛṣṇa’s disciple and it is improper to immerse a disciple in an ocean of shame in this way. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is pursing His lips and trying to hide His smile. Here, the import of the word ‘Hṛṣīkeśa’ is that, although Kṛṣṇa was previously controlled by the loving statements of Arjuna, now, for Arjuna’s own welfare and out of love for him, Kṛṣṇa is controlling Arjuna’s mind.

The words *senayor ubhayor madhye* indicate that Arjuna’s grief and the instructions and assurances given by Śrī Bhagavān were equally visible to both armies. In other words, this message of *Bhagavad-gītā* was also manifest before all the ordinary persons present. It was not kept secret from anyone.

VERSE II

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase

gatāsūn agatāsūṁś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ

śrī bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; *aśocyān* – for what is not worthy of grief; *anvaśocaḥ* – are lamenting; *tvam* – you; *prajñā-vādān* – learned words; *ca* – but; *bhāṣase* – you are speaking; *gata* – lost; *asūn* – life; *agata* – not lost; *asūn* – life; *ca* – yet; *na anuśocanti* – do not lament; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the wise.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Though you are speaking learned words, you lament for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are truly learned lament not for the living nor for the dead.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O Arjuna, your grief, which is born from the painful thought of killing your relatives, is illusory. Your question, ‘How shall I fight with Bhīṣma?’ shows that your reasoning is based on ignorance.” To explain why the above statement is true, Śrī Bhagavān says, “*aśocyān anvaśocaḥ* – You are grieving for that which is not worthy of grief.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa further says, “Even after being reassured by Me, you are asking questions such as, ‘*katham bhīṣmam-aham-saṅkhye* – how can I fight with Grandfather Bhīṣma?’ (Gītā 2.4). Even though you are presenting yourself as a learned personality, your presentation of such arguments and logic shows that you are not actually learned and that you actually have no knowledge. The wise do not lament for a gross material body from which the life-air has gone, because the body is temporary.

“*Agatāsūn* means ‘from whom the life-air has not gone’. Until one achieves the stage of liberation, the subtle body is indestructible. The learned or wise do not lament even for the subtle bodies of such persons. In both conditions, with and without life, the nature of both the gross and subtle bodies is unchangeable. Yet foolish people lament for the gross body of their father or relatives when the life-air leaves it. They do not lament for the subtle body, because generally, they do not have knowledge of that.

“Bhīṣma and others are also the soul and covered by the gross and subtle bodies. Since the soul is eternal, to lament for it is improper. Earlier you were saying that scriptures on morality are superior to scriptures on economical development, but know that scriptures on knowledge, from where this understanding comes (*jñāna-sāstra*) are superior even to scriptures on morality (*dharma-sāstra*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The portion of the Supreme Absolute Reality – who is composed of eternality, consciousness and bliss – that is endowed only with the marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*) is called the *jīvātma*, the individual soul. The *jīvas* are atomic particles of consciousness, and their eternal and natural characteristic is to serve Bhagavān. *Jīvas* are of two types: liberated (*mukta*) and conditioned (*baddha*). The liberated souls are eternally engaged in the service of Śrī Bhagavān in His abode. They never fall down. The conditioned souls have forgotten the service of Śrī Bhagavān since time immemorial, and thus being covered by the two types of material bodies, gross and subtle, they are suffering from the three types of miseries as punishment in this material world.

The gross body of the conditioned soul is made of the five material elements – earth, water, fire, air and sky – and it is temporary and perishable. After death, the soul changes his gross body. When there is birth, death will always follow. Today, tomorrow, or after some years, death is certain.

*mṛtyur janmavatām vīra dehena saha jāyate
adya vābda-śatānte vā mṛtyur vai prāṇinām dhruvaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.1.38)

O great hero, one who takes birth is sure to die, for death is born along with the body. One may die today or after hundreds of years, but death is sure for every living entity.*

In the *Gītā* (2.27) it is said, “*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ* – for one who has taken birth, death is a certainty.”

That which covers the pure nature of the soul is called the subtle body, and it is made up of mind, intelligence and false ego. In each birth, one is granted a new gross body, and at the time of death that body is destroyed. But such is not the case with the subtle body. Because the *jīva* has forgotten Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa*, or eternal form, the subtle body has covered the *jīva*’s *svarūpa* since time immemorial. This subtle body cannot be dissolved even after remembering Bhagavān, through such processes as knowledge, *yoga*, austerities, meditation or the study of the Vedas. It can only be dissolved by remembering Him

through the medium of pure devotional service to Him (*bhagavad-bhakti*). At that time, the soul becomes situated in his pure nature.

pṛītir na yāvan mayi vāsudeve na mucyate deha-yogena tāvat
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.6)

Therefore, until one has love for Lord Vāsudeva, who is none other than Me, he is certainly not delivered from having to accept a material body again and again.*

sa liṅgena vimucyate
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.83)

He will be liberated from the bodily conception of life by hearing My pastimes.

bhayam dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syāt
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37)

Fearfulness is caused by forgetfulness of the Lord and is the cause of the bodily conception of life.

yadā ratir brahmaṇi naiṣṭhikī pumān
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.22.26)

Upon becoming fixed in his attachment to the Supreme Personality, the living entity burns up his material surroundings exactly as fire, arising from wood, burns the wood itself.*

mām upetya tu kaunteya
Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā (8.16)

But one who attains Me, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.

When we study these verses, it becomes quite clear that although the subtle body has no beginning, it is acquired by forgetfulness of Bhagavān and destroyed by remembrance of Him. Therefore, those who know the nature of the soul to be immutable, imperishable and eternal do not lament or become disturbed at the loss of the gross body. They grieve neither for a gross body without a soul nor for a gross body with a soul, which will be destroyed in the future. On the

other hand, those who consider their gross body to be their self are ignorant. Such persons are not even aware of the subtle body, what to speak of the soul. They consider the gross body (which contains the soul) to be their mother, father, brother or relative. When the soul leaves that body, they consider their mother, father, brother or relative to be dead, and they lament for that body.

VERSE 12

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
 न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥१२॥
na tv evāham jātu nāsam na tvam neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam ataḥ param

na – never; *tu eva* – most certainly; *aham* – I; *jātu* – at any time; *na āsam* – did not exist; *na* – nor; *tvam* – you; *na* – nor; *ime* – these; *janādhipāḥ* – kings; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *eva* – certainly; *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ* – shall not exist; *sarve vayam* – all of us; *ataḥ param* – hereafter.

There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Kṛṣṇa asks the question, “O My friend Arjuna, when one grieves over the death of a dear person, what is the object of his love? Is it the body or the soul? In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.50) it is said:

sarveṣām api bhūtānām nṛpa svātmaiva vallabhaḥ

O King, for all living entities, the *ātmā*, or self, is certainly the most dear.

According to this statement of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, if the soul, or *ātmā*, is the only object of love, then both types of *ātma* – the Supreme *ātma* and the subordinate *ātma* – are eternal and free from death. This is so even though there is a difference between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul. Therefore, it is not the soul that is the object of grief. For this reason only, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is speaking this verse beginning with *na tv evāham*. “It is not true that I, Paramātmā, the Supreme Self,

did not exist in the past. Certainly I existed. In the same way, you, the individual *ātma*, also existed in the past, as did the *ātma* of all these kings.” The possibility of the soul not existing prior to its existence in his present body is refuted by this statement. “Similarly, it is also not true that you, these kings and I will not continue to exist in the future. We will all continue to exist.” Thus, it has been proven that the soul is indestructible. In this regard, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.13) states:

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

There is one Supreme Eternal amongst all eternals, one Supreme Consciousness among all conscious beings. Although He is one, He fulfils the desires of all.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The soul’s contact with the gross body is called birth, and separation from it is called death. When the soul is situated in the gross body, a person has loving dealings with others. But such ignorant persons, who consider the gross body to be the self, do not realize that the real self is not material, and thus when a soul disappears from a body, they become absorbed in grief.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Parikṣit Mahārāja asked Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, “O *brāhmaṇa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not born to the parents of the other cowherd boys. How was it possible for those parents to have such unparalleled love for Him, a love they did not even have for their own children?” In response to this Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī says, “O King, for all living entities, one’s own self is the most dear. Although objects that are separate from one’s self, such as a son, wealth or a house, are dear to one’s self, they are not as dear as the self itself. The affection one has for them is secondary to the affection one has for one’s own self. In other words, there is a difference between ‘I’ and ‘mine’. The amount of affection a person has for the objects he possesses is not the same as the affection that he has for his own self.”

Those who consider the body to be the self do not feel that anything related to the body, such as a house, a wife or a son, is as dear to them as their own body. And even though a person’s body is the object of his affection, it is not as dear to him as the self, because when the body becomes old, the desire for survival still remains strong. This is due

to one's excessive attachment to one's self. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the very Self of the self, and for that reason He is every soul's most dear object. The world, which is related to Kṛṣṇa, is also dear but not the most dear. Kṛṣṇa is the object of the word 'I', because He is the Soul of all souls. And anything related to Kṛṣṇa, such as the universe, is the object of the word 'mine'. That is why Kṛṣṇa is so dear to the cowherd boys.

The dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5) verifies the above statements. Therein it is said:

*sa hovāca na vā are patyuh kāmāya priyo
bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati na
vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ
bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati*

[The great sage Yājñavalkya is saying to Maitreyī:] No living entity loves another for the other's satisfaction. Only for one's own satisfaction does the husband love his wife, the wife love her husband, the father love his son and the son love his father. A person is dear not for his satisfaction but for the happiness and satisfaction of one's own self.

VERSE 13

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ १३ ॥

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*

dehinaḥ – of the embodied soul; *asmin* – in this; *yathā* – just as; *dehe* – in the body; *kaumāraṁ* – boyhood; *yauvanam* – to youth; *jarā* – to old age; *tathā* – in the same way; *deha-antara* – another body; *prāptiḥ* – achieving; *dhīraḥ* – an intelligent person; *tatra* – in this situation; *na muhyati* – he is not bewildered.

Just as the embodied soul gradually passes within this gross physical body from boyhood to youth and to old age, similarly, the soul receives another body at death. An intelligent person is not bewildered by the destruction and rebirth of the body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following point may be raised: Since the soul is associated with the body, the body will also be an object of our love. Furthermore, those who are related to the body, such as sons, brothers, relatives and grandsons, will also be the objects of our love. When they die, therefore, we will certainly feel grief.

Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *dehinaḥ* in answer to this. “The soul (*ātmā*) within the body attains boyhood; at the end of boyhood he attains youth; and at the end of youth, he enters old age. Similarly, upon losing his body, he attains another body. One does not grieve at the close of boyhood and youth, which are objects of love due to their relationship with the *ātmā*. Therefore, one should not grieve for the loss of the body itself, which is also an object of love due to its relationship with the *ātmā*. If a person laments when he passes from youth into old age, then he also must feel happy when he attains youth at the loss of boyhood. Therefore, you should feel happy, because when Bhīṣma and Droṇa lose their old bodies, they will attain new ones. Or you should consider that just as the body grows and attains various stages, the same *jīva* also attains different types of bodies.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The word *dehī* means ‘the soul’, or *jīva*, which is unchangeable. The body, however, is subject to transformation. Even when the body undergoes changes from boyhood to youth to old age and finally death, the embodied soul does not undergo any change; it remains ever the same. Therefore, it is not proper to lament for the loss of the body. Just as when one advances from boyhood to youth, one feels happiness instead of grief, similarly, after death one attains a new, able and beautiful body. Why, then, should one feel distress? Rather, one should only feel happiness.

King Yayāti became old in his youth because he was cursed by his father-in-law, Śukrācārya. In great distress, he humbly begged forgiveness at the feet of Śukrācārya. To please his daughter, who was married to the king, Śukrācārya gave him the boon that he could exchange his old age for the youth of any of his young sons. His eldest son, Yadu, refused because he wanted to worship the Lord, but his youngest son, Puru, gave his youth and accepted the old age of his father. In this way, Yayāti again became young and enjoyed with

his queens (Devayānī and others). In the company of his sons and grandsons, he considered himself very happy. Finally, however, he understood that all these pleasures were temporary and the cause of unlimited misery. He returned his son's youth to him and went to the forest to perform internal worship (*bhajana*) of Bhagavān (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.18.1-51). Therefore, at the loss of an old, weak and withered body, it is appropriate to feel happy, knowing that a healthy, strong and beautiful new body will soon be obtained.

VERSE 14

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तास्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥

mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāms titikṣasva bhārata

mātrā – of the senses with their objects; *sparśāḥ* – touching; *tu* – only; *kaunteya* – O Arjuna, son of Kuntī; *śīta* – cold; *uṣṇa* – heat; *sukha* – happiness; *duḥkha* – distress; *dāḥ* – they give; *āgama-apāyinaḥ* – come and go; *anityāḥ* – temporary; *tān* – them; *titikṣasva* – you must tolerate; *bhārata* – O Bhārata.

O son of Kuntī, when the senses come in contact with the sense objects, one experiences cold, heat, happiness and distress. Such experiences are flickering and temporary, O Bhārata, and therefore, you must tolerate them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may tell Kṛṣṇa, “What You have said is true. Yet, the senseless mind of an indiscriminate person like me, which is covered by grief and lamentation, is merely a source of misery. And it is not only the mind that produces misery. The senses, such as touch, which experience their respective sense objects through the impressions of the mind, also become a cause of trouble.”

For this reason, Kṛṣṇa says *mātrā*, indicating the sense objects that are accepted by the senses. The experience of such sense objects is called *sparśāḥ*. Śrī Bhagavān explains *śītoṣṇaḥ āgamāpāyinaḥ*.

“Although cool water gives pleasure in the summer, that same water causes distress in the winter. Therefore, knowing the experience of sense objects to be temporary and flickering, one should tolerate them.” To tolerate them is an obligation prescribed in the scriptures. Taking bath is troublesome in the month of Māgha (the winter month of January). In spite of this, one is not supposed to give up the obligatory routine of bathing as enjoined in the scripture. Similarly, those same persons (one’s brother, son, etc.) who give happiness both when they are born and when they earn wealth, give pain at the time of their death. “Knowing such happiness and distress to be temporary and flickering, you should tolerate them. You cannot give up your prescribed duty of fighting in the battle on the plea of having affection for such relatives. It is definitely a cause of great disturbance to give up one’s duty that has been recommended in the scriptures.”

VERSE 15

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥

*yam hi na vyathayanty ete puruṣam puruṣarṣabha
sama-duḥkha-sukham dhīraṁ so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate*

yam – whom; *hi* – indeed; *na vyathayanti* – do not disturb; *ete* – these (contacts of the senses with the sense objects); *puruṣam* – person; *puruṣa-ṛṣabha* – O best among men; *sama* – equiposed; *duḥkha* – in distress; *sukham* – and in happiness; *dhīraṁ* – steadfast, patient; *saḥ* – he; *amṛtatvāya* – for immortality, liberation from birth and death; *kalpate* – is qualified.

O best among men, that sober person who remains undisturbed despite the dualities caused by sense perception, and who considers happiness and distress to be the same, is certainly qualified for liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: If a person properly deliberates on the influence of the sense objects and practises tolerance of them, these sense objects will not be the cause of misery when he experiences them. When the

sense objects are no longer a cause of misery, one will naturally come closer to attaining liberation. Therefore, the verse beginning with *yam hi na* is being spoken. Here the word *amṛtatvāya* means 'liberation'.

VERSE 16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo 'ntas tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ

na – no; *asataḥ* – of the temporary; *vidyate* – there is; *bhāvaḥ* – endurance; *na* – no; *abhāvaḥ* – destruction; *vidyate* – there is; *sataḥ* – of the eternal; *ubhayoḥ* – two; *api* – very; *dṛṣṭaḥ* – observed; *antaḥ* – conclusion; *tu* – indeed; *anayoḥ* – of these; *tattva* – of the truth; *darśibhiḥ* – by the knowers.

Of the temporary, such as winter or summer, there is no permanent existence, and of the eternal, such as the soul, there is no destruction. Those who know the Truth have reached this conclusion by deliberating on what is temporary and what is eternal.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: These words are spoken for persons who cannot yet discriminate. According to the statement, *asaṅgo hy ayam puruṣaḥ*, the soul, or *jīvātmā*, does not have a relationship with either the subtle or the gross body, or with the characteristics of the body such as lamentation and delusion. This is because these relationships are imagined only, due to ignorance. For this reason, the present verse beginning with the word *nāsataḥ* is spoken. The word *asataḥ* means that due to the non-spiritual nature of lamentation and delusion, which appear to be in both the *jīva* (who is spiritual by nature) and his shelter, the gross body, they have no real existence. Similarly, the word *sataḥ* means that the *jīvātmā*, whose nature is eternal (*sat*), is never destroyed. In this way the fundamental principle of *sat* (eternality) and *asat* (temporariness) is understood. “Thus you and Bhīṣma are eternal. Bodily identification, lamentation and delusion do not exist in regard to the imperishable soul, so how can Bhīṣma and the others be annihilated? Knowing that, why should you grieve for them?”

VERSE 17

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७ ॥

*avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
vināśam avyayasyāsyā na kaścit kartum arhati*

avināśi – indestructible; *tu* – indeed; *tat* – that; *viddhi* – know; *yena* – by which; *sarvam* – entire body; *idaṁ* – this; *tatam* – pervaded; *vināśam* – the destruction; *avyayasya* – of the imperishable (soul); *asya* – of; *na kaścit* – no one; *kartum* – to effect; *arhati* – is able.

You should know that which pervades the entire body – the imperishable soul – to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “*Nā bhāvo vidyate sataḥ* – that which is eternal cannot be destroyed.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *avināśi* to clarify this truth. The fundamental nature (*svarūpa*) of the *jīva* is such that it pervades the whole body. One may question how the consciousness of the *jīva*, which only pervades the individual body and is therefore limited in size, cannot be temporary. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “No, it is not so.” There is evidence of this in both the Śrutis and the Smṛtis. The Śrutis state: “*sūkṣmānām apy ahaṁ jīvaḥ* – among subtle objects, I am the *jīva*” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.16.11). The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) also states “*eṣo ’nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo yasmīn prāṇaṁ pañcadhā samviveśa* – the *ātmā* is very minute; it can only be realized in a pure heart. The soul remains situated in the body, separate from the five types of life-air, such as *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna* and *udāna*.” In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) it is said:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate*

One should know that the *jīvātmā* is the size of one ten-thousandth the tip of a hair.

Also the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (5.8) states, “*ārāgra-mātro hy avaro ’pi drṣṭaḥ* – it is seen that the *jīva* has an extremely subtle form.”

The above statements from the Śrutis prove that the individual soul, or *jīvātmā*, is atomic in size; it is very subtle. Just as the entire body can be nourished by applying a potent herb or placing a precious gem on the head or chest, similarly, the *jīvātmā* is able to pervade the entire body, although it is situated in one place. There is no difficulty in reconciling this. Being bound by material designations, the soul enters various species and wanders in different heavens and hells. Dattātreyā has also verified this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.9.20): “*yena saṁsaratē pumān – the jīvātmā wanders throughout the material world.*”

The present verse describes that the *jīvātmā* has the quality of being able to travel to any place. There is nothing irreconcilable about this. The *jīvātmā* is called *avyayaśya*, or eternal. This is also verified in the Śrutis:

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

Kāṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.13)

He is the Supreme Eternal amongst all eternal entities, the Supreme Conscious Being among all conscious beings. Even though He is only one, He performs so many activities and fulfils the desires of all living entities.

If we view this verse from another perspective, we can say that all three – the body, the soul and the Supersoul (Paramātmā) – are seen in all human beings, birds, animals and so forth. The natures of the body and the soul have been explained in the previous verse, *nāsato vidyate bhāvo (Gītā 2.16)*, so what is the nature of the third entity, Paramātmā? To answer this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *avināśī*. The word *tu* is used to indicate a different context. This material world has come into existence only because *māyā* and the *jīvātmā* are by nature fundamentally different from Paramātmā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: There are two indestructible truths. One is the individual, atomic conscious *jīva* and the other is the manifesting source and controller of all *jīvātmās*, namely the Supersoul, or Paramātmā. The same Paramātmā is present as a witness in both inert and conscious objects. The *jīvas* are unlimited in number. An individual *ātmā* exists separately in each gross body. The individual *jīva*

in each body experiences happiness and misery. The Supreme Absolute Truth, the Paramātmā, is situated in the body only as a witness and is not affected by the happiness and distress of the individual *jīva*. In this verse, the nature of the indestructible *jīva* has been described. How is it that the atomic *jīvātmā*, being situated in one part of the body, is experienced throughout the entire body? Śrī Kṛṣṇa is answering this question in the present verse. His statement above is verified by the *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.22) *avirodhaś candanavat*. This means that just as a single drop of sandalwood paste applied to one part of the body cools the whole body, similarly, the *jīvātmā*, situated in one part of the body, is experienced throughout the entire body.

This is also verified in the Smṛtis:

*aṇumātro 'py ayaṁ jīvāḥ sva-dehe vyāpya tiṣṭhati
yathā vyāpya śarīrāṇi hari-candana-vipruṣaḥ*

Just as a drop of sandalwood paste applied to one part of the body gives pleasure to the whole body, similarly, the *jīvātmā*, being situated in one part of the body, pervades the whole body.

If the question is asked, “In which part of the body does the *jīvātmā* reside?” the answer is, “within the heart.” *Hṛdi hy eṣa ātmeti* (*Ṣaṭ-praśnī Śruti*). This is also stated in the *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.24), *gunād vālokavat*. Like light, the *jīvātmā*, by its quality, pervades the whole body. Although the *jīvātmā* is atomic, by its quality of consciousness it pervades the entire body. Just as the sun situated in one part of the sky illuminates the whole universe, similarly, the *jīvātmā* also pervades the whole body. This has been stated by Śrī Bhagavān Himself in the *Gītā* (13.33).

VERSE 18

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

*antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
anāśīno 'prameyasya tasmād yudhyasva bhārata*

anta-vantaḥ – having an end, or being subject to destruction; *ime* – all of these; *dehāḥ* – material bodies; *nityasya* – perpetually (possessing an unchanging

form); *uktāḥ* – are said; *śarīriṇaḥ* – of the embodied soul; *anāśinaḥ* – indestructible; *aprameyasya* – not subject to measurement (by microscope, for example); *tasmāt* – therefore; *yudhyasva* – fight; *bhārata* – O Arjuna.

The material bodies of the soul, who is eternal, indestructible and immeasurable, are known to be perishable. Therefore, O Arjuna, fight.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: To clarify the meaning of *nāsato vidyate bhāvah*, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *antavantaḥ*. The word *śarīriṇaḥ* has been used to describe the embodied *jīva*. *Aprameyasya* means that the *jīvātmā* is very difficult to understand, because he is extremely subtle. *Tasmād yudhyasva* means ‘therefore fight’. Based on these arguments, Kṛṣṇa concludes that it is completely improper to give up one’s prescribed religious duty.

VERSE 19

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९॥

ya enam vetti hantāraṁ yaś cainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyam hanti na hanyate

yaḥ – whoever; *enam* – this (soul); *vetti* – knows; *hantāraṁ* – as the killer; *yaḥ* – who; *ca* – and; *enam* – this soul; *manyate* – considers; *hatam* – as killed; *ubhau tau* – of the two; *na vijānītaḥ* – is not in knowledge; *na* – nor; *ayam* – this soul; *hanti* – kills; *na* – not; *hanyate* – is killed.

He who considers the soul to be either the killer or the killed is ignorant, for the self neither slays nor is slain by anyone.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Kṛṣṇa says, “O friend, Arjuna, you are a soul and therefore you are neither the subject nor the object of the act of killing.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *ya enam*. “One who thinks that the *jīvātmā* kills (e.g. Arjuna kills Bhīṣma), or the *jīvātmā* is killed (Arjuna is killed by Bhīṣma), is

ignorant. Therefore, O friend, why do you fear infamy just because ignorant people will accuse you of killing your superiors?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is instructing Arjuna, “You are a soul, and therefore, you are neither the subject nor the object of the verb ‘to kill.’” Here, He is clearly explaining that Arjuna is not the subject, the killer of heroes such as Bhīṣma who are on the opposite side, nor can he be the object of the killing done by them. Moreover, ignorant people who identify the self with the body consider that the gross body is the subject and object of killing. Kṛṣṇa concludes, “Therefore, becoming fully aware of this truth, give up your identification with the gross body and become situated in the nature of the self. Surrendering unto Me, fearlessly engage in your duty for My pleasure. Do not remain in ignorance about this at all.”

The same concept is also stated in the Śrūtis:

*hantā cen manyate hataṁ hataś cen manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyāte*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.19)

If one who identifies the self with the body thinks that he is killing someone, and if one whose body is being killed concludes that he is killed, then both are ignorant, because the soul neither kills anyone nor is killed.

VERSE 20

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्
नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato ’yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

na jāyate – does not take birth; *mriyate* – die; *vā* – or; *kadācit* – at any time; *na* – nor; *ayam* – this (soul); *bhūtvā* – has come into being; *bhavitā* – will come into being; *vā* – nor; *na* – not; *bhūyaḥ* – repeatedly (accept material bodies); *ajāḥ* – unborn; *nityaḥ* – eternal; *śāśvataḥ* – ever-existing; *ayam* – he; *purāṇaḥ* – primeval; *na hanyate* – he is not killed; *hanyamāne* – is destroyed; *śarīre* – when the body.

The soul neither takes birth nor does he die, nor is he affected by the repeated growth and dwindling of the body. He is unborn, eternal and ever-existing. Though primeval, he remains ever-youthful. When the body is destroyed, the soul is not annihilated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: To establish the eternality of the soul, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with the words *na jāyate mriyate*, in which it is proven that there is never a time when the soul is born or dies. That there was no birth or death for the soul in the past nor will there be in the future is proven by the words *nāyam bhūtvā bhavitā*. Śrī Bhagavān is further explaining by the use of the word *ajāḥ* (unborn) that the soul does not take birth in the past, present or future. Thus He establishes that the *jīva* also existed in the past. The word *śāśvataḥ* means ‘that which is ever-existing and not destroyed in the past, present or future’. Therefore, the *jīvātmā* is eternal. If one still raises a doubt that because the soul exists for a long time, he may be over-powered by old age, Śrī Bhagavān says in response, “No, that is not true, because he is *purāṇaḥ*. This means that although he is primeval, he is ever-fresh and free from the six types of transformations, including birth and death.” If someone then raises the question, “Will the soul not die, even figuratively, at the death of the body?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa answers, “No, the soul has no relationship at all with the body.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The eternal nature of the soul has been established in this verse. He is beyond birth and death, and he is eternal and ever-existing. He is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. Consequently, the soul is devoid of the six types of transformations of the material body: birth, duration of existence,

growth, procreation, diminution and death. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.18) a similar conclusion is given:

*na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścīn nāyaṃ kutaścīn na vibhūva kaścīt
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne career*

[The meaning of this verse is the same as *Gītā* 2.20, but here, the word *vipaścīt*, which means 'one who knows the self', is used.]

Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.25) also verifies this conclusion: *sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmājaro 'maro 'mṛto 'bhayaḥ*. "The *ātmā* is indisputably great, unborn, deathless, free from old age, immortal and fearless."

VERSE 21

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम्।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥२१॥

*vedāvināśīnam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam
katham sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṃ ghātayati hanti kaṃ*

veda – knows; *avināśīnam* – indestructible; *nityam* – eternally; *yaḥ* – who; *enam* – the soul; *ajam* – unborn; *avyayam* – immutable; *katham* – how?; *saḥ* – that; *puruṣaḥ* – person; *pārtha* – O Pārtha (Arjuna); *kaṃ* – whom?; *ghātayati* – cause to kill; *hanti* – can he kill; *kaṃ* – whom?

O Pārtha, how can a person who knows the soul to be eternally birthless, immutable and indestructible kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is answering Arjuna: "O Pārtha, after acquiring this knowledge, you will not be guilty of committing sin even after engaging in battle, and I will also not be guilty of inspiring you to fight." To convey this, the present verse beginning with *vedāvināśīnam* is being spoken. Here the word *nityam* is an adverb. The use of the words *avināśī* (indestructible), *aja* (unborn) and *avyayam* (immutable) refute the conception that the *ātmā* can be slightly diminished by any act of destruction. Śrī Bhagavān says, "When you have attained

such knowledge, how can you think a person like Me could induce someone to kill anyone? In the same way, how can a person like you kill someone or cause someone to be killed?”

VERSE 22

वासोसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

vāsāmsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gr̥hṇāti naro 'parāṇi
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny anyāni samyāti navāni dehī

vāsāmsi – clothes; *jīrṇāni* – old and worn out; *yathā* – just as; *vihāya* – giving up; *navāni* – new ones; *gr̥hṇāti* – accepts; *naraḥ* – a person; *aparāṇi* – other; *tathā* – in the same way; *śarīrāṇi* – bodies; *vihāya* – giving up; *jīrṇāni* – old; *anyāni* – other; *samyāti* – accepts; *navāni* – new ones; *dehī* – the embodied soul, *jīvātmā*.

Just as a person discards his old garments and acquires new ones, the soul similarly gives up old bodies and accepts new ones.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Is there any harm in giving up old clothes to accept new ones? You may say, ‘By fighting against Bhīṣma, You and I will be the cause of the soul named Bhīṣma giving up his body.’ To this I reply that Bhīṣma will simply give up his old and useless body and take a new body. How can you or I be blamed for this?”

VERSE 23

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३ ॥

nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainam kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ

na – not; *enam* – him (the *jīvātmā*); *chindanti* – pierce; *śastrāṇi* – various weapons; *na* – not; *enam* – him; *dahati* – burn; *pāvakaḥ* – fire; *na* – not;

ca – and; *enam* – him; *kledayanti* – moisten; *āpaḥ* – waters; *na* – not; *śoṣayati* – dry; *mārutah* – the wind.

The soul can never be pierced by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water nor dried by the wind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, the weapons used by you in battle cannot cause any pain or misery to the soul.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *nainam*. Here the word *śastrāṇi* means ‘swords, etc.’, *pāvakaḥ* means ‘the fire weapon’, *āpaḥ* ‘the water weapon’ and *mārutah* ‘the air weapon’. “O Arjuna, even if you use all these weapons, they will not cause any pain to the soul.”

VERSES 24-25

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

*acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca
nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo 'yam sanātanaḥ*

*avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate
tasmād evaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitum arhasi*

acchedyaḥ – is indivisible; *ayam* – this (soul); *adāhyaḥ* – cannot be burned; *ayam* – this (soul); *akledyaḥ* – insoluble; *aśoṣyaḥ* – cannot be dried; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *nityaḥ* – eternal; *sarva-gataḥ* – even though he goes everywhere; *sthāṇuḥ* – fixed; *acalaḥ* – immovable; *ayam* – this (soul); *sanātanaḥ* – ever-existing; *avyaktaḥ* – unmanifest; *ayam* – this (soul); *acintyaḥ* – inconceivable (to the mind); *ayam* – this (soul); *avikāryaḥ* – not subject to transformation; *ayam* – this (soul); *ucyate* – it is said; *tasmāt* – therefore; *evaṁ* – in this way; *viditvā* – having understood; *enam* – for this (soul); *na* – not; *anuśocitum* – to lament; *arhasi* – befitting.

The soul is indivisible, insoluble and cannot be burned or dried. He is eternal, all-pervading, permanent, non-moving and ever-existing.

He is unmanifest and inconceivable, and being free from the six types of transformations such as birth and death, he is immutable. After understanding the soul in this way, it is not proper for you to lament.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The soul has been described as indivisible and so forth. The repetition of this indicates the eternality of the soul and removes the doubts of those who are uncertain of its nature. If one says three or four times that there is religion, or *dharma*, in this present age of Kali-yuga, the repetition will lay stress on the fact that, without a doubt, there is indeed *dharma* in Kali-yuga. Similarly, the soul's qualities have been repeated to confirm the eternality of his nature. Here, the word *sarva-gataḥ* (all-pervasive) indicates that due to his own actions, the *jīva* transmigrates through all species of life such as demigods, human beings, animals and birds.

The words *sthānuḥ* (fixed) and *acalaḥ* (immovable) have been repeated in order to give a clear conception of the stable nature of the soul. The soul, or *jīvātmā*, is called *avyaktaḥ* (imperceptible) because he is very subtle. He is called *acintya* (inconceivable, not understood by mundane reasoning) because he pervades the whole body as consciousness. He is called *avikāryaḥ* (immutable) because he is free from the six types of transformations, such as birth and so forth.

VERSE 26

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

atha cainam nitya-jātam nityam vā manyase mṛtam
tathāpi tvam mahā-bāho nainam śocitum arhasi

atha – if however; *ca* – also; *enam* – this (soul); *jātam nityam* – always takes birth; *nityam* – always; *vā* – or; *manyase* – you think; *mṛtam* – dies; *tathāpi* – still; *tvam* – you; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one; *na* – not; *enam* – for this (soul); *śocitum* – grieve; *arhasi* – befitting.

If, however, you think that the soul is perpetually born and perpetually dies, there is still no reason for you to grieve, O mighty-armed one.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “O Arjuna, what I have explained to you so far has been based on scripture, but now I am explaining from the perspective of ordinary experience. Please listen very attentively. If you consider that the birth of the body is eternal, that is, that the self is born perpetually, and if you think that when the body perishes, the soul dies, even then, O mighty-armed Arjuna, as a valiant *kṣatriya*, it is your duty to fight.” In regard to one’s prescribed duty, it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.54.40):

*kṣatriyāṅām ayaṁ dharmāḥ prajāpati-vinirmitaḥ
bhrātāpi bhrātaraṁ hanyād yena ghorataras tataḥ*

According to the religious principles of the *kṣatriyas*, who were created by Lord Brahmā, one brother can even kill another brother. Therefore, *kṣatriya-dharma* is said to be very fearsome.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa ceases to employ scriptural injunctions in His effort to make Arjuna understand and is now making him understand from a common sense point of view. He has told him that if he understands the soul to be eternal, as explained in the Śrutis and other scriptures, then there is no reason for grief. But even from a common sense point of view, there is also no reason to grieve. Atheists like Cārvaka consider the soul to be temporary like the gross body and say that it does not exist after death. Also, according to the philosophy of a certain sect of Buddhists, if one considers the soul to be repeatedly taking birth and dying, there is still no reason to grieve for it.

VERSE 27

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

***jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvam śocitum arhasi***

jātasya – for one who is born; *hi* – because; *dhruvaḥ* – is certain; *mṛtyuḥ* – death; *dhruvam* – is certain; *janma* – birth; *mṛtasya* – for one who dies; *ca* – and; *tasmāt* – therefore; *aparihārye arthe* – in this unavoidable situation; *na* – not; *tvam* – you; *śocitum* – grieve; *arhasi* – should.

For one who is born, death is certain, and for one who has died, birth is certain; therefore, it is not proper for you to grieve for that which is unavoidable.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: When the fruit of a person's previous actions experienced in his present body (*prārabdha-karma*) is exhausted, his death is certain. After death, he will inevitably take birth again so that he can experience the results of the actions performed in his previous body. It is not possible for anyone to escape the inevitability of birth and death.

VERSE 28

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata
avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā*

avyakta-ādīni – unmanifest in the beginning, imperceptible; *bhūtāni* – all beings; *vyakta* – manifest, perceptible; *madhyāni* – in the interim stage; *bhārata* – O Arjuna; *avyakta* – unmanifest, imperceptible; *nidhanāni* – and after death; *eva* – certainly; *tatra* – therefore; *kā* – why?; *paridevanā* – lament.

O Arjuna, all beings are unmanifest before their birth, become manifest in the interim stage – after their birth – and after they die, they once again become unmanifest. So what cause can there be to lament?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this way, having dispelled lamentation in relation to the soul by the verse *na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit* (*Gītā* 2.20),

and in respect to the body by the verse *jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ* (*Gītā* 2.27), Śrī Bhagavān now dispels the cause of lamentation for both the soul and the body by speaking this verse beginning with the word *avyaktaḥ*. Before their birth, demigods, human beings, animals, birds and so on are unmanifest. At that time, the subtle and gross bodies also exist in their causal state in the form of matter, such as earth, but they are in an unmanifest stage. They become manifest in the middle period, and after death they again become unmanifest. In the period of the dissolution and devastation of the universe (*mahā-pralaya*), the soul also remains in his subtle form because his *karma* and his tendency to accept sense objects still exist. Therefore, all *jīvas* remain unmanifest in the beginning, and in the end they again become unmanifest. They only become manifest in the middle period. The Śrutis also state: “*sthira-cara-jātayaḥ syur ajayottha-nimitta-yujaḥ* – All moving and non-moving entities become manifest due to their actions. Therefore, why cry out of grief?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.87.29).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.13.44) Śrī Nārada Muni says:

*yan manyase dhruvaṁ lokam adhruvaṁ vā na cobhayam
sarvathā na hi śocyās te snehād anyatra mohajāt*

Whether you consider the human to be an eternal soul or a temporary body, or whether you consider that due to his indescribability, he is both eternal and temporary, you do not have to lament in any way. There is no cause for lamentation other than the affection that has arisen out of delusion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All living entities arise from the unmanifest stage, remain manifest for some time and again become situated in an unmanifest state. Just to explain this point, the present verse has been spoken. In his explanation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.29) cited in the above commentary, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that, because all *jīvas* are manifest from the Supreme Lord Parameśvara, they are under His control. Parameśvara is beyond material nature and remains detached from it. When He performs His pastime of glancing over the material nature, the *jīvas*, who contain impressions from their previous actions, become manifest in moving and non-moving bodies. Wherever the word *utpanna* (arising) is used, it means ‘to become manifest’.

If one asks how the *jīvas*, being merged in Parameśvara, can take birth, the answer is given that it is by His glance and the inspiration of His will. Past *karma* then becomes active, after which the *jīvātmā* appears along with his subtle body. Then, becoming united with the gross body, the *jīvātmā* takes birth. In other words, when the designations born from the effect of material nature are dissolved, the *jīvas* are considered to have died; and when the *jīvātmā* appears with his past *karma*, impressions, and gross and subtle bodies in various species of life in this material world, he is said to have taken his birth. This is stated in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Śruti*:

*yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā
vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanah
sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve
devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti*

Just as sparks appear from a fire, so the senses (such as the power to speak), the results of action (such as happiness and distress), all the demigods and all the living entities from Lord Brahmā down to the ant appear from Me, Paramātmā.

The great devotee Śrī Yamarāja also says: “*yatrāgatas tatra gataṁ maṇuṣyam* – the living entity goes back to the same unknown place from where he came.”

VERSE 29

आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

*āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam
āścaryavad vadati tathaiiva cānyaḥ
āścaryavac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit*

āścarya-vat – as amazing; *paśyati* – sees; *kaścīd* – some person; *enam* – this (soul); *āścarya-vat* – as amazing; *vadati* – speak of; *tathā* – in the same way; *eva* – indeed; *ca* – also; *anyaḥ* – another; *āścarya-vat* – as amazing;

ca – and; *enam* – of this (soul); *anyaḥ* – others; *śṛṇoti* – hears; *śrutvā* – having heard; *api* – even; *enam* – this (soul); *veda* – understand; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *kaścit* – some people.

Some look upon the soul as amazing, some speak of him as amazing and some hear of him as amazing. Others, however, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “O Arjuna, if you ask what this amazing subject is that I am speaking about, then listen. It is indeed a matter of wonder that even after receiving this knowledge, your wisdom has not been awakened. Your doubt is therefore appropriate.” Only for this reason is this verse beginning with the word *āścarya-vat* being spoken. This whole material world, in the form of the combination of the body and the soul, is indeed a wonder.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Since the truth about the science of the soul is very difficult to understand, the soul itself, the person who instructs about the soul, the instruction itself and the audience are all amazing. In other words, only some very rare, great persons look upon the soul as amazing, and some very rare persons hear about the soul and accept him as amazing. It is even more amazing that most of the audience, even after hearing these instructions from one who knows the Absolute Truth, still cannot realize the soul. This is also explained in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.7):

*śravaṇayāpi bahubhir yo na labhyaḥ śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuh
āścaryo 'sya vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā āścaryo 'sya jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ*

The opportunity to hear instructions about the science of the self (*ātma-tattva*) is very rare. Even after hearing them, most cannot realize the instructions because a master who is self-realized is very rare. If, by great fortune, such a teacher is available, it is rare to find students who are able to understand this topic.

For this reason, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has instructed everyone in this present age of Kali-yuga to perform the congregational chanting of the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*śrī hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*). If even

faithless persons chant the name of Śrī Hari while they are talking, walking, sitting, standing, eating, drinking, crying, laughing or in any other way, they will still benefit from it. Gradually, they will attain the association of pure devotees. By such association they can even attain pure love for Bhagavān, and as a secondary result, they easily attain knowledge on the science of the soul.

*madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (11.234)*

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of all that is auspicious. It is the fully-ripened fruit of the flourishing creeper of the Vedas and it is the embodiment of transcendental knowledge. O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty, even if someone chants the holy name only once, with faith or indifference, he is immediately delivered from this ocean of birth and death.

*sāṅketyaṁ pārihāsyam vā stobham helanam eva vā
vaikuṅṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.2.14)*

One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly (to indicate something else), jokingly, for musical entertainment or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all learned scholars of the scriptures.*

VERSE 30

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत।
तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥३०॥

*dehī nityam avadhyo 'yaṁ dehe sarvasya bhārata
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi*

dehī – the soul; *nityam* – eternal; *avadhyaḥ* – cannot be killed; *ayaṁ* – this; *dehe* – within the body; *sarvasya* – of all beings; *bhārata* – O Bhārata

(Arjuna); *tasmāt* – therefore; *sarvāṇi* – for all; *bhūtāni* – living beings; *na* – not; *tvam* – you; *śocitum* – grieve; *arhasi* – should.

O Arjuna, the eternal soul, who resides within the body of all living beings, can never be slain. Therefore, it is not proper that you grieve for the soul.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may ask, “What should I do and what should I not do? Please instruct me definitively.” Kṛṣṇa would then answer, “Give up your lamentation and fight.” For this purpose, the verse beginning with *dehī* is being spoken.

VERSE 31

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

svadharmam api cāvekṣya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat kṣatriyasya na vidyate

sva-dharmam – your own religious duty; *api* – also; *ca* – and; *avekṣya* – after considering; *na* – not; *vikampitum* – hesitate; *arhasi* – you should; *dharmyāt* – for religious purposes; *hi* – because; *yuddhāt* – than fighting; *śreyaḥ* – auspicious engagement; *anyat* – another; *kṣatriyasya* – for the warrior; *na vidyate* – there does not exist.

Moreover, even after considering your duty as a *kṣatriya*, it is not at all proper for you to hesitate, as there is no more auspicious engagement for a *kṣatriya* than to fight for religious purposes.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Since the soul is indestructible, it is not proper for you to be disturbed by thinking that the soul can be killed. And if you consider your own religious duty, it is also not proper for you to be perturbed.”

VERSE 32

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

***yadṛcchayā copaṇnam svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham idṛśam***

yadṛcchayā – of its own accord; *ca* – and; *upaṇnam* – arrived; *svarga* – to the higher planets; *dvāram* – door; *apāvṛtam* – is a wide open; *sukhinaḥ* – fortunate; *kṣatriyāḥ* – members of the military or reigning order; *pārtha* – O Pārtha (Arjuna); *labhante* – achieve; *yuddham* – a battle; *idṛśam* – like this.

O Pārtha, fortunate are those *kṣatriyas* for whom such an opportunity to fight comes of its own accord. It is just like a wide open door to the heavenly planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “In a religious battle, those who are killed by the conquerors attain more happiness than those who kill them. Therefore, to give more pleasure to Bhīṣma and others than to yourself, you should kill them.” To support this statement, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking the present verse, beginning with the word *yadṛcchayā*. *Yadṛcchayā* means ‘to attain the heavenly planets without performing pious activities, or *karma-yoga*’. *Apāvṛtam* means ‘uncovered’ or ‘unveiled’. In this case it refers to the celestial kingdom, which is unveiled for the fortunate *kṣatriya* who dies in battle.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the *Gītā* (1.36) Arjuna asked, “O Mādhava, what happiness will come from killing our friends and relatives?” In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān is instructing Arjuna that a *kṣatriya*’s religious duty is to fight in battle, which is an open door to the heavenly planets (*Svarga*). “If you win this battle, you will attain great fame and the pleasure of a kingdom. On the other hand, because this is a battle for justice, if you die, you will definitely attain *Svarga*. Even the aggressors and those fighting on the side of irreligion will attain *Svarga* if they are killed in this battle.” The *Smṛtis* state:

*āhaveṣu mitho ’nyonyam jighāmsanto mahī-kṣitāḥ
yuddhamānāḥ paraṁ śaktyā svargam yānty aparān-mukhāḥ*

When *kṣatriya* kings fight one another with great power in battle, without turning their backs, they will certainly enter the heavenly kingdom (at death).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna, “Therefore, it is not proper for you to become averse to this battle, which will be fought for the sake of justice.”

VERSE 33

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३३ ॥

*atha cet tvam imam dharmyam saṅgrāmam na kariṣyasi
tataḥ sva-dharmam kīrtim ca hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi*

atha – on the other hand; *cet* – if; *tvam* – you; *imam* – this; *dharmyam* – religious duty; *saṅgrāmam* – of war; *na* – do not; *kariṣyasi* – perform; *tataḥ* – then; *sva-dharmam* – personal duty; *kīrtim* – fame; *ca* – and; *hitvā* – losing; *pāpam* – sinful reaction; *avāpsyasi* – you will gain.

However, if you do not perform your scripturally prescribed religious duty of fighting this religious battle, you will lose your fame and your *dharma* as a *kṣatriya*. Furthermore, you will simply reap sinful reaction.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the present verse beginning with *atha* and in the following three verses, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the defects in taking the stance of not fighting.

VERSE 34

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ ३४ ॥

*akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te 'avyayām
sambhāvitasya cākīrtir maraṇād atiricyate*

akīrtim – infamy; *ca* – and; *api* – also; *bhūtāni* – all people; *kathayiṣyanti* – will speak; *te* – of your; *avyayām* – unending; *sambhāvitasya* – for an honourable person; *ca* – and; *akīrtiḥ* – dishonour; *marañāt* – than death; *atiricyate* – becomes greater.

People will speak of your infamy for all time. For an honourable person, dishonour is more painful than death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here the word *avyayām* means ‘indestructible’, and *sambhāvitasya* indicates a very honourable or famous person.

VERSE 35

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥

*bhayād raṇād uparatam maṁsyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ
yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam*

bhayāt – out of fear; *raṇāt* – from the battle; *uparatam* – have fled; *maṁsyante* – they will think; *tvām* – you; *mahā-rathāḥ* – the great warriors; *yeṣām* – those for whom; *ca* – and; *tvam* – you; *bahu-mataḥ* – greatly honoured; *bhūtvā* – having been; *yāsyasi* – you will become; *lāghavam* – insignificant.

Great warriors such as Duryodhana will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear. Those who have always honoured you highly will deem you insignificant.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Your opponents are of the opinion, ‘Our enemy Arjuna is extremely valiant.’ If you run away from the battle after being the object of such honour, you will be deemed a coward in their eyes. *Mahārathīs* such as Duryodhana and others will think that you have fled the battlefield out of fear. ‘It must be due to fear, not affection for his relatives, that a *kṣatriya* becomes averse to fighting while on the battlefield.’ They will consider your position only in this way.”

VERSE 36

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

*avācya-vādānś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ
nindantas tava sāmāthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim*

avācya – harsh; *vādān* – words; *ca* – also; *bahūn* – many; *vadiṣyanti* – will speak; *tava* – your; *ahitāḥ* – enemies; *nindantaḥ* – criticizing; *tava* – your; *sāmāthyam* – ability; *tataḥ* – than this; *duḥkha-taram* – more painful; *nu* – indeed; *kim* – what?.

Your enemies will scorn you with many harsh words, while criticizing your ability. O Arjuna, what could be more painful for you than this?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Avācya-vādān* implies the use of harsh words such as ‘eunuch’.

VERSE 37

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

*hato vā prāpsyasi svargam jītvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ*

hataḥ – being killed; *vā* – either; *prāpsyasi* – you will attain; *svargam* – the heavenly planets; *jītvā* – by achieving victory; *vā* – or; *bhokṣyase* – you shall enjoy; *mahīm* – the earthly kingdom; *tasmād* – therefore; *uttiṣṭha* – arise; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *yuddhāya* – for battle; *kṛta-niścayaḥ* – with determination.

O son of Kuntī, if you are killed in the battle, you will attain the heavenly planets, and if you are victorious, you will enjoy this earthly kingdom. Therefore, stand up and fight with determination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Should a question arise in the mind of Arjuna as to why he should engage in battle when it is not certain that he will win, Śrī Bhagavān responds by speaking this verse beginning with *hataḥ*.

VERSE 38

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*

sukha – happiness; *duḥkhe* – and distress; *same kṛtvā* – understanding them to be equal; *lābha-alābhau* – both gain and loss; *jaya-ajayau* – both victory and defeat; *tataḥ* – then (being like this); *yuddhāya* – for fighting; *yujyasva* – be ready; *na* – not; *evam* – in this way; *pāpam* – sinful reaction; *avāpsyasi* – will incur.

Considering happiness and distress, gain and loss, and victory and defeat to be equal, you should prepare to fight. In this way you will not incur any sin.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O Arjuna, fighting is your only duty. You doubt this and think that by fighting you will incur sin, but you should accept My instructions and fight. By doing so, you will not incur sinful reaction. Through victory or defeat you will either gain a kingdom or lose one, and as a consequence, you will experience either happiness or distress. Therefore, O Arjuna, deliberate on this with proper wisdom, and fight, knowing victory and defeat to be equal. You will not incur sin as long as you are endowed with this quality of equanimity.” This subject is also described later in the *Gītā* (५.१०):

lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā

Just as a lotus leaf remains in water but never becomes wet, similarly, though engaged in battle, you will not incur sin.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the *Gītā* (१.३६) Arjuna is thinking, “I will incur sin by killing them.” In speaking this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is refuting Arjuna’s argument as baseless. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “There is a possibility of incurring sin by killing one’s relatives in battle when the battle is fought with attachment to one’s happiness and distress. I am explaining to you the means by which you can

become free from sin. Sin will not touch you if you perform your duty of fighting as per My instructions, considering happiness, distress, gain, loss, victory and defeat as equal.” One becomes sinful, or bound by action (*karma*), if he is attached to the fruits of his action. Therefore, it is certainly necessary to renounce attachment to action. This conclusion has been established in the *Gītā* (5.10):

*brahmany ādhāya karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā*

Those who give up all attachment to work and surrender all the results of their work unto Me, the Supreme Controller, do not become affected by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains untouched by water.

VERSE 39

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥३९॥

*eṣā te 'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tv imāṃ śṛṇu
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandham prahāsyasi*

eṣā – this; *te* – to you; *abhihitā* – explained; *sāṅkhye* – regarding analytical knowledge of matter and spirit; *buddhiḥ* – knowledge; *yoge* – in *bhakti-yoga*; *tu* – but; *imāṃ* – this (knowledge); *śṛṇu* – now hear; *buddhyā* – by knowledge; *yuktaḥ* – connected; *yayā* – by which; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *karma-bandham* – bondage of the material world; *prahāsyasi* – you shall be liberated from.

O son of Pārtha, thus far, I have explained this knowledge of *sāṅkhya-yoga*, but now I will impart to you knowledge pertaining to the science of *bhakti-yoga*, by which you will become freed from bondage to this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: At this point Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Until now I have instructed you in spiritual realization through transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*). I am concluding My instructions on *jñāna-yoga* with this verse beginning with the word *eṣā*. That which properly

illuminates the nature of an object is called *sāṅkhya* (complete knowledge). That intelligence with which you must act has been explained here by the word *eṣā*.

“Now hear about the intelligence required to act for spiritual realization through loving devotion (*bhakti-yoga*).” Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s statement, in which He uses the word *yayā*, explains that when a person is endowed with intelligence related to *bhakti*, he will become freed from bondage to this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is concluding His explanation of *yoga* through the principle of analysis, or *sāṅkhya-yoga*, and is beginning His instructions on *buddhi-yoga*, or *bhakti-yoga*. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura defines *sāṅkhya-yoga* as follows: “*samyak khyāyate prakāśyate vastu tattvam aneneti sāṅkhyam samyaj jñānam* – That which properly illuminates the nature (*tattva*) of an object is called *sāṅkhya-yoga*. *Sāṅkhya-yoga* gives complete knowledge about the *ātmā* (soul) and *anātmā* (inert matter).”

From the verse *na tv evāham* (*Gītā* 2.12) to *dehī nityam* (*Gītā* 2.30), various facets of the science of the soul have been explained, and from *svadharmam api cāveksya* (*Gītā* 2.31) to *sukha-duḥkhe* (*Gītā* 2.38), knowledge of the science of what is not related to the soul, in the form of occupational duty, has been explained. When a person performs selfless action, fixing his intelligence on that which is related to *bhakti*, he becomes free from the bondage of action. In other words, his bondage to the illusory material world is destroyed. This conclusion is verified in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* (1.1):

*īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

Everything moving and non-moving in the entire universe is pervaded and enjoyed by Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller.

All moving and non-moving objects in this world are to be enjoyed only by Parameśvara, the sole enjoyer of this world. The *jīvas* are the servants of Bhagavān. They should engage in service to Him, using this universe as an instrument, and they should maintain their lives by accepting His remnants. The supreme duty of the *jīvas* is to render

loving service to Śrī Bhagavān by using His property, being devoid of a desire to accept that property as the object of their own enjoyment. In this way, the *jīvas* do not become bound by their actions:

*kurvann eveha karmāṇi jijīviṣec chatam samāḥ
evam tvayi nānyatheto 'sti na karma lipyate nare
Śrī Īśopaniṣad (1.2)*

One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of action. There is no alternative to this for man.*

VERSE 40

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥४०॥

*nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*

na – no; *iha* – in this (*bhakti-yoga*); *abhikrama* – endeavours; *nāśaḥ* – destruction; *asti* – there is; *pratyavāyaḥ* – flaw; *na* – no; *vidyate* – there is; *su-ल्पam* – a very little; *api* – even; *asya dharmasya* – of this *yoga*; *trāyate* – delivers; *mahataḥ* – from great; *bhayāt* – danger.

Endeavours on the path of *bhakti-yoga* are neither fruitless, nor do they contain any flaw. Even a little practice frees one from the great danger of transmigrating endlessly within the cycle of repeated birth and death in this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: O Arjuna, *yoga* (*buddhi-yoga*) is of two types: (1) *bhakti-yoga* in the form of hearing and chanting and (2) *bhagavad-arpita-niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, which entails surrendering the fruits of one's selfless actions to Śrī Bhagavān. In the *Gītā* (2.47), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "O Arjuna, you have the qualification to perform action (*karma*) only." Now, before *karma-yoga* is described, *bhakti-yoga* is being delineated. The *Gītā* (2.45) states, "O Arjuna, situate yourself beyond the three modes of material nature." This statement certainly means

that *bhakti* is beyond the three modes, because it is only by *bhakti* that a person can transcend the modes of nature. This is well known from the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Jñāna* and *karma* are described as being in the modes of goodness and passion respectively, which proves that they are not beyond the three modes of nature.

Bhagavad-arpita-niṣkāma-karma-yoga is *bhakti* that is characterized by offering the fruits of one's *karma* (action) to Śrī Bhagavān. It does not allow the *karma* to go in vain, as is the case with the performance of prescribed duty that is not offered to Bhagavān. However, because devotion is not predominant in such activities, they are not accepted as actual *bhakti*. If prescribed duty (*karma*) in which the fruits are offered to Śrī Bhagavān were accepted as *bhakti*, then what would constitute *karma*? If one says that *karma* is only action that is not offered to Śrī Bhagavān, one is not correct. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.12) states that one of the characteristics of *brahma* (the effulgence of Śrī Bhagavān) is that it is inactive (*niṣkarma*). Being identical with the mood of inactivity, it is called *naiṣkarmya*. Knowledge of *brahma* is without any material motivation and faultless, but even that is not praiseworthy because it is devoid of *bhakti*. How, then, can action that is performed with personal desire (*sakāma-karma*) and selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma*), be praiseworthy if they are not offered to Bhagavān, since they are troublesome in both the stages of practice and the final attainment?

According to the above-mentioned statement spoken by Śrī Nārada (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.12), *karma* that is not offered to Śrī Bhagavān is useless. Therefore, only that *bhakti* which is characterized by hearing and chanting has been accepted as the practice to attain the sweetness of the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. Nevertheless, selfless action that is offered to Śrī Bhagavān, or *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, is also worthy of consideration. Both types of *yoga* (*bhakti-yoga* and *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) are to be understood by the word *buddhi-yoga*. This is evident from the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā* such as, "I bestow upon them that *buddhi-yoga* by which they can attain Me," (*Gītā* 10.10) and "O Dhanañjaya, compared to *buddhi-yoga*, action with fruitive desire (*sakāma-karma*) is very insignificant" (*Gītā* 2.49).

Now, this verse beginning with *neha* explains the glory of devotion to Bhagavān that is free from the modes of material nature (*nirgunā-*

bhakti), which is characterized by hearing and chanting. Śrī Bhagavān says, “The benefit that comes from practising even the initial steps of *bhakti-yoga* can never be destroyed, and thus it does not have the fault of becoming lost. Conversely, if a person starts to perform *karma-yoga* but does not complete it, the result of whatever *karma* he has performed is lost, and fault is incurred.”

The question may be raised, “Can the result of *bhakti* be attained by those who desire to follow the process but are unable to perform it properly?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa responds with *svalpam*, which means that even if their practice of *bhakti* has only just begun, the result is never lost and one will be delivered from this material world. The life histories of Ajāmila and others are evidence of this. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.16.44) also states that just by once hearing Śrī Bhagavān’s name, even a low class dog-eater is freed from the great fear caused by material existence. Moreover, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.20), it is stated:

*na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyañ nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ*

O Uddhava, because I have personally determined the transcendental nature of this *dharma*, even if one improperly performs selfless action performed for pure *bhakti*, in the form of hearing and chanting, there is no possibility of the slightest loss.

The purport of these statements of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* seems to be the same, but the above statement of *Bhāgavatam* has a special characteristic. If an object is transcendental, it is never destroyed. This is the only point worthy of deliberation in this context. One may argue that selfless action offered to Śrī Bhagavān can also become transcendental to the modes of nature by His grace, but this is not a fact. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.23) gives evidence of this: “Obligatory and occasional duties (*nitya* and *naimittika karma*) that are performed without any fruitive desire and offered to Me are considered to be in the mode of goodness.” In other words, they are not transcendental to the three modes of material nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, *buddhi-yoga* is described as being of two types. The first is *bhakti-yoga* in the form of hearing and

chanting, and the second is *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* wherein the results of *karma* are offered to Śrī Bhagavān without motive. Of these two, the first is primary *bhakti-yoga* and the second is secondary *bhakti-yoga*. In fact, *bhakti-yoga* is completely transcendental to the modes of nature. No irregularities, faults or unwanted reactions can occur in the beginning of one's practice nor in the course of one's practice, even if for some reason one is unable to complete it. Rather, a little performance of *bhakti-yoga* delivers the practitioner from the terrible dangers of the material world and makes his life successful by giving him the service of Śrī Bhagavān.

The following example can be cited. Because Bharata Mahārāja became attached to a deer, he was not able to complete the full process of *bhakti*. Although in his next birth he took the body of a deer, the influence of his previous life's performance of *bhakti* enabled him to associate with pure devotees of Bhagavān. Taking birth again, he became the highest class of devotee, an *uttama-bhāgavata*, and performed service to Śrī Bhagavān. Therefore, Bhagavān says in the *Gītā* (6.40), “*pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate* – a person who has fallen from the path of *bhakti* is never lost in this world or in the next, nor does he ever obtain a miserable condition.”

On the other hand, in *bhagavad-arpita-niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, even if the fruits of one's actions are offered to Bhagavān, they are still referred to as *karma-yoga*, not *bhakti-yoga*. By first performing *karma-yoga*, the heart becomes purified and eventually one attains *bhakti-yoga*. Therefore, this *karma-yoga* only aims at *bhakti* indirectly, from far away. Unlike pure *bhakti*, *karma-yoga* is not transcendental, nor is it free from material contamination. Rather, it is called *karma* in the mode of goodness. Moreover, if a person does not perform this *karma* perfectly or if he does not complete his practice, it may become lost and he will incur some unwanted reactions. However, as stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.23): *mad-arpaṇam niṣphalam vā sāttvikam nija-karma tat*. If a practitioner of *bhakti* begins to perform this *bhakti-yoga* even slightly but leaves the path due to his own incapability, or if his practices cease due to his sudden, untimely death while he is in either the beginning or intermediate stage, his endeavours in *bhakti* will never go in vain. In other words, his endeavours do not become

faulty nor does he incur any sin, even if he is unable to complete the process. In his next life, the practitioner will continue from that same point from where his performance of *bhakti-yoga* was obstructed. The presiding deity of *bhakti-yoga*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa or Bhakti-devī herself, makes all these arrangements. In this context, there is one important point to note. If a practitioner has faith, but due to ignorance there are some irregularities in his performance, the results of *bhakti-yoga* will never be lost nor does he incur sin. However, if someone offends the spiritual master, the Vaiṣṇavas or anything that belongs to Śrī Bhagavān or is related to Him, such as Tulasī, Yamunā or the holy *dhāma*, that person's *bhakti-yoga* can be completely ruined.

VERSE 41

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-sākhā hy anantāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām

vyavasāya-ātmikā – of a resolute nature; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *ekā* – one-pointed; *iha* – on this path of *bhakti*; *kuru-nandana* – O child of the Kurus; *bahu-sākhāḥ* – many-branched; *hi* – certainly; *anantāḥ* – endlessly; *ca* – and; *buddhayaḥ* – the intelligence; *avyavasāyinām* – of the irresolute (opposed to *bhakti*).

O son of the Kuru dynasty, the resolute intelligence of those who are on this path of *bhakti* is one-pointed, but the intelligence of those who are averse to *bhakti* branches endlessly.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Of all types of intelligence, intelligence that is aimed at *bhakti-yoga* is supreme. Bhagavān explains this by speaking the above verse beginning with *vyavasāya*: “Resolute intelligence in *bhakti-yoga* is one-pointed.” He describes the mood of one who possesses such intelligence as follows: “The instructions that my *gurudeva* has given me about *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda-sevanam*, etc. of Śrī Bhagavān are my spiritual practice, my perfection

and my very life. I am unable to relinquish them in either the stage of practice (*sādhana*) or in the stage of perfection (*sādhya*). My single desire and only engagement is to follow those instructions. Besides this, I have no other desire or engagement, even in my dreams. There is no loss for me, whether I attain happiness or misery by following them, or whether my material life is destroyed or not.” This type of resolute intelligence is possible only in pure *bhakti*, which is free from hypocrisy and cheating. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.28):

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ / śraddhātur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ

Knowing that all perfection is achieved through *bhakti* alone, a man of resolute faith will perform *bhajana* of Me, with devotion.

Only by *bhakti* can intelligence become one-pointed. Śrī Bhagavān elaborates on this by referring to that which has many branches (*bahu-sākhāḥ*). Because there are unlimited desires in *karma-yoga*, the intelligence that is applied to it is also of unlimited types. Similarly, because in *karma-yoga* there are unlimited varieties of *sādhana*, or practices, it has unlimited branches. In the initial stage of *jñāna-yoga*, one fixes one’s intelligence in selfless action, to purify the heart. When the heart is purified, the practitioner fixes his intelligence in the renunciation of fruitive action, or *karma-sannyāsa*. Having attained this stage, one then fixes one’s intelligence in knowledge, or *jñāna*. When one realizes that even *jñāna* is unsuccessful and unable to grant service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, one fixes one’s intelligence in *bhakti*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.1) it is said, “*jñānam ca mayi sannyaset – jñāna* must also be offered to Me.”

According to the above statement of Śrī Bhagavān, after attaining the stage of *jñāna*, one has to fix one’s intelligence in the renunciation of *jñāna*. Therefore, intelligence is of unlimited varieties. Since *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* all ought to be performed, their branches are also unlimited.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Of the three types of *buddhi-yoga – karma, jñāna* and *bhakti* – only that intelligence (*buddhi*) which is related to pure *bhakti-yoga* is supreme. The exclusive aim and object of the primary form of *bhakti-yoga* is Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that intelligence which is related only to Him is called *aikāntikī*

or *ananyā* (one-pointed or exclusive). The practitioners of such exclusive devotion are free from the desires for mundane enjoyment and liberation; thus they are non-duplicitous and their intelligence resolute. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.28) as follows: “They resolutely think, ‘Even if there are millions of obstacles in the performance of my *bhajana*, even if I lose my life, if I have to go to hell because of offences or if lust overpowers me, I can never give up *bhakti*, whatever the circumstance may be. I will not perform *jñāna* and *karma*, even if Lord Brahmā himself orders me to. Under no circumstances can I give up *bhakti*.’ Only this type of determination can be called unflinching, or *niścayātmikā buddhi*.”

Due to lack of such exclusive *niṣṭhā* in Bhagavān, a person’s intelligence remains engaged in *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. His intelligence is called many-branched because of a variety of aims and objectives, such as the pleasures in this world or the next that are related to profit (*lābha*), adoration (*pūjā*) and distinction (*pratiṣṭhā*). His intelligence is filled with unlimited desires.

According to the Vaiṣṇava spiritual masters, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the non-dual, original, Supreme Absolute Reality. He is called *nirguṇa* due to His being simultaneously beyond the material qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance and also endowed with all transcendental qualities such as opulence, sweetness, compassion and affection for His devotees. However, modern people who are uneducated and bereft of *tattva-jñāna* and whose intelligence is covered by illusion consider *brahma*, the Absolute Truth, to be without transformations (*nirvikāra*), without variety (*nirviśeṣa*) and untainted (*nirañjana*). They accept Him as being beyond the modes of nature, in a mundane sense only.

They consider the pastime incarnations (*līlā-avatāras*) of the Lord to be the impersonal *brahma* but covered by *māyā*, and that His form and His qualities such as compassion are illusory and therefore material like their own. They say that by worshipping *brahma* endowed with material qualities (*saguṇa-brahma*), their hearts will gradually become purified and they will become one with the impersonal *brahma* devoid of material qualities (*nirguṇa-brahma*).

The establishment of such conclusions is as useless as trying to strike the sky, because scriptures such as the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which describe

the transcendental form and characteristics of Śrī Bhagavān, refute this despicable concept in every regard. Therefore, pure devotion to the transcendental Absolute Reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is endowed with all transcendental qualities, is called *nirguṇā-bhakti*. In Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.11), he explains *nirguṇā-bhakti* to be of one kind only, one-pointed (*aikāntika*). Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.7–10) that because *sakāma-bhakti* is performed with various material desires, it has unlimited branches such as *tāmasika-sakāma-bhakti*, or materially motivated devotion mixed with the material mode of ignorance.

VERSE 42

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥४२॥

yām imām puṣpitām vācam pravadanty avipaścitaḥ
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinaḥ

yām imām – all these; *puṣpitām* – flowery; *vācam* – statements; *pravadanti* – proclaim; *avipaścitaḥ* – the foolish; *veda-vāda-ratāḥ* – attached to the statements of the Vedas; *pārtha* – O Pārtha; *na anyat* – no other (superior principle); *asti* – there is; *iti* – thus; *vādinaḥ* – they say.

O Pārtha, those who are foolish reject the real meanings of the Vedas out of attachment to ornamental statements that glorify the pursuit of celestial pleasures but which yield only poisonous effects. There is no higher truth, they say, than these proclamations.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Irresolute persons with material desires are extremely dull-witted. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yām imām*. The phrase *puṣpitām vācaḥ* implies that these statements of the Vedas are only temporarily pleasing, just like flowery creepers that are poisonous. *Pravadanti* refers to those who accept such Vedic statements as the summum bonum. Those whose hearts have been captivated by such statements have

no resolute intelligence. This verse is in natural sequence with *Gītā* 2.44 (*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām*). It is impossible for such people to have resolute intelligence, so this instruction is not given for them. What to speak of being devoid of resolute intelligence, Śrī Bhagavān even says that they are fools (*avipaścitaḥ*). This is because they accept as the ultimate objective of the Vedas the declaration of flowery statements such as, “By performing the *cāturmāsya-vrata* (a four month period of austerities) one will attain imperishable results” or “After drinking celestial nectar (*soma-rasa*) one becomes immortal.” They also speculate that beyond this there is no such thing as a Supreme Controller.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The prime objective established in the Vedas is the original Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and *prema-bhakti* to Him. If one does not understand this, one’s intelligence will be inappropriately placed in the exterior meanings of the Vedas, which initially appear very attractive and sweet to the ear but which ultimately deliver a fearsome result. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has further clarified this later in the *Gītā* (2.45) by stating that the Vedas deal mostly with materialistic topics, *traigunya-viṣayā vedāḥ*. Also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.47) one is warned to be careful of the assertions of the Vedas:

*tasmāt karmasu barhiṣmann ajñānād artha-kāśiṣu
mārtha-dṛṣṭim kṛthāḥ śrotra sparśiṣv asprṣṭa-vastuṣu*

O King Prācīnabarhiṣat, only out of ignorance do the ritualistic activities mentioned in the Vedas appear as the ultimate objective. Though their accounts are alluring to the ear, in fact they are devoid of any connection with the Absolute Truth. Therefore, disregard them.

VERSE 43

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपराः जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ ४३ ॥

***kāmātmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulām bhogaiśvarya-gatim prati***

kāma-ātmānaḥ – those whose hearts are polluted with lust; *svarga-parāḥ* – desirous of entering heaven; *janma-karma-phala* – good birth and fruitive results; *pradām* – awarding; *kriyā-viśeṣa* – elaborate Vedic rituals; *bahulām* – many; *bhoga* – sense enjoyment; *aiśvarya* – opulence; *gatim* – the goal; *prati* – towards.

Dedicated to attaining the heavenly planets, those whose hearts are contaminated by lust perform many elaborate sacrificial rituals that bestow aristocratic birth and award the results of their fruitive activities. They declare these to be the highest objective of the Vedas.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: What type of statements do these people follow? In response, it is said that such people follow those statements which discuss in detail the increased performance of the various practices by which they will attain material enjoyment and wealth; even though such activities result in repeated birth within the cycle of fruitive work.

VERSE 44

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥४४॥

*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate*

bhoga – to material enjoyment; *aiśvarya* – and opulence; *prasaktānām* – for those who are attached; *tayā* – by that (the statements of the Vedas); *apahṛta-cetasām* – for those whose minds are captivated; *vyavasāyātmikā* – the resolute; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *samādhau* – in trance (on the Supreme Lord); *na vidhīyate* – there does not take place.

Those who are attached to enjoyment and opulence, and whose minds have been captured by these flowery words, do not attain the resolute intelligence for exclusive absorption (*samādhi*) in Śrī Bhagavān.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those whose minds have been captivated by such flowery statements become attached to material enjoyment and opulence. Such persons are unable to place their intelligence in a resolute, or concentrated, manner upon the Supreme Controller, and thus they are unable to attain *samādhi*.

VERSE 45

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ ४५ ॥

traiguṇya-viṣayā vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho niryoga-kṣema ātmavān

traiguṇya – of the three modes of material nature; *viṣayāḥ* – subject matter; *vedāḥ* – all the Vedas; *nistraiguṇyaḥ* – free from the three modes; *bhava* – be; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *nirdvandvaḥ* – be free from duality (in the form of mundane honour and dishonour); *nitya-sattva-sthaḥ* – situated always in pure goodness; *niryoga-kṣemaḥ* – detached from the tendency to preserve and acquire; *ātma-vān* – situated in the self (being connected through the intelligence given by Me).

O Arjuna, give up being influenced by the three binding forces of material nature that are described in the Vedas and become established in transcendence, which is beyond them. Be free from all dualities, such as honour and dishonour, and do not be concerned about acquiring assets or maintaining what you have. Become situated in spiritual existence by using the intelligence awarded by Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Becoming detached from the means to attain the four materialistic pursuits of religiosity (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*), take exclusive shelter of *bhakti-yoga*.” With this intention Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *traiguṇya*, because the Vedas predominantly illuminate the subject matters of *karma*, *jñāna*, etc., which are composed of the three modes of material nature, otherwise called the *guṇas*. The meaning of the word *traiguṇya* is formed by adding the suffix *ṣyañ*.

Since, in the Vedas, there are excessive descriptions of *karma* and *jñāna*, according to the logic of *bhūmnā-vyapadeśā-bhavanti*, wherein the title of a work is based on what is prominent in its composition, the Vedas are called *traiguṇya* (pertaining to the three modes of nature). Only *bhakti*, however, can take one to Śrī Bhagavān. This is the verdict of the *Māthara Śruti*. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* states: “*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau* – the meaning of the Vedas can only be revealed to one who has the same transcendental devotion to both Śrī Bhagavān and to one’s spiritual master.”

Devotion that is free from the contamination of material nature is the only subject matter of the Smṛtis, such as the Pañcarātra and the Upaniṣads. This includes the *Gītopaniṣad (Bhagavad-gītā)* and the *Gopālātāpanī Upaniṣad*. If it were accepted that *bhakti* is not described in the Vedas, *bhakti* would become unauthoritative. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa directs Arjuna to become free from the Vedic injunctions promoting *jñāna* and *karma*, which are under the influence of the modes of material nature. He tells him not to perform them but to always follow the process for achieving *bhakti* as stated in the Vedas. It is mentioned in *Brahma-yāmala Purāṇa*, “The pretentious display of exclusive devotion to Śrī Hari, in which the process of *pañcarātra* (ritualistic worship) recommended in scriptures such as the Śrutis, the Smṛtis and the Purāṇas is neglected, results only in eventual disturbance.” This mistake or fault is inexcusable.

Those subject matters of the Vedas that pertain to the modes of material nature (*saguṇa*) and those that are beyond the modes of material nature (*guṇātīta*) are called respectively *traiguṇya* (within the three *guṇas*) and *nistraiguṇya* (free from the three *guṇas*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Of the two, pursue only *nistraiguṇya*. Become free from the three *guṇas* by the influence of My *nirguṇā-bhakti*. Only then will you become free from dualities such as honour and dishonour. Therefore, remain exclusively in the association of My devotees who are always situated in eternal transcendence.”

Here, the explanation of how to become situated in pure transcendence (*viśuddha-sattva-guṇa*) will contradict the explanation on becoming free from the three modes of material nature. To achieve that which is lacking is called *yoga*, and to protect that which one possesses is called *kṣema*. By the word *niryoga-kṣema*, Śrī Bhagavān is telling Arjuna to become free from the concern for both *yoga* and *kṣema*. “Upon

becoming overpowered by a taste for My *bhakti-rasa*, achieving both that which is lacking (*yoga*) and protecting that which one possesses (*kṣema*) will not be a cause for concern.” Śrī Bhagavān states in the *Gītā* (9.22), “I personally carry what My devotee lacks and I preserve what he has.” He is displaying His affection for His devotees by stating, “Because I carry the burden of their maintenance, there is no need for them to separately endeavour for it.” *Ātmavān* means ‘become a person endowed with intelligence granted by Me’.

Now the words *nistraiguṇya* and *traiguṇya* are being discussed. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.23–29) it is said:

mad-arpaṇam niṣphalam vā sāttvikam nija-karma tat
rājasam phala-saṅkalpam himsā-prāyādi-tāmasam
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.23)

Know that action offered to Śrī Bhagavān without the desire to enjoy the fruits (*niṣkāma-karma*) is in the mode of goodness. That action which is performed with a desire for the fruit is in the mode of passion, while action performed with violence or envy is in the mode of ignorance.

In the above verse (11.25.23) *niṣphalam vā* implies that occasional duties (*naimittika-karma*) are performed without fruitive desires.

kaivalyam sāttvikam jñānam rajo vaikalpikam ca yat
prākṛtam tāmasam jñānam man-niṣṭham nirguṇam smṛtam
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.24)

Knowledge related to the self, which is beyond the conception of the body, is knowledge in the mode of goodness. Knowledge related to the body, which, through the false conception of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, one considers oneself to be the doer and the enjoyer, is in the mode of passion. Knowledge of inert matter, the mundane world or the body is in the mode of ignorance, while knowledge related to Me is transcendental, beyond the modes of material nature.

vanam tu sāttviko vāso grāmo rājasa ucyate
tāmasam dyūta-sadanam man-niketaṁ tu nirguṇam
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.25)

To live in the forest is in the mode of goodness, to live in the village is in the mode of passion, to live in a gambling house is in the mode of ignorance and to live where I live (the temple) is transcendental, beyond the modes of nature.

*sāttvikāḥ kārako 'saṅgī rāgāndho rājasāḥ smṛtaḥ
tāmasāḥ smṛti-vibhraṣṭo nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.26)

The doer who is not attached to the result of his action is in the mode of goodness, the doer who is blinded by attachment is in the mode of passion, the doer who has lost his memory is in the mode of ignorance, and the doer who has taken complete shelter of Me is transcendental.

*sāttviky ādhyātmikī śraddhā karma-śraddhā tu rājasi
tāmasy adharme yā śraddhā mat-sevāyām tu nirguṇā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.27)

Faith related to the self is in the mode of goodness, faith related to action is in the mode of passion, faith related to irreligious activities is in the mode of ignorance, and faith related to My service is transcendental.

*pathyaṁ pūtam anāyas tam āhāryaṁ sāttvikāṁ smṛtam
rājasam cendriya-preṣṭham tāmasam cārtidāśuci*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.28)

Food that is wholesome, pure and easily available is in the mode of goodness, food that is pungent, sour and gives pleasure to the senses, is in the mode of passion. Food that is impure and the cause of misery is in the mode of ignorance, and that food that is offered to Me is transcendental.

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, the word *ca* in this verse (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.25.28) means 'that which is offered to Śrī Bhagavān is transcendental, or *nirguṇa*'.

*sāttvikam sukham ātmottham viṣayottham tu rājasam
tāmasam moha-dānyottham nirguṇam mad-apāśrayam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.29)

Happiness that comes from the self is in the mode of goodness, happiness that comes from sense objects is in the mode of passion, happiness that comes from delusion and depravity is in the mode of ignorance, and happiness that comes in relation to Me is transcendental.

After explaining objects that exemplify the three modes of material nature, in the above-mentioned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses (11.25.23–29), Śrī Bhagavān further explains how to attain perfection in realizing the nature of an object that is beyond the three *guṇas*. He says that only by performing *bhakti* that is beyond the modes of material nature (*nirguṇā-bhakti*) can one conquer the influence of the modes, or *guṇas*, that exist within oneself. This is stated in the following verses:

*dravyam deśaḥ phalaṁ kālo jñānam karma ca kārakaḥ
śraddhāvasthāḥkṛtir niṣṭhā traigunyaḥ sarva eva hi*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.30)

Everything material, such as the substance, place, results, time, knowledge, action, the agent, faith, situation, form and determination, are all within the jurisdiction of the three modes of material nature.

*sarve guṇamayā bhāvāḥ puruṣavyakta-dhiṣṭhitāḥ
dṛṣṭam śrutam anudhyātam buddhyā vā puruṣarśabha*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.31)

O best of human beings, whatever states of being that are heard, seen or conceived of that exist between the *puruṣa* (the enjoying self) and *prakṛti* (material nature) are comprised of the three modes of nature.

*etāḥ saṁsṛtayaḥ puṁso guṇa-karma-nibandhanāḥ
yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇā jīvena citta-jāḥ
bhakti-yogena man-niṣṭho mad-bhāvāya prapadyate*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.32)

O gentle one, all the material conditions of the living entity are born from action performed in the three modes of nature. Only those living entities who, by practising *bhakti-yoga*, have conquered

these modes become endowed with *niṣṭhā*, or steadiness of mind, and are able to attain Me.

Therefore, only by *bhakti* that is beyond the modes of nature can one conquer the three modes of nature. This is not possible by any other means. In response to the question asked in the *Gītā* (14.21) “*katham caitāms trīn guṇān ativartate* – how can one conquer the three modes of material nature?” it is later said in the *Gītā* (14.26):

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

Only those who render service to Me with one-pointed devotion can transcend the three modes of nature and become qualified to realize transcendence.

In his commentary on this verse (*Gītā* 14.26) Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “*Ca* is emphatic. That is, those who exclusively perform unblemished and unflinching devotional service to Me, the Supreme controller, or Parameśvara, can conquer the modes of material nature.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The four materialistic pursuits of religiosity (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) are called *catur-varga* (the four goals of human life). *Bhakti* is the fifth goal. Although the Vedic scriptures have described the paths of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* as various practices for the *jīvas*, one can only attain Śrī Bhagavān by giving up all other paths and engaging exclusively in pure devotion. This is also made clear by studying the following two verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.21)*

I can only be attained through *bhakti* that is performed with full faith. I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the exclusive goal of their devotional practices. Even the dog-eaters can purify themselves of their lower birth and ultimately attain Me by performing devotional service to Me.

*na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharmā uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.20)

O Uddhava, *yoga*, analytical philosophy, study of the Vedas, performance of difficult austerities and charity cannot control Me as does exclusive devotion to Me.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “The scriptures contain two types of subjects: *uddiṣṭa* and *nirdiṣṭa*. The highest goal of a scripture is called *uddiṣṭa-viṣaya*, and the instructions that indicate the *uddiṣṭa-viṣaya* are called *nirdiṣṭa-viṣaya*. For example, because the Arundhatī star is so dim, it is very difficult to be seen in the sky without assistance. If someone’s objective is to see it, his indicator will be the biggest star closest to it. So if Arundhatī is the subject, the *uddiṣṭa-viṣaya*, then the biggest star closest to it is the *nirdiṣṭa-viṣaya*. All the Vedas indicate that the Absolute Reality beyond the three modes (*nirguṇa-tattva*) is the subject matter of the Vedas, it is the *uddiṣṭa-viṣaya*. But because that Absolute Reality cannot be understood immediately, the Vedas first describe *saguṇa-tattva*, which is the *nirdiṣṭa-viṣaya*.

“*Māyā*, consisting of the three modes of nature, namely, goodness, passion and ignorance, initially appears to be the subject matter of the Vedas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa therefore says, ‘O Arjuna, do not remain entangled in this *nirdiṣṭa-viṣaya*. Rather, attain the transcendental entity, or that which has been indicated to be the real subject matter of the Vedas, the *uddiṣṭa-tattva*, and become free from the modes of nature. Some parts of the Vedic literatures have prescribed *karma* based on the modes of passion and ignorance. Other parts prescribe knowledge based on the mode of goodness, and specific parts explain the practice of pure *bhakti*, which is free from the modes. You should attain pure spiritual existence by becoming free from dualities such as honour and dishonour. In other words, by associating with My devotees, renounce the endeavour for acquisition (*yoga*) and preservation (*kṣema*) sought after by the processes of acquiring knowledge and performing prescribed duties, become free from the modes of nature by the process of *buddhi-yoga*.’”

VERSE 46

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ ४६ ॥

*yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ*

yāvān – whatever; *arthaḥ* – purpose; *uda-pāne* – by (many) wells; *sarvataḥ* – in all respects; *sampluta-udake* – served by a large lake; *tāvān* – that many (purposes); *sarveṣu* – within all; *vedeṣu* – the Vedas; *brāhmaṇasya* – of the devotee *brāhmaṇa*; *vijānataḥ* – who has knowledge (of the Vedas).

The various necessities served by many small wells can easily be served by a large lake. Similarly, whatever results are attained by the worship of various demigods, as described in the Vedas, can easily be attained through the worship of Śrī Bhagavān by a *brāhmaṇa* endowed with devotion who knows the essence of the Vedas.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa continues, “Oh, what more can I say about the glories of that *bhakti-yoga*, which is free from both material desires and the modes of material nature! Even initial endeavours in *bhakti* are neither lost nor adverse in their effect.” Also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.20), Śrī Kṛṣṇa has told Uddhava:

*na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyaṅ nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ*

O Uddhava, because I have personally determined the transcendental nature of this process, even if selfless action performed for pure *bhakti* in the form of hearing and chanting is improperly performed, there is no possibility of the slightest loss.

However, in this context, resolute intelligence, or *vyavasāyatmika-buddhi*, also indicates devotion performed with material desires (*sakāma-bhakti-yoga*). To prove this, Śrī Bhagavān uses an example when He speaks the verse beginning with *yāvān*. Since *udapāne* is a singular noun, it has been used in a similar case. Here, the word *udapāne* indicates a group of wells. Many purposes are fulfilled by

different wells. One well is used for cleaning after evacuation, one for brushing teeth, one for washing cloth, one for cleaning hair, one for bathing and one for drinking water. The different purposes fulfilled by various wells can all be fulfilled by a large reservoir of water. It is laborious to go to different wells for various purposes, but it takes no labour to go to one reservoir. Moreover, a small well often has salty water, but water from a large lake is sweet. One should deliberate on this difference between a well and a lake. Similarly, the different fruits one attains through worshipping various demigods by the procedures described in the Vedas can all be attained simply by worshipping Śrī Bhagavān. The word *brāhmaṇasya* means ‘those who know *brahma* (Veda)’. Only a *brāhmaṇa* knows the Vedas, but beyond Vedic knowledge is the knowledge of the real *brāhmaṇas*, who specifically know *bhakti* as the ultimate meaning of the Vedas. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.2) also states:

*brahma-varcasa-kāmas tu yajeta brahmaṇaḥ patim
indram indriya-kāmas tu prajā-kāmaḥ prajāpatin*

A person desiring the *brahma* effulgence should worship Brahmā, the master of the Vedas. A person desiring satisfaction of the senses should worship Indra. A person desiring progeny should worship the Prajāpatīs, while a person desiring wealth should worship Durgā.

After this it is said:

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tivreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.3.10)

Whether one is free from desires, full of desires or desirous of liberation, one should, having attained a higher intelligence, worship the Supreme Personality Śrī Bhagavān, with intense *bhakti-yoga*.

Just as the rays of the sun are very intense when the sky is free from clouds, similarly, *bhakti-yoga*, which is devoid of *jñāna* and *karma*, is also very intense. One’s intelligence becomes many-branched by worshipping a number of demigods to fulfil various desires. Only Śrī

Bhagavān, however, can fulfil all of one's desires. When even a particle of such intelligence is engaged in worship, it is considered to be one-pointed because of the superlative nature of the object of worship.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: The various activities that can be performed by the use of separate wells can all be performed by using a large reservoir of water, such as a lake. Similarly, the various desires that can be fulfilled by worshipping many different demigods, according to the Vedic directives, can all be fulfilled simply by worshipping Bhagavān. If the heart is filled with many material desires, various demigods are worshipped to fulfil those desires. The resulting intelligence, which is many-branched, is known as *avyavasāyātmikā-buddhi*. In contrast to this, the one-pointed worship of Śrī Bhagavān is only achieved by focused, resolute intelligence. For this reason, those who know the Vedas explain *bhakti* to be the sole essence of the Vedas. Therefore, one's intelligence is only resolute in *bhakti-yoga*.

VERSE 47

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgaḥ 'stv akarmaṇi

karmaṇi – your prescribed duty; *eva* – certainly; *adhikāraḥ* – a right; *te* – your; *mā* – never; *phaleṣu* – to the fruits (of work); *kadācana* – at any time; *mā* – not; *karma-phala* – towards the results of work; *hetuḥ* – cause; *bhūḥ* – be; *mā* – not; *te* – you; *saṅgaḥ* – attachment; *astu* – there must be; *akarmaṇi* – not accomplishing prescribed duties.

You are only eligible to perform your prescribed work, but you have no right to the fruits of your actions. You should not consider yourself to be the cause of the result of your actions, nor should you become attached to neglecting your duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is the instructor of *jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge;

bhakti-yoga, the path of loving devotion; and *karma-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement where the fruit of one's pious action is offered to the Lord. So far, He has directed His instructions about *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* to His dear friend Arjuna. Now, having considered Arjuna's ineligibility to perform these two processes, He explains selfless action, or *niškāma-karma-yoga*, in two verses, the first beginning with *karmaṇi*.

By the words *mā phaleṣu*, Kṛṣṇa intends to say that those who desire the fruits of their actions have extremely impure hearts. "Your heart, however, is almost pure. I know this, and that is why I am speaking in this way." If one points out that any action one performs will bear fruit, Śrī Bhagavān responds "*mā karma-phala-hetur bhūḥ* – a person becomes the cause of the fruit of action only when he acts with a desire for it. You should not act like that. I bless you not to fall into this category" *Akarma* means 'neglecting prescribed duties' and *vikarma* means 'performing sinful activities'. "You should not become attached to either of these. Rather, you should despise them. I again bless you that you will be able to do this."

In the *Gītā* (3.2), Arjuna says, "*vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena buddhim mohayasīva me...* – my intelligence is bewildered by Your apparently ambiguous instructions." From this it should be understood that the previous statements in this chapter are not entirely consistent with later statements. But here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's inner feelings towards Arjuna are worth considering. "Just as I have become your subordinate by acting as your chariot driver, similarly you should also become a follower of My order."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: Through Arjuna, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is giving instruction on selfless action offered to the Supreme Lord for those who do not have the eligibility to follow the paths of *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.43) it is stated "*karmākarma vikarmeti veda-vādo na laukikaḥ* – an understanding of action (*karma*), non-performance of prescribed religious duties within the *varṇāśrama* system (*akarma*), and sinful action (*vikarma*) can only come from the Vedic literature, not from the words of mundane persons."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "There are three types of *karma* to consider: *karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma*. Of these,

vikarma (engaging in sinful activities) and *akarma* (non-performance of prescribed religious duties within the *varṇāśrama* system) are extremely inauspicious. You should not desire them. Give up *vikarma* and *akarma* and carefully follow the path of *karma*. *Karma* is of three types: daily duties (*nitya-karma*), occasional duties (*naimittika-karma*) and fruitive activities (*kāmya-karma*). Of these three, the last is most inauspicious. Those who perform *kāmya-karma* become the cause of the fruit of their activities, so it is for your benefit that I am telling you to not adopt this method of action, because if you do, you will become the cause of the results of your actions. You have the right to perform your prescribed duties, but you do not have the right to the fruits of any action. It is acceptable for those who take shelter of *yoga* to perform *nitya-karma* and *naimittika-karma*, solely in order to maintain their lives.”

VERSE 48

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥४८॥

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga ucyate

yoga-sthaḥ – being situated in *bhakti-yoga*; *kuru* – perform; *karmāṇi* – prescribed duties; *saṅgam* – attachment (as the performer of action); *tyaktvā* – abandoning; *dhanañjaya* – O Dhanañjaya (Arjuna); *siddhi-asiddhyoḥ* – in success and failure (in regards to the fruit of action); *samaḥ* – equiposed; *bhūtvā* – having become; *samatvam* – equanimity; *yogaḥ* – *yoga*; *ucyate* – is called.

O Dhanañjaya, completely give up attachment to the success or failure of the results of your work. Thus connected in *bhakti-yoga*, perform your prescribed duty with equanimity. Such equanimity is called *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with *yoga-sthaḥ*, Śrī Bhagavān is giving instructions on selfless action, or *niṣkāma-karma*.

He says, “Become equipoised in victory and defeat, and just perform your prescribed duty of engaging in this battle.”

The result of this *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is that it culminates in *jñāna-yoga*. Thus *jñāna-yoga* is the purport of the previous verse and the following verse.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Intelligence which is equipoised in the face of the success or failure of one’s prescribed work is called *yoga*.

VERSE 49

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥४९॥

dūreṇa hy avaram karma buddhi-yogād dhanañjaya
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phala-hetavaḥ

dūreṇa – (throw) far away; *hi* – because; *avaram* – is (vastly) inferior; *karma* – fruitive activity; *buddhi-yogāt* – by the *yoga* of intelligence (selflessly offering all the fruits of one’s actions to Śrī Bhagavān) *dhanañjaya* – O Dhanañjaya (Arjuna); *buddhau* – within the culture of intelligence (*niṣkāma-karma*); *śaraṇam* – shelter; *anviccha* – accept; *kṛpaṇāḥ* – misers; *phala-hetavaḥ* – desire the fruits of their activities.

O Dhanañjaya, action performed by those desirous of its fruit is vastly inferior to selfless action offered to the Lord. You should take shelter of this selfless action, *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Those who desire the fruits of their action are misers.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In speaking this verse beginning with *dūreṇa*, Śrī Bhagavān is criticizing fruitive action, that is, *sakāma-karma* or *kāmya-karma*. *Kāmya-karma* is very inferior to *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, which is offered to the Lord and which is also called *buddhi-yoga*. Here, the word *buddhau* implies performing action without the desire for the fruit (*niṣkāma-karma*), while *buddhi-yoga* implies worship of the Supreme Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one’s work without attachment (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Kṛpaṇaḥ* refers to those miserly persons who are unable to understand the meaning of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selfless action dedicated to Bhagavān. Such people are attached to the fruits of their activities, and consequently, they are sometimes happy and sometimes distressed. This topic has been explained at greater length in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

Once, there was a great assembly of realized sages in the royal court of Janaka Mahārāja. Janaka Mahārāja's royal servants brought to that assembly hundreds of milk-giving cows along with their beautiful calves. The horns of the cows were encased in gold and their hooves in silver. Beautiful cloth decorated with golden ornaments graced their backs. Folding his hands, Janaka Mahārāja addressed the sages with great humility. "Whoever among you is *brahma-vettā* (a knower of the Absolute), I beg you to come and accept these cows."

All who were assembled there began to whisper amongst themselves. No one dared come forward to present himself as *brahma-vettā* and take the cows. Again, Janaka Mahārāja looked towards them, with all seriousness. This time the sage Yājñavalkya got up and told his students, "O boys, take these cows to my *āśrama*."

Hearing this, the other saints objected, saying, "Are you *brahma-vettā*?"

Mahārṣi Yājñavalkya said, "I offer my obeisances at the feet of those who are *brahma-vettā*. If you want to examine me or ask any question, please do so."

The various sages asked different questions and Yājñavalkya Mahārṣi gave them befitting answers. At last, the greatly learned Gārgī humbly inquired, "Who is a miser and who is a *brāhmaṇa*?"

Yājñavalkya Mahārṣi's response was this, "*yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ* – O Gārgī, that person is a miser who leaves this world without knowing Śrī Bhagavān Acyuta, the Infallible Absolute Reality" (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.8.10).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.9.49) it is said "*na veda kṛpaṇaḥ śreya ātmano guṇa-vastu-dṛk* – misers, or *kṛpaṇas*, are those who consider that the Ultimate Reality consists only of sense objects produced from the material modes." Furthermore, it is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.44) "*kṛpaṇo yo jīvendriyaḥ* – a miser is a person who has no control over his senses."

VERSE 50

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद् योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

buddhi-yukto jahātiha ubhe sukr̥ta-duṣkr̥te
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam

buddhi-yuktaḥ – an intelligent person connected to Bhagavān (through selfless action); *jahāti* – gives up; *iha* – in this birth; *ubhe* – both; *sukr̥ta-duṣkr̥te* – virtue and vice; *tasmāt* – therefore; *yogāya* – (being equipoised) in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *yujyasva* – just engage; *yogaḥ* – equipoised selfless action; *karmasu* – in (both fruitive and selfless) actions; *kauśalam* – the art.

One who is fixed in *buddhi-yoga* (pure intelligence) relinquishes both virtue and vice in this very life. Therefore, strive to worship the Supreme Lord through performing selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). Working under the shelter of *buddhi-yoga* with equanimity in both success and failure is indeed the art of all action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, the word *yogāya* means ‘for that *yoga* which possesses the characteristics mentioned above’ (in *Gītā* 2.48). *Yujyasva* means ‘make an endeavour’. More specifically, it means, ‘being equipoised, endeavour for *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly offering the fruit of one’s work to Bhagavān’. This is because *karmasu* means ‘among all fruitive (*sakama*) and selfless (*niṣkāma*) actions’; *yoga* refers to the performance of *karma* while being indifferent to the results. This indeed is *kauśalam*, expertise.

VERSE 51

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१॥

karma-jam buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṁ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ
janma-bandha-vinirmuktāḥ padam gacchanty anāmayam

karma-jam – born of fruitive activities; *buddhi-yuktāḥ* – united with Bhagavān through *buddhi-yoga*, or selfless action; *hi* – because; *phalam* – results; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *manīṣiṇaḥ* – sages; *janma-bandha* – from the bondage of birth and death; *vinirmuktāḥ* – liberated; *padam* – the abode (of the Lord); *gacchanti* – they attain; *anāmayam* – without misery, Vaikuṅṭha.

Enlightened sages endowed with *buddhi-yoga* give up the results born of *karma*. Thus becoming freed from the cycle of birth and death, they eventually attain Vaikuṅṭha, the state beyond all mundane miseries.

VERSE 52

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२॥

yadā te moha-kalilam buddhir vyatitariṣyati
tadā gantāsi nirvedam śrotavyasya śrutasya ca

yadā – when; *te* – your; *moha* – illusion; *kalilam* – the dense forest; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *vyatitariṣyati* – has completely crossed beyond; *tadā* – at that time; *gantāsi* – you shall become; *nirvedam* – indifferent; *śrotavyasya* – to that which is to be heard; *śrutasya* – to all that is already heard; *ca* – and.

When your intelligence has completely crossed beyond the dense forest of illusion, you will become indifferent to all that has been heard and all that is to be heard.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *yadā* to explain that one becomes situated in *yoga* by the practice of selflessly offering the fruits of one’s action to the Supreme Lord. This is called *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. “When your heart completely transcends the deep forest of delusion, you will become indifferent to all the topics that have already been heard and the various topics that are fit to be heard.”

A person may raise the question, “I have already become free from doubt, and I no longer am faulty of an adverse attitude, so what need is there for me to hear the instructions of the scriptures?” Bhagavān would then respond, “Even so, at present it is appropriate for you to practise at every moment the process I have explained.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *jīvas* are attached to this world because of their identification with the body. This is the root cause of material existence. As long as this material attachment remains, the *jīvātmā* cannot attain knowledge of the Absolute Truth, nor can he become detached from the material world. *Nirveda* means ‘detachment from the material world’. It is not an easy achievement. Through the practice of selflessly offering the fruits of one’s work to Bhagavān, one gradually becomes free from the false conception that the body is the self. One then achieves *nirveda* (renunciation) from all the types of activities one has heard about or will hear about, and which originate from material desires described in the scriptures. Eventually, he engages in exclusive devotion to the Lord. This instruction is also in the Vedas:

*parīkṣya lokān karma-cittān brāhmaṇo
nirvedam āyān nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena*

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.2.12)

A *brāhmaṇa* who knows the Absolute Truth attains detachment upon understanding that the happiness and pleasure one attains by *karma* in this world or the next are temporary and distressful.

Prahlāda Mahārāja has given a similar instruction:

*ādy-antavanta urugāya vidanti hi tvām
evam vimṛśya sudhiyo vīramanti śabdāt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.49)

O Urukrama (one who performs wondrous activities), those who by discrimination realize that all objects have a beginning and an end give up the study of the Vedas and exclusively engage in *bhajana* to You.

VERSE 53

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥५३॥

*śruti-vipratipannā te yadā sthāsyati niścālā
samādhāv acalā buddhis tadā yogam avāpsyasi*

śruti-vipratipannā – from hearing the various conflicting materialistic statements as well as false interpretations of the Vedas; *te* – your; *yadā* – when; *sthāsyati* – will become situated; *niścālā* – detached; *samādhau* – in trance upon the Supreme Lord; *acalā* – steadfast; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *tadā* – at that time; *yogam* – (the fruit of) *yoga*; *avāpsyasi* – you shall achieve.

When your intelligence becomes detached from hearing the various conflicting materialistic statements and interpretations of the Vedas, and when it becomes free from all other attachments while remaining steadfast in the Supreme Lord, you will attain the fruit of *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “After this you will become detached from hearing about mundane subject matters and even mundane interpretations of Vedic instructions, and as a result you will become steadfast; your mind will not be deceived by these topics.” In the Sixth Chapter, also, *samādhi* is described as fixed, or undisturbed. Śrī Bhagavān assures Arjuna, “Then, by having direct experience of transcendence through *yoga*, you will attain freedom from material bondage.”

VERSE 54

अर्जुन उवाच—
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेत किम् ॥५४॥

arjuna uvāca –
*sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhi-sthasya keśava
sthita-dhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim*

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *sthita-prajñasya* – of one whose intelligence is fixed; *kā* – what?; *bhāṣā* – (symptoms such as) speech; *samādhi-sthasya* – of one situated in trance; *keśava* – O Keśava; *sthita-dhiḥ* – one with fixed intelligence; *kim* – in what way?; *prabhāṣeta* – would he speak; *kim* – how?; *āsīta* – would he sit; *vrajeta* – would he walk; *kim* – how?

Arjuna said: O Keśava, what are the symptoms of a person whose intelligence is fixed in *samādhi*? How does he speak? How does he sit? And how does he walk?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the previous verse, Arjuna heard about the intelligence of one fixed in trance. Arjuna now inquires about the symptoms of a true *yogī*. “How do they whose intelligence is undisturbed and fixed (*sthita-prajña*) speak? What is the symptom of their language? How do those in *samādhi* remain situated in trance? The designations *sthita-prajña* (one whose intelligence is fixed) and *samādhi-stha* (one who is situated in trance) apply to liberated persons. How do they speak when they face a situation of pleasure or misery, honour or dishonour, glorification or criticism, affection or envy and so on? Do they speak clearly or do they just contemplate within themselves? How do they sit? How do they engage their senses in the external world? How do they walk? In other words, how do their senses behave in relationship to external sense objects?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Beginning from this verse, Arjuna asks Śrī Kṛṣṇa sixteen questions. In response, Śrī Kṛṣṇa illuminates the deep secrets of prescribed duty (*karma*), the path of spiritual advancement in which the fruit of one’s work is offered to Bhagavān (*karma-yoga*), the path of knowledge (*jñāna*), the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), meditation (*dhyāna*), austerities (*tapasya*), devotion mixed with fruitive action (*karma-miśra-bhakti*), devotion mixed with empiric knowledge (*jñāna-miśra-bhakti*) and pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*). From this verse till the Eighteenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives indications regarding the pure, loving devotion (*prema-bhakti*), which is the most confidential knowledge.

In His conclusion to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, He explains that one can have entrance into *prema-bhakti* through the gateway of complete surrender to Him.

The sixteen questions asked by Arjuna are as follows:

- (1) “*sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā* – What are the symptoms of one who is of fixed intelligence, *sthita-prajña*?” (2.54)
- (2) “*jyāyase cet karmanas te* – Why engage me in this ghastly warfare?” (3.1)
- (3) “*atha kena prayukto ’yam* – What impels one to perform sinful acts?” (3.36)
- (4) “*aparam bhavato janma* – How am I to understand that You previously instructed this science to Vivasvān?” (4.4)
- (5) “*sannyāsam karmanām kṛṣṇa* – Which path is better, renunciation or selfless action?” (5.1)
- (6) “*yo ’yam yogas tvayā proktaḥ* – This path of *yoga* appears impractical due to the unsteady nature of the mind.” (6.33)
- (7) “*ayatih śraddhayopeto* – What is the destination of the unsuccessful transcendentalist?” (6.37)
- (8) “*kim tad brahma kim adhyātmam* – What are *brahma*, *karma*, *adhyātma*, *adhibhūta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña*, and how can You be known at the time of death?” (8.1–2)
- (9) “*vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa* – Please tell me in detail about Your glories, or *vibhūti*.” (10.16)
- (10) “*evam etad yathāttha tvam* – I wish to see how You have entered this cosmic manifestation.” (11.3)
- (11) “*ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugra-rūpo* – O fierce one! Please tell me who You are.” (11.31)
- (12) “*teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ* – Who is more perfect, he who performs *bhajana* or the impersonalist?” (12.1)
- (13) “*prakṛtiṁ puruṣam caiva* – I wish to know about *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *kṣetra*, *kṣetrajña*, *jñāna* and *jñeya*.” (13.1)
- (14) “*kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān* – By what symptoms can one identify a person who has transcended the three modes of material nature?” (14.21)

(15) “*teṣāṃ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa* – What is the situation of one who does not follow the principles of scripture?” (17.1)

(16) “*sannyāsasya mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one, what is the purpose of the renounced order (*sannyāsa*)?” (18.1)

VERSE 55

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान्।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥५५॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān

ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadocyate

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the Personality of Godhead said; *prajahāti* – he abandons; *yadā* – when; *kāmān* – of desire; *sarvān* – all types; *pārtha* – O Pārtha; *manaḥ-gatān* – arising from the mind; *ātmani* – within his (controlled) mind; *eva* – indeed; *ātmanā* – by his blissful soul; *tuṣṭaḥ* – he is satisfied; *sthita-prajñas* – a person of steady intelligence; *tadā* – at that time; *ucyate* – he is called.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, when the living entity renounces all material desires arising from the mind, and when, his mind thus controlled, he becomes completely satisfied by the blissful personal form of his own *ātmā* (self), He is to be known as *sthita-prajña*, a person of steady intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now from this verse beginning with *prajahāti* until the end of the chapter, Śrī Bhagavān answers four of Arjuna’s questions in sequence. *Sarvān* denotes one who does not have a scent of material desire. The word *mano-gatān* indicates the ability to give up material desires born of a non-spiritual nature, which are opposed to the nature of the soul. If the nature of these desires were spiritual, it would not be possible to give them up, just as fire cannot give up heat. This is because a controlled mind, after realizing the *ātmā*, which is blissful by nature, becomes satisfied by the *ātmā* alone. The Śrutis confirm this:

*yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hṛdi sthitāḥ
atha martyo 'mṛto bhavaty atra brahma samaśnute*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.3.14)

When all desires are removed from the heart, the bound soul attains realization of the Absolute Truth and becomes immortal.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One should also study the verse *ātmany eva ca santuṣṭaḥ* (*Gītā* 3.17). The great devotee Prahāda Mahārāja has given a similar instruction in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.10.9):

*vimuñcati yadā kāmān mānava manasi sthitān
tarhy eva puṇḍarikākṣa bhagavattvāya kalpate*

O lotus-eyed Lord, when a man gives up all the material desires situated in his heart, he becomes eligible to attain opulences equal to Your own.

VERSE 56

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥५६॥

*duḥkheṣu anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata-spr̥haḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate*

duḥkheṣu – in the presence of the threefold miseries: *ādhyātmika* pains, given by oneself (bodily or mental), *ādhibhautika* pains, given by other living creatures and *ādhidaiivika* pains, given by the demigods, such as heat and cold; *anudvigna-manāḥ* – one whose mind is unagitated; *sukheṣu* – in the presence of sense-pleasures; *vigata-spr̥haḥ* – and remains free from hankering; *vīta* – free from; *rāga* – attachment; *bhaya* – fear; *krodhaḥ* – and anger; *sthita-dhīr* – of fixed intelligence; *munir* – a sage; *ucyate* – is called.

One who is not disturbed by the three types of miseries – given by one's own body or mind, given by others and given by the demigods or nature – who remains free from hankering in the presence of

plentiful opportunities for sensual happiness, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How does one who is of fixed intelligence speak?” To answer this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the present verse beginning with *duḥkheṣu*, and also the next verse. *Duḥkheṣu* means ‘the threefold miseries – *adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika* and *adhidaivika*’. *Adhyātmika* miseries are hunger, thirst, fever, headache and so on; they come from one’s own body and mind. *Adhibhautika* miseries are caused by other living entities, such as a snake or a tiger, and *adhidaivika* miseries, such as excessive rain or natural disasters, are caused by the demigods.

Anudvigna-manāḥ refers to a person whose mind is undisturbed. When he is faced by such miseries he thinks, “I have attained these miseries due to my past actions and I have to suffer them.” Knowing this, he either deliberates upon this within himself, understanding the misery to be due to the reactions to his own past action, or he speaks openly and without duplicity when questioned by others. In either case, his face shows no agitation, even in the presence of these miseries. This absence of disturbance is evident to those who are expert in reading such symptoms. However, it is obvious when an imitator artificially manifests symptoms of tolerance. Those who are expert call that imitator corrupt. Similarly, he who remains free from desires when a happy situation appears, knowing it to be enjoyment resulting from past actions, either contemplates it within himself or enlightens others. His actual response to this, also, is understood by learned men. The present verse clarifies such symptoms, describing such persons as:

- (1) *vīta-rāga* – detached from happiness;
- (2) *vīta-bhaya* – free from the fear that entities such as tigers may eat them;
- (3) *vīta-krodha* – free from anger, even towards a person who comes to attack or kill them. An example of this is Jaḍa Bharata. No fear or anger arose in him when the dacoit king Vṛṣala took him to the deity of Devī Kālī as a human sacrifice.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VRṬTI: A person whose heart is not disturbed by the threefold miseries, *adhyātmika*, *adhibhautika* and *adhidaivika*, who is devoid of the desire to attain happiness, and who does not become elated when happiness comes to him, is called a person of fixed intelligence, or *sthita-prajña*.

*na prahr̥ṣyet priyaṁ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam
sthira-buddhir asammūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ*

Bhagavad-gītā (5.20)

A person who does not become elated when attaining something dear to him is called *sthita-prajña*.

The example of this is the life history of Bharata Mahārāja as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Bharata Mahārāja was worshipping Bhagavān alone in a remote forest, after renouncing his entire kingdom. In the last part of his life, he became attached to an infant deer. Due to his state of mind upon leaving his body, he then took birth as a deer. But because he remembered his previous birth, he remained isolated from the association of family and friends and spent his time in the hermitages of the sages, hearing topics of Śrī Bhagavān. As a result of his worship of Bhagavān in his previous life, he took his next birth in the house of a religiously devoted *brāhmaṇa*. Internally, he always remembered Śrī Bhagavān, but externally he kept himself completely aloof from the world by pretending to be a madman, even though his father diligently tried to make him learn the Vedas. Jaḍa Bharata tolerated ill-treatment and taunts by his step-mother, step-brothers and relatives, while remaining ecstatically absorbed in the worship of Bhagavān.

Once, Vṛṣala, the king of thieves, desired a son, and he wanted to offer a human being who was free from bodily flaws in sacrifice to his worshipable goddess, Bhadra Kālī. He had previously captured a suitable person for sacrifice, but somehow the man had escaped. While the dacoit king was wandering in search of his escaped offering, he saw the *mahā-bhāgavata* Jaḍa Bharata protecting his family's fields. The dacoit king became happy when he saw that Jaḍa Bharata was blessed with a body appropriate for the sacrifice. According to the rules for sacrificing a human, he fed Jaḍa Bharata nicely, decorated

him with turmeric powder, garlands and sandalwood paste, and eventually presented him in front of Kālī-devī as an offering. The topmost devotee Jaḍa Bharata saw, heard and was aware of all this, but he felt neither fear or anger. Rather, he simply stood there completely free from anxiety, fixed in remembrance of Bhagavān.

Just as the robbers were ready to sever Jaḍa Bharata's head, Kālī Devī herself appeared in a ferocious form, making a loud noise. She snatched the sword from the hand of King Vṛṣala, and beheaded him and all his servants. After drinking their blood, she danced and played with their heads as if they were balls. Finally, with great affection, she sent the great devotee Jaḍa Bharata on his way. This deity of Bhadra Kālī is still present in Kurukṣetra.

While describing this history of Jaḍa Bharata in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.9.20), Śukadeva Gosvāmī says to Parīkṣit Mahārāja: "O Viṣṇu-rāta (one who is always protected by the arms of the Lord), Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu, who carries the Sudarśana *cakra*, is death to death personified, and He is always anxious to look after His devotees. He completely protects such exalted devotees, who have become free from falsely identifying the body as the self, who have performed the very difficult task of severing the knot of mundane attachment, whose hearts are anxiously absorbed in thoughts of doing welfare to all living entities, and who neither harm others nor feel enmity towards them. Such swan-like devotees (*paramahamsas*), who accept the shelter of Śrī Bhagavān's fearless lotus feet, are never disturbed, even at the time of their own execution. There is nothing surprising about this."

VERSE 57

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत् प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५७॥

*yaḥ sarvatrānabhisnehas tat tat prāpya śubhāśubham
nābhinandati na dveṣṭi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

yaḥ – he who; *sarvatra* – in all situations (even for one's children and friends); *anabhisnehaḥ* – without excessive attachment; *tat tat* – whatever; *prāpya* – achieving; *śubha* – favourable; *aśubham* – unfavourable; *na*

abhinandati – he does not rejoice; *na* – nor; *dveṣti* – hate; *tasya* – his; *prajñā* – intelligence; *pratiṣṭhitā* – is well fixed.

One who is always devoid of mundane affection and who neither rejoices in prosperity nor despairs in adversity is known to be a person of fixed intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, the word *anabhisnehaḥ* means ‘free from all affection arising from material designations’. Such persons certainly feel some affection because of compassion, but their affection is free from material designations. They do not welcome pleasing situations, such as being honoured or offered palatable food, nor do they glorify those from whom they receive them by saying, “You are a highly religious personality who has been rendering service to great saintly persons (*paramahāmsas*). May you be happy.” Conversely, when they are faced with an unpleasant situation, such as being dishonoured or beaten, they do not feel any aversion, nor do they curse their adversary, saying, “You sinful person! May you go to hell!” The intelligence of such a person is completely fixed, or situated in trance (*samādhi*). He indeed is called *sthita-prajña*, one of fixed intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Affection is of two types: (1) in relation with the body and (2) in relation with Śrī Bhagavān. Affection in relation with the body can be seen in ordinary persons who identify themselves with their bodies. Those who are of fixed intelligence are free from identification with their bodies and are therefore devoid of that type of affection. Because they are the well-wishers of all living entities, they are endowed with the second type of affection, which is in relation to Śrī Bhagavān. This type of affection is continuously flowing within their hearts, but it rarely manifests externally. It may be seen in some special circumstances, but an ordinary person cannot detect it.

VERSE 58

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सवशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५८॥

*yadā samharate cāyam kūrmo 'ṅgānīva sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṅindriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

yadā – when; *samharate* – withdraws; *ca* – and; *ayam* – this (saintly person); *kūrmaḥ* – tortoise; *aṅgāni* – limbs; *iva* – as; *sarvaśaḥ* – completely; *indriyāṅi* – his senses; *indriya-arthebhyaḥ* – from the sense objects; *tasya* – his; *prajñā* – his intelligence; *pratiṣṭhitā* – well fixed.

When a person can completely withdraw his senses from their respective sense objects at will, just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, then he is said to be of fixed intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: With this verse beginning with *yadā*, Śrī Bhagavān responds to Arjuna's question, "kim āsīta – how does he sit?" *Indriyārthebhyaḥ* means that, just as a person can withdraw his senses, such as the sense of hearing, from their sense objects (in this case, sound) similarly, he who is *sthita-prajña* is able to withdraw his subordinate senses from external sense objects and fix them within his undisturbed mind. The example of a tortoise is given to illustrate this point. Just as a tortoise can withdraw his eyes, face and so forth inside his shell at will, similarly, a person whose intelligence is fixed can withdraw his senses from the sense objects.

VERSE 59

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥५९॥

*viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*

viṣayāḥ – the sense objects; *vinivartante* – are forcibly restrained; *nirāhārasya* – for who practices sense-restraint such as fasting; *dehinaḥ* – for an ignorant person in the bodily concept of life; *rasa-varjam* – devoid of taste (for sense object); *rasaḥ* – (there is) a taste; *api* – however; *asya* – for such a person of fixed intelligence; *param* – of Paramātmā (the Supersoul); *dṛṣṭvā* – having seen or realized; *nivartate* – refrains.

He who identifies himself with his body may restrict his enjoyment by withdrawing the senses from their objects, but his taste for sense pleasure remains. One whose intelligence is fixed, however, has realized Paramātmā; therefore, his taste for sense objects automatically ceases.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: If one raises a doubt that even foolish or less intelligent persons may become detached from the objects of their senses by fasting or through sickness, Śrī Bhagavān answers in this verse beginning with *viṣayāḥ*. The word *rasa-varjam* implies that such persons do not become free from the desire for sense objects. Rather, their taste for sense objects persists. Yet one who is of fixed intelligence ceases to desire sense objects because he has direct realization of Paramātmā. There is no flaw in this definition. Those who are able to realize the self are perfected souls, or *siddhas*. They are not practitioners, or *sādhakas*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Sometimes an ordinary person restricts his senses because of disease, or because he is practising *haṭha-yoga* or fasting. Still the desire to enjoy the sense objects remains in his heart. It is impossible to eliminate this desire without devotion to Śrī Bhagavān.

In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes as follows: “The practice of ceasing to indulge in the objects of the senses through the process of fasting from them is only for extremely unintelligent people. This practice is followed by those who identify the self with the body. The eightfold *yoga* system, known as *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, also provides an opportunity for those who are less intelligent to become renounced from sense objects, by engaging in the practices of *yama* and *niyama* (regulative principles), *asana* (postures), *prāṇāyāma* (breathing exercises) and *pratyāhara* (sense control). This process is not acceptable for one who is *sthita-prajña*, fixed in the Absolute Truth. After directly seeing the beauty of the Supreme Truth Śrī Bhagavān, one who is *sthita-prajña* becomes attracted to Him and gives up all attachments to ordinary sense objects. There is provision for extremely unintelligent persons to withdraw their senses from sense objects by the process of fasting, yet the *jīvas* cannot attain their eternal auspiciousness without the process of spontaneous devotion, or *rāga-*

mārga. When a person comes to the platform of *rāga*, or attachment to Kṛṣṇa, he has realization of a sense object that is superior to all others, and thus he naturally gives up inferior pleasures.”

VERSE 60

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥६०॥

yataṭo hy api kaunteya puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ
indriyāṇi pramāthīni haranti prasabham manaḥ

yataṭaḥ – who is endeavouring (for liberation); *hi* – because; *api* – even; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī (Arjuna); *puruṣasya* – of a man; *vipaścitaḥ* – who possesses discrimination; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *pramāthīni* – being churned; *haranti* – steal away; *prasabham* – forcibly; *manaḥ* – the mind.

O son of Kuntī, the senses, when agitated, can forcefully steal away the mind, even of a person who is endeavouring for liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is beyond the capacity of the *sādhaka* to have complete control over his senses while he is within the stage of practice, but the endeavour alone is commendable. To explain this point, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the present verse beginning with *yataṭaḥ*. Here meaning of the word *pramāthīni* is ‘those things that cause agitation’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The duty of a *sādhaka* is to endeavour very carefully to achieve control over his senses. One cannot become *sthita-prajña* without being sense controlled. The flickering senses are always agitated, and it is as difficult to have complete control over them as it is to control the wind. However, according to the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, even this difficult task becomes very easy when one engages all his senses in the service of Śrī Bhagavān.

One can learn how to engage his controlled senses in the service of Śrī Bhagavān from the daily activities of King Ambarīṣa, which are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
 vacāmsi vaikunṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
 karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
 śrutim cakārācyuta-sat-kathodaye
 mukunda-liṅgālaya-darśane dṛṣau
 tad-bhṛtya-gātra-sparśe 'nga-saṅgamam
 ghrāṇam ca tat-pāda-saroja-saurabhe
 śrīmat-tulasyā rasanām tad-arpite
 pādaū hareḥ kṣetra-padānusarpane
 śiro hṛṣikeśa-padābhivandane
 kāmaṃ ca dāsye na tu kāma-kāmyayā
 yathottamaśloka-janāśrayā ratih*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.18–20)

Ambarīṣa Mahārāja always engaged in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by fixing his mind in remembering His lotus feet, by engaging his tongue in describing His name, form, qualities and pastimes, his ears in hearing the topics of Bhagavān, his eyes in seeing Bhagavān's beautiful deity form, his sense of touch in experiencing the happiness of serving the feet of the devotees of Bhagavān, his nostrils in smelling the fragrant objects such as the Tulasī and sandalwood paste that had been offered at the lotus feet of Bhagavān, his feet in circumambulating His abode, and his head in paying obeisances to Bhagavān and His devotees. In this way, he controlled all his senses and engaged them in the service of Bhagavān.

It is very beneficial and auspicious for *sādhakas* to follow this path.

VERSE 61

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ।
 वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६१॥
*tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīt mat-paraḥ
 vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

tāni sarvāṇi – all these (senses); *saṁyamya* – keeping under control; *yuktaḥ* – the devotee, or *bhakti-yogī*; *āsīta* – he should be situated; *mat-paraḥ* – dedicated to Me; *vaśe* – are controlled; *hi* – because; *yasya* – whose; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *tasya* – his; *prajñā* – intelligence; *pratiṣṭhitā* – is completely fixed.

Therefore, one should subdue the senses by surrendering to Me in *bhakti-yoga* and remain under My shelter, because only one whose senses are controlled is fixed in intelligence. He alone is *sthita-prajña*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Here, the word *mat-paraḥ* means ‘My devotee’, because there is no other way to conquer the senses other than to perform *bhakti* to Me.” This fact is apparent everywhere in the later sections of *Bhagavad-gītā*. As Uddhava says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.2–3):

prāyaśaḥ puṇḍarikākṣa
yuñjanto yogino manaḥ
viśīdanty asamādhānān
mano-nigraha-karsitāḥ

athāta ānanda-dughaṁ padāmbujam
haṁsāḥ śrayerann aravinda-locana
sukhaṁ nu viśveśvara yoga-karmabhis
tvan-māyayāmī vihataṁ na māninaḥ

O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, *yogīs* are generally unsuccessful in controlling their minds, and after endeavouring for a short time, they become tired and frustrated. Therefore, those who are expert in discerning between what is substantial and what is insubstantial take exclusive shelter of Your lotus feet, which give unlimited pleasure to everyone, as the very foundation of their happiness.

To show the difference between one in the stage of practice – a *sādhaka* – and one whose intelligence is fixed (*sthita-prajña*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says *vaśe hi*, which indicates that only the senses of one who is *sthita-prajña*, are under control.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: One can escape the disturbance caused by a gang of dacoits by taking shelter of a valiant king. When the dacoits become aware of the shelter this person has taken, they become subordinate to him. Similarly, the senses of a *jīvātmā* are compared to a gang of dacoits, and they automatically become controlled when he accepts the shelter of Bhagavān Śrī Hṛṣīkeśa, who is the indwelling witness of everyone and everything. Therefore, one should control one's senses in a simple and natural way by *bhakti* alone. It is said in scripture:

*hṛṣīkeśe hṛṣīkāṇi yasya sthairyā-gatāni hi
sa eva dhairyam āpnoti sāmsāre jīva-cañcale
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 24.184)*

It is very difficult to control the agitated senses in this world, but for those who engage all their senses in the service of Bhagavān Śrī Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses, their senses naturally become stable and controlled.

VERSE 62

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गत्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२ ॥

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgaḥ teṣu teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate*

dhyāyataḥ – one who contemplates; *viṣayān* – sense objects (such as sound); *puṁsaḥ* – for a person; *saṅgaḥ* – attachment; *teṣu* – for those (sense objects); *upajāyate* – arises; *saṅgāt* – from attachment; *sañjāyate* – arises; *kāmāḥ* – desire, or lust; *kāmāt* – from lust; *krodhaḥ* – anger; *abhijāyate* – arises.

By continuously meditating on the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to lust, which in turn leads to the awakening of anger.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Control of the mind is the fundamental means by which those who are *sthita-prajña* control

their external senses. However, hear from Me, O Arjuna, about what happens when one is unable to fully control his mind.” The present verse, beginning with *dhyāyataḥ*, is spoken to explain this topic. “By meditating on sense objects, one develops attachment, from which lust, or excessive desire for those objects, awakens. Anger then arises if for some reason the fulfilment of this desire is obstructed.”

VERSE 63

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३ ॥

*krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramah
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati*

krodhāt – from anger; *bhavati* – comes; *sammohaḥ* – utter confusion, lacking the discrimination to know what to do and what not to do; *sammohāt* – from such confusion; *smṛti-vibhramah* – loss of memory; *smṛti-bhramśāt* – from loss of memory; *buddhi-nāśah* – intelligence is destroyed; *buddhi-nāśāt* – from loss of intelligence; *praṇaśyati* – by this one is completely ruined and falls into the ocean of repeated birth and death.

Anger gives rise to utter delusion, and from such delusion comes loss of memory (forgetting the instructions of the scriptures). Loss of memory destroys one’s intelligence, and when intelligence is destroyed, one’s entire spiritual direction in life is lost. One then falls into the ocean of material existence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: From anger comes delusion, in which there is a loss of discrimination between what is to be done and what is not to be done. When the *jīva* is in a deluded condition, he forgets the instructions of the scriptures, which are the cause of auspiciousness for him. When his memory is lost, his intelligence loses the capacity to function properly. After that, the *sādhaka* again falls into the well of material life.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The mind indeed is the king, the controller and the impelling cause of the senses. Therefore, by

controlling the mind, the external senses are automatically controlled. Thus, in the Vedas it is said:

*yadā pancāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha
buddhiś ca na viceṣṭati tām āhuḥ paramām gatim*
Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.3.10)

If one can control his five knowledge-acquiring senses, his mind and his intelligence, he attains the supreme destination. Otherwise, if the mind and other senses are not subdued, one has to wander in the cycle of birth and death.

This is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.21.19–21):

*viṣayeṣu guṇādhyāsāt puṁsaḥ saṅgas tato bhavet
saṅgāt tatra bhavet kāmaḥ kāmād eva kalir nṛṇām*

When one contemplates the qualities of sense objects, attachment arises. From attachment, desires ensue, and unfulfilled desires lead to quarrel.

*kaler durviśahaḥ krodhas tamas tam anuvartate
tamasā grasyate puṁsaś cetanā vyāpinī drutam*

From quarrel, unrestrained anger arises, anger causes delusion, and when one is in delusion, the wisdom to discriminate between right and wrong vanishes.

*tayā virahitaḥ sādho jantuḥ sūnyāya kalpate
tato 'sya svārtha-vibhramśo mūrcchitasya mṛtasya ca*

O gentle one, a man who has lost his discrimination becomes like inert matter, and from that condition, he slides down to states of unconsciousness and becomes almost dead. Thus the supreme purpose of life is defeated.

If someone forcibly tries to subdue his external senses without controlling his mind, the results are extremely unpleasant. It is therefore one's duty to control the mind by worshipping Bhagavān with very special endeavour. Consequently, Śrī Bhagavān's statement in the *Gītā* (2.61), *tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya*, is completely logical.

VERSE 64

रागद्वेषविमुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
 आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥६४॥

*rāga-dveṣa-vimuktaiḥ tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran
 ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati*

rāga – attachment; *dveṣa* – and aversion; *vimuktaiḥ* – free; *tu* – however; *viṣayān* – sense objects; *indriyaiḥ* – by the senses; *caran* – even while enjoying; *ātma-vaśyaiḥ* – which are under his control; *vidheya-ātmā* – a man of controlled senses; *prasādam* – joyfulness; *adhigacchati* – attains.

A man of controlled senses, however, who is free from attachment and aversion, attains the stage of joyfulness even while enjoying suitable objects through his senses.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Previously, Arjuna asked, “How does one who is *sthita-prajña* behave?” In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *rāga*. Since the mind cannot directly accept sense objects, there is no fault in accepting sense objects with controlled senses. *Vidheyātmā* means ‘one whose mind is fixed in the instructions of Bhagavān only’. *Prasādam adhigacchati* implies that there is no fault if such qualified persons accept sense objects. In fact, it is specifically to their credit, because they see that everything is related to Bhagavān. One who is *sthita-prajña* may or may not give up sense objects, and he may or may not be motivated to attain them. In any case, everything is auspicious for him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Even when the external senses are controlled by keeping them aloof from the sense objects, the mind does not stop thinking of them. Such renunciation is called *phalgu* (useless) or *markaṭa-vairāgya* (monkey-like renunciation). This is stated in the *Gītā* (3.6), *karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya*. When a *sādhaka* practises appropriate renunciation by engaging everything in the service of the Lord and worships Śrī Bhagavān, he can control his mind and absorb it in thinking of his worshipable deity. When he has

reached such a stage, there is no fault in his accepting those sense objects that are favourable to his practice and rejecting those that are unfavourable.

VERSE 65

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥ ६५ ॥

prasāde sarva-duḥkhānām hānir asyopajāyate
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate

prasāde – on attainment of that joyful state; *sarva-duḥkhānām* – of all miseries; *hāniḥ* – dispelled far away; *asya* – of that person (whose mind and senses are controlled); *upajāyate* – takes place; *prasanna-cetasoḥ* – for that person whose mind is content; *hi* – certainly; *āśu* – very soon; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *paryavatiṣṭhate* – becomes completely fixed (in attaining his heart's desire).

When that self-controlled person attains the stage of joyfulness, all of his miseries are dispelled and his intelligence soon becomes completely fixed upon attaining his desired goal.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate* means that in all respects, his intelligence becomes stable and fixed on the desired goal. Thus he remains happy, whether he accepts sense objects or not. *Prasanna-cetasoḥ* indicates that it should be understood that internal happiness will come only from *bhakti*, because without *bhakti* the heart cannot become pleased. This has been explained vividly in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which describes how Vyāsadeva's mind was not happy, even after he had compiled *Vedānta-sūtra*. However, when he followed the instructions of Śrī Nārada, his heart became blissful through the exclusive practice of *bhakti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The heart can be pleased only by *bhakti*, rendering loving devotional service to Śrī Bhagavān. *Bhakti* removes all miseries, and in a very short period, a person who practises *bhakti* easily becomes fully fixed at the lotus feet of his worshipful

Lord. This is also described in the dialogue between Vyāsa and Nārada in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, from *dhyta-vratena hi mayā* (1.4.28) to *yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ* (1.6.35). “When the *sādhaka* practises *yama* and *niyama* (sense control by observing strict regulations) which are on the path of the eightfold process of *yoga*, the mind, which is always under the control of lust and greed, attains a certain level of happiness and peace. However, there is no comparison between this and the immediate and immense pleasure attained by service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.35).

In this regard, it is worth deliberating on the examples of Saubhari Ṛṣi, Yayāti Mahārāja, Viśvāmitra Muni and others. Saubhari Ṛṣi was unable to control his mind even after performing austerities within the water of the Yamunā for ten thousand years. His mind became agitated by seeing fish engaging in sex life. He emerged from the water to marry the fifty daughters of King Māndhātā, but his lust remained unsatiated, even after enjoying with them by expanding himself into fifty forms. Eventually, he attained his desired goal by controlling his senses through the worship of Śrī Bhagavān.

Yayāti Mahārāja was not able to control his mind, despite various endeavours. He exchanged his old age for the youth of his son Puru and enjoyed for many years, but his lusty desires increased, just as ghee nourishes fire. He could only attain peace when he finally fixed his mind in the worship of Bhagavān.

Although Viśvāmitra Muni engaged in severe austerities by practising *sama* (mind control) and *dama* (sense control) and subduing his senses, he still abandoned his austerities upon hearing Menakā's ankle bells and became absorbed in lustful activity. His agitated mind eventually only found peace in the worship of Bhagavān.

This conclusion is specifically verified in the dialogue between Vyāsa and Nārada in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vedavyāsa had already divided the Vedas into four parts and had compiled *Mahābhārata*, the Purāṇas and *Vedānta-sūtra*. Although he had described knowledge of religious duty (*dharma*) and other such topics, for the information of people in general, his mind remained unsatisfied. Unable to understand why, he inquired from his spiritual master, Śrī Nārada:

*śrī nārada uvāca –
bhavatānudīta-prāyaṃ yaśo bhagavato 'malam
yenaivāsau na tuṣyeta manye tad darśanaṃ khilam
yathā dharmādayaś cārthā muni-varyānukīrtitāḥ
na tathā vāsudevasya mahimā hy anuvarṇitāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.5.8–9)

O great sage, you have described the processes of mundane religiosity (*dharmā*) and knowledge (*jñāna*), which I consider to be incomplete and insignificant, but you have not clearly described the topics of Śrī Bhagavān's most purifying pastimes and their glories. Śrī Bhagavān cannot be pleased unless one glorifies such pastimes, which manifest themselves in the purified mind by the performance of *bhakti*.

Following the instructions of Nārada Muni, by performing *bhakti-yoga*, Vyāsa was able to see in his pure heart all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful pastimes, which are full of *aiśvarya* (opulence) and *mādhurya* (sweetness). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* consists of the activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which Vyāsa realized in his devotional trance, or *samādhi*.

*yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe
bhaktir utpadyate puṃsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.7)

By the culture of hearing and following this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, devotion to Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately manifests in the heart, dispelling lamentation, delusion and fear.

VERSE 66

*नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ ६६ ॥*

*nāsti buddhir ayuktasya na cāyuktasya bhāvanā
na cābhāvayataḥ śāntir aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham*

na asti – there is not; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence aimed at the realization of the Supreme Lord; *ayuktasya* – for one whose mind is disconnected (and thus uncontrolled); *na* – no; *ca* – also; *ayuktasya* – for such a disconnected

and unintelligent person; *bhāvanā* – meditation (on the Supreme Lord); *nā* – nor; *ca* – also; *abhāvayataḥ* – for the non-meditative person; *śāntiḥ* – peace; *aśāntasya* – for a person who is not peaceful; *kutaḥ* – where?; *sukham* – happiness.

One whose mind is uncontrolled, however, does not have the intelligence to understand the science of the soul. Such an unintelligent person is unable to meditate on the Supreme Lord. A person unable to perform such meditation cannot attain peace, and without peace, where is the possibility of happiness?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is speaking this verse beginning with *nāsti* to indirectly strengthen the previous verse's conclusion. The intelligence of a person whose mind is uncontrolled will not become fixed in the self. Such a person is devoid of intelligence and unable to meditate on the Supreme Lord. *Abhāvayataḥ* means that one who does not meditate cannot have peace. In other words, he cannot become detached from the objects of the senses. A disturbed person can find neither happiness nor pleasure in the self.

VERSE 67

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥६७॥

indriyāṅām hi caratām yan mano 'nuvidhīyate
tad asya harati prajñām vāyur nāvam ivāmbhasi

indriyāṅām – of the senses; *hi* – certainly; *caratām* – while wandering (to the sense objects); *yat* – which (goes towards any particular sense); *manaḥ* – the mind; *anuvīdhīyate* – follows; *tad* – that; *asya* – of that person (of uncontrolled senses); *harati* – it carries away; *prajñām* – intelligence; *vāyuh* – the wind; *nāvam* – like a boat; *iva* – as; *ambhasi* – on the water.

Just as the wind sweeps away a boat on the water, the mind of an unrestrained person runs behind any one of the senses that wanders toward its sense object.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: A person with an uncontrolled mind does not have intelligence. Śrī Bhagavān establishes this point by speaking the verse beginning with *indriyāṇām*. “The mind follows any one of the senses as it wanders unrestrictedly amongst its respective sense objects. Such a person is forced to follow all of the senses, being controlled by the mind. In such a state, the mind is likened to an unfavourable wind, sweeping away a boat on water, because it carries away a person’s intelligence.”

VERSE 68

तस्माद् यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६८॥

*tasmād yasya mahā-bāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ
indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

tasmāt – therefore; *yasya* – whose; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one; *nigṛhītāni* – restrained; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every respect; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *indriya-arthebhyaḥ* – from the sense objects; *tasya* – his; *prajñā* – intelligence; *pratiṣṭhitā* – fixed.

Therefore, O mighty-armed one, one whose senses are completely restrained from their respective sense objects is of fixed intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Yasya* means that those whose minds are already under control are *sthita-prajña*. Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna, “O mighty-armed one, just as you conquer your enemies, you should also conquer your mind.”

VERSE 69

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥६९॥

*yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ*

yā – which (spiritual intelligence); *niśā* – like night; *sarva-bhūtānām* – for all beings; *tasyām* – in that (night); *jāgarti* – is awake; *saṁyamī* – a self-controlled man (of fixed intelligence); *yasyām* – in which (state which is directed to the search for sense objects); *jāgrati* – remains awake; *bhūtāni* – ordinary beings; *sā* – that (material intelligence); *niśā* – night; *paśyataḥ* – for the enlightened; *muneḥ* – thinker.

Spiritual intelligence, which is directed toward the soul, is like night for materialistic common people, who are enchanted by the material energy. One who is *stitha-prajña*, however, remains awake in that intelligence. And when intelligence is absorbed in sense objects, the common person remains awake. For the sage who perceives transcendental Reality, that consciousness is the darkest night. In other words, such a person accepts sense objects in an appropriate way, without being attached to them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is natural for one whose intelligence is fixed to control the senses. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *yā*. Intelligence is of two types: intelligence inclined towards the self (*ātma-pravaṇā*), and intelligence inclined towards material sense objects (*viśaya-pravaṇā*). Intelligence that is inclined towards the self is like night for all conditioned souls. Just as a sleeping person does not know what happens at night, similarly the bewildered souls do not know what one attains by this spiritual intelligence. But one who is of fixed intelligence remains awake in such a night, so he directly experiences the bliss related to intelligence fixed in the self.

The conditioned souls remain awake in the second type of intelligence, which is directed towards the attainment of material enjoyment, and they directly experience lamentation, bewilderment and so on, according to their respective absorption. They are not asleep to it. Wise persons of fixed spiritual intelligence, however, do not experience anything in such a night. They remain indifferent to the sense objects that give happiness and distress to materialistic persons and, remaining controlled and detached, only accept those sense objects that are needed for their maintenance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who are of fixed spiritual intelligence naturally achieve perfection in controlling all the senses. They are knowledgeable persons in the real sense. On the other hand, the intelligence of ignorant people who identify the body with the self remains absorbed in sense objects. Such persons who are attached to sense objects are called materialistic, or ignorant. The *Skanda Purāṇa* states, “*ajñānam tu niśā proktā divā jñānam udīryate* – knowledge is like day and ignorance is like night.”

Everything in the kingdom of that most wonderful controller Śrī Bhagavān is wonderful. What is night for one person is day for another. For an owl, night is like day, while for a crow it is night. An owl sees only at night, not during the day. Similarly, a man blinded by ignorance cannot have the illuminated vision of one who knows the Absolute Truth. Those who know the Absolute, however, always see Śrī Bhagavān, the radiant personification of all knowledge. They never contemplate objects of the senses. Just as a lotus leaf never becomes wet, even though it remains in water, similarly, one who is *sthita-prajña* never becomes attached to sense objects, even while he is living in contact with them.

VERSE 70

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत्।
तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥७०॥

āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭham
samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntim āpnoti na kāma-kāmī

āpūryamāṇam – completely full in all directions; *acala-pratiṣṭham* – fixed and unmoved; *samudram* – the ocean; *āpaḥ* – the waters (of many rivers); *praviśanti* – enter; *yadvat* – just as; *tadvat* – similarly; *kāmāḥ* – the agitations of the senses; *yaṁ* – whom (a person of fixed intelligence);

praviśanti – they enter; *sarve* – all; *saḥ* – he; *śāntim* – peace; *āpnoti* – attains; *na* – not; *kāma-kāmī* – he who desires to fulfill his own desires.

Just as countless rivers flow into the ocean, which is full and always still, without causing any disturbance to it, similarly, various desires flow into the mind of one who is *sthita-prajña*, yet his equilibrium is never disturbed. Such persons alone can attain peace, not those who strive always to fulfil their desires.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Nirleptā*, or remaining unattached to sense objects, indicates that one does not become disturbed even after coming in contact with a sense object. Śrī Bhagavān explains this idea by speaking the verse beginning with *āpūryamāṇam*. Although different rivers pour so much water into the ocean during the rainy season, they cannot cause it to overflow. *Acala-pratiṣṭham* means ‘whose boundary is not crossed’. Similarly, various sense objects also present themselves as enjoyable and desirable to one who is fixed in spiritual intelligence. But, just as water pouring into or flowing out of the ocean makes no difference to the ocean, similarly, those who remain unaffected, both while enjoying sense objects and when bereft of them, are called *sthita-prajña*. Only they attain peace, that is, knowledge.

VERSE 71

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ७१ ॥

vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān pumāṁś carati niḥspṛhaḥ
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sa śāntim adhigacchati

vihāya – giving up; *kāmān* – material desires; *yaḥ* – who; *sarvān* – all; *pumān* – the person; *carati* – wanders; *niḥ-spṛhaḥ* – free from hankering; *nirmamaḥ* – without a sense of possessiveness; *nir-ahaṅkāraḥ* – without false ego; *saḥ* – that person (of fixed intelligence); *śāntim* – peace; *adhigacchati* – attains.

Only those who give up all desires and who wander free from hankering, false ego and possessiveness, attain peace.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Some people lose faith in material desires and no longer enjoy them. Śrī Bhagavān is explaining this by speaking this verse beginning with the word *vihāya*. Here, *nirahaṅkāra nirmamaḥ* means that only they who remain free from the false ego and possessiveness towards the body and anything related to it attain peace.

VERSE 72

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥७२॥

eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha nainām prāpya vimuhyati
sthitvāsyām anta-kāle 'pi brahma-nirvāṇam ṛcchati

eṣā – this; *brāhmī* – of one who has attained the spiritual; *sthitiḥ* – situation; *pārtha* – O Pārtha (Arjuna); *na* – not; *enām* – this state; *prāpya* – attaining; *vimuhyati* – is bewildered; *sthitvā* – being situated; *asyām* – in this (state); *anta-kāle* – at the time of death; *api* – even; *brahma-nirvāṇam* – spiritual emancipation; *ṛcchati* – one attains.

O Pārtha, attaining *brahma* in this way is called *brāhmī sthitiḥ*, becoming spiritually situated. After attaining this state, one is no longer deluded. If, at the time of death, one is situated in this consciousness even for a moment, he attains liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is now concluding this chapter with the verse beginning with *eṣā*. If spiritual emancipation (*brahma-nirvāṇa*) is achieved at the time of death by attaining the state of *brahma* for even a moment, then what can be said of the result for one who achieved this state in childhood?

Jñāna and *karma* are specifically explained in this chapter, and *bhakti* is explained indirectly. Therefore, this chapter is called the summary of Śrī Bhagavad-gītā.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Second Chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states: “This chapter is the summary of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Verses 1–10 introduce the nature of the person who is asking questions. Verses 12–30 give a description of spirit (*ātmā*) and non-spirit (*anātmā*). Verses 31–38 explain piety and sin within the Vedic system of prescribed duties, known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Verse 39 till the end of the chapter describe selfless action wherein the fruits are offered to the Supreme Lord, or *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, by which knowledge of the self is attained. This is the goal of the aforementioned *jñāna* and *karma*. There is also a description of the behaviour of a person who is situated in this *yoga*.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Second Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER THREE



Karma-Yoga

Yoga Through the Path of Action

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥१॥

arjuna uvāca –

*jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore mām niyojayasi keśava*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *jyāyasī* – is superior; *cet* – if; *karmaṇaḥ* – than fruitive work; *te* – Your; *matā* – consideration; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence (that is directed towards transcendental *bhakti*); *janārdana* – O Janārdana; *tat* – then; *kiṁ* – why?; *karmaṇi* – in activity (in the form of fighting); *ghore* – in this ghastly; *mām* – me; *niyojayasi* – are You engaging; *keśava* – O Keśava.

Arjuna said: O Janārdana, if You consider that intelligence related to *bhakti* is beyond the modes and thus superior to fruitive work, then why, O Keśava, are You engaging me in this ghastly activity of warfare?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This Third Chapter gives a detailed explanation of work (*karma*) that is offered to Śrī Bhagavān without the expectation of any material return. It also describes the wisdom of a person who is willing to conquer lust, anger and so forth.

Arjuna has understood from the verses in the previous chapter that devotion that is free from the modes of material nature is superior to the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) and also to selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). Now, in the mood of a friend, he reproaches Śrī Bhagavān, who is eager to engage him in his prescribed duty of fighting, with the following words: “If that intelligence which is resolute and free from material inebriety is superior, then why, O Janārdana, are You engaging me in this ghastly warfare?” *Jana* means ‘to Your own people’ and *ārdana* means ‘giving pain’, so Janārdana means ‘by Your order You give pain to Your own people’.

Arjuna also addresses Kṛṣṇa as Keśava. “No one can transgress Your order because You are Keśava, the controller of both Brahmā and Mahādeva (Śiva). *Ka* means ‘Brahmā’, *īsa* means ‘Mahādeva’ and *va* means ‘controller’.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse there is a mysterious secret behind Arjuna’s addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the names Keśava and Janārdana. Arjuna inquired, “O Janārdana, first You said that resolute intelligence (*vyavasāyātmikā-buddhi*), which is beyond the modes and fixed in transcendental *bhakti*, is superior to prescribed duty (*karma*). Why, then, are You engaging me in this ghastly and violent warfare? Learned men are right in calling You Janārdana, for by Your order You give pain to Your own people, who are dear to You and dependent on You. Janārdana is a very befitting name for You because You killed the demon Jana, which is but another indication of Your cruel nature. And because You killed the demon named Keśī, Keśava is another appropriate name for You. Moreover, *ka* means ‘Brahmā’, *īsa* means ‘Mahādeva’ and *va* means ‘controller’. Since You control them, You are called Keśava. How, then, can an insignificant person like me transgress Your order? O Prabhu, be merciful to me!”

In Śrī *Harivaṁśa*, Śrī Rudra says in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His name Keśava:

*ka iti brahmaṇo nāma īso 'haṁ sarva-dehinām
āvām tavāṅga-sambhūtau tasmāt keśava-nāma-bhāk*

Ka is Brahmā, and I am Īsa (Śaṅkara), the controller of all living entities. Since both of us were born from Your limbs, You are called Keśava.

VERSE 2

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ २ ॥

*vyāmiśreṇeva vākyaena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me
tat ekam vada niścitya yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām*

vyāmiśreṇa iva – by (Your) apparently equivocal; *vākyaena* – by the statements; *buddhiṁ* – intelligence; *mohayasi iva* – You seem to bewilder; *me* – my; *tat* – therefore; *ekam* – one path; *vada* – please tell; *niścitya* – ascertaining; *yena* – by which; *śreyah* – welfare; *aham* – I; *āpnuyām* – may have.

My intelligence is somewhat bewildered by Your apparently ambiguous statements. Please, therefore, tell me decisively which path will be most auspicious for me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “O friend, Arjuna, it is a fact that because the *bhakti* that is beyond the modes is transcendental, it is the most superior process. But such *bhakti* can only be attained by the mercy of My great devotee, who is discriminating and one-pointed to Me. It can never be attained by one’s own endeavour. Therefore, become free from the material modes of nature. I bless you that you will become situated beyond the modes of nature by performing transcendental *bhakti* to Me. When this blessing fructifies, you will achieve this very *bhakti* by the mercy of such a great devotee. But as I have already said, at present, you are eligible to perform your prescribed duty (*karma*) only. This is the truth.”

Arjuna then says, “If this is so, then why do You not tell me definitively to engage exclusively in *karma*? Why are You drowning me in an ocean of doubts?” Arjuna is thus speaking this verse beginning with *vyāmiśreṇeva*, which has various implications. He

is saying, “By such statements, You are bewildering my intelligence. Initially You said, ‘*karmaṇy evādhikāras te* – you only have the qualification to perform *karma*, your prescribed duty’ (*Gītā* 2.47). Then You said, ‘*siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate* – the equanimity in which one remains equipoised in both success and failure is called *yoga*’ (*Gītā* 2.48). Then again, You said, ‘*buddhi-yukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛta-duṣkṛte tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam* – intelligent persons abandon both pious and impious activities, and because *buddhi-yoga* is the art of work, they endeavour for *niṣkāma-karma*, selflessly offering the fruits of their work to the Supreme’ (*Gītā* 2.50). Here, by the word *yoga*, You are also referring to an accumulation of knowledge, or *jñāna*. You then say, ‘*yadā te mohakalilam buddhir vyatitariṣyati* – when your intelligence crosses beyond the dense forest of delusion...’ (*Gītā* 2.52). Here, again, You are simply speaking about *jñāna*.

“In fact, the word *iva* (‘like that’ or ‘it seems’) implies that Your statement is not ambiguous. Since You are merciful, it is not Your desire to bewilder me. Besides, since I am not ignorant of these matters, it is appropriate for You to speak to me directly.”

The deep purport is that action (*karma*) in the mode of goodness is superior to action in the mode of passion. Knowledge is also in the mode of goodness, but it is superior to action in the mode of goodness. And devotion that is beyond the modes (*nirguṇā-bhakti*) is far superior to knowledge. “If You think that it is impossible for me to engage in devotion that is beyond the modes, then please simply instruct me on knowledge in the mode of goodness, by which I will become free from bondage to this miserable material world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Action performed in the mode of goodness is superior to action performed in passion. Knowledge is superior to action that is in the mode of goodness, even though knowledge is also in the mode of goodness. “*Sattvāt sanjāyate jñānam* – from the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*) real knowledge develops” (*Gītā* 14.17).

Superior to knowledge in the mode of goodness is devotion that is completely free from the contamination of the three modes of

material nature (*nirguṇā-bhakti*). This is defined as follows in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.11-12):

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau
lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*

While Kapiladeva was instructing His mother Devahūti in *nirguṇā-bhakti*, He said, “Just as the water of the Gaṅgā River flows naturally and without cessation towards the ocean, similarly, the soul flows in a natural, unbroken way towards Me, who am situated within the cave of the heart of the living entity. This takes place simply by hearing about My pastimes and qualities, which are blessed with extraordinary potency. It is called *nirguṇā-bhakti-yoga*, transcendental devotion. *Nirguṇā-bhakti* is free from any desire other than to serve Me. It is also devoid of the dualities of the material world, which arise from forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, and it absorbs the performer in continuous service in a mood that is favourable to Me, the Supreme Person, *Puruṣottama*.”

To forget Kṛṣṇa and become absorbed in illusion (*māyā*) is called *dvitīya-abhiniveśa*, absorption in a second, or false, object (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37). This gives rise to various separate interests, such as ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘you’ and ‘yours’.

VERSE 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच—
लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ।
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

*śrī bhagavān uvāca –
loke 'smin dvi-vidhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha
jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām karma-yogena yoginām*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; *loke* – in the world; *asmin* – this; *dvi-vidhā* – two types of; *niṣṭhā* – strong faith; *purā* – previously; *proktā* –

it was clearly said; *mayā* – by Me; *anagha* – O sinless Arjuna; *jñāna-yogena* – through the connecting process of philosophical speculation; *sāṅkhyānām* – of the analytical philosophers; *karma-yogena* – through the *yoga* of selflessly offering the result of one’s *karma* to the Supreme, *niṣkāma-karma*; *yoginām* – of the *yogīs*.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O sinless Arjuna, I have already explained clearly that there are two types of faith in this world. The faith of the empiric speculators is in the path of *jñāna-yoga*, and that of the *yogīs* is in worshipping the Supreme Lord by offering Him the fruits of their prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In response to Arjuna’s question, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “If I say that worshipping the Supreme by selflessly offering Him the results of one’s prescribed duties (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) and by the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) – both of which are the practices to attain liberation – are independent of each other, you will again ask Me to speak decisively on one of them. But as I have explained, these two types of faith, faith in *karma* and faith in *jñāna*, are actually two consecutive stages on the same path. I have not said that there are two types of people who are eligible to achieve liberation.”

For this reason these two verses are being spoken, beginning with *loke ’smin*. As explained in the previous chapter, *dvi-vidhā* indicates two types of faith. In this regard, Kṛṣṇa is saying that, since in the stage of *jñāna* the heart of the *jñānī* is pure, he can be established in regulated self-discipline by the practice of *jñāna-yoga*. Only such persons who practise such regulated discipline are known in this world as *jñānīs*.

In the *Gītā* (2.61) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

*tāni sarvāṇi samyamya yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ
vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*

Therefore, one should subdue the senses by surrendering to Me in *bhakti-yoga* and remain under My shelter, because only one whose senses are controlled is of fixed intelligence. Only he is *sthita-prajñā*.

Kṛṣṇa says, “On the other hand, there are those who lack the purity of heart to situate themselves on the path of *jñāna* but are searching for the means to attain that path. The regulative discipline of such *yogīs* is established by following the path of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, which is offered unto Me. Such persons are known as *karmīs*. In the *Gītā* (2.31) it is said, ‘For a *kṣatriya*, there is no better engagement than to fight for religion.’ The terms *karmī* and *jñānī*, therefore, are only appellations. However, generally, when *karmīs* begin to purify their hearts by the process of selflessly offering the fruits of their work to the Supreme Lord, they too become *jñānīs*, who can in turn become liberated by the process of devotion to Him. This is the import of My statements.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The various processes of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna*, and *tapasya* (austerity) cannot independently award the results of practising them. Only by taking support of *bhakti* are they able to produce any beneficial result. *Bhakti* that is beyond the modes of material nature, however, can award *kṛṣṇa-prema* independently, without the help of these other processes.

Bhakti-yoga that is mixed with *jñāna* or *karma* is the means to attain liberation. There are two types of staunch faith related to this practice of mixed *bhakti*. Those with pure hearts possess the first type of faith. They ascend to the path of *bhakti-yoga* through their steady faith in *sāṅkhya* (the analytical study of the nature of spirit and matter) or *jñāna-yoga* (the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge). Those with impure hearts possess the second type of faith, yet by performing selfless action offered to Śrī Bhagavān, they can also ascend the path of *jñāna-yoga* and ultimately achieve *bhakti*.

VERSE 4

न कर्मणामनारम्भात्त्रैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च सन्न्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥४॥

na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo 'śnute
na ca sannyaśanād eva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati

na – not; *karmaṇām* – of duties prescribed in the scriptures; *anārambhāt* – by refraining from; *naiṣkarmyam* – (knowledge in the form of) freedom from reactive action; *puruṣaḥ* – a person; *aśnute* – attains; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *sannyasanāt* – by renouncing prescribed duties (by a person whose heart is impure); *eva* – only; *siddhim* – perfection; *samadhigacchati* – can attain.

By ceasing to perform work as prescribed in the scriptures, a person cannot attain knowledge in the form of freedom from work and its reaction, nor can a person with an impure heart attain perfection merely by renouncing action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In this verse beginning with the word *na*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining that *jñāna* will not appear in an impure heart. A person cannot attain *jñāna*, or freedom from work and its reaction (*naiṣkarmya*) without performing the work prescribed in the scriptures. Those persons whose hearts are impure cannot attain perfection merely by accepting the renounced order nor by renouncing scripturally prescribed action (*karma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: True knowledge (*jñāna*) does not appear unless the heart is pure, and without *jñāna* one cannot perfect *sannyāsa*, which is a limb of the process of attaining liberation. Therefore, until one attains *jñāna* by purity of heart, one should, as stated in the scriptures, continue performing one's prescribed duties related to *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

VERSE 5

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥५॥

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ

na – not; *hi* – certainly; *kaścit* – anyone; *kṣaṇam* – for a moment; *api* – even; *jātu* – at any time; *tiṣṭhati* – remains; *akarma-kṛt* – inactive;

kāryate – is performed; *hi* – because; *avaśaḥ* – helplessly; *karma* – in action; *sarvaḥ* – everyone; *prakṛti-jaiḥ* – born of one’s nature; *guṇaiḥ* – by the qualities (such as attachment and hatred).

No one can remain inactive, not even for a moment. Everyone is impelled to act under the influence of such qualities as attachment and hate, which are born of one’s nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who accept *sannyāsa*, the renunciation of their prescribed duties, while their hearts are still impure become absorbed in mundane activities and give up the work scriptures prescribe for them. It is for this reason only that Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *na hi*. Arjuna may ask, “By the acceptance of *sannyāsa*, does a person cease to perform activities prescribed in the Vedas, or activities that are related to the material world?” Anticipating this, Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying *kāryate*. “Being forcibly bound by his own nature, he must act.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, the word *sannyāsa* means ‘detachment from the fruits of one’s prescribed duty’. It does not mean ‘completely giving up that duty’ or ‘becoming inactive’, because it is not possible for the embodied soul to completely renounce activity. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.1.44), *dehavān na hy akarma-kṛt*. This verse means, ‘Those whose hearts are pure and who control their senses remain engaged in the duties (*karma*) prescribed in the scriptures. However, persons whose hearts are impure and whose senses are uncontrolled remain attached to neglecting their duty (*akarma*) and to sinful action (*kukarma*). For this reason it is impossible for such persons to achieve *sannyāsa*.’

VERSE 6

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥६॥

karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate

karma-indriyāṇi – the working senses; *saṁyāmya* – having restrained; *yaḥ* – who; *āste* – remains; *manasā* – through his mind; *smaran* – meditating; *indriya-arthān* – on sense objects; *vimūḍha-ātmā* – foolish person; *mithya-ācārah* – a hypocrite; *saḥ* – he; *ucyate* – is called.

A deluded person who forcibly restrains his working senses while internally meditating on sense objects is to be known as a hypocrite.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: One may argue, “It seems that like a hypocrite, some *sannyāsīs* close their eyes and refrain from any bodily movement.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “A person who controls his working senses, such as his speech and hands, but on the pretext of meditation contemplates sense objects, is indeed a hypocrite and an impostor.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI:

*tvam-padārtha-vivekāya sannyāsaḥ sarva-karmaṇām
śrutyeḥa vihito yasmāt tat-tyāgī patito bhavet*

This Vedic injunction is from the scriptures on correct moral conduct (*dharma-śāstra*). It states that it is absolutely essential to renounce all fruitive actions in order to attain knowledge of the self. Those who do not follow this injunction are fallen. Therefore, a man with an impure heart who accepts the dress of a *sannyāsī* and who makes a display of sitting in a yogic posture to meditate on Bhagavān is an offensive pretender. It is pretentious to exhibit oneself in society as a devotee, while being devoid of devotion. Such people are not only pretenders but also arrogant.

VERSE 7

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥७॥

*yas tv indriyāṇi manasā niyamyaṛabhate 'rjuna
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate*

yah – who; *tu* – however; *indriyāṇi* – the senses; *manasā* – through the mind; *niyamyā* – regulates; *ārabhate* – begins; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *karma-indriyaiḥ* – by his working senses; *karma-yogam* – scripturally prescribed action, or *karma*; *asaktaḥ* – without attachment; *saḥ* – he; *viśiṣyate* – is superior.

But, O Arjuna, a person who performs action with his working senses in accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures, who regulates his senses through the mind, and who is free from all fruitive desires, is superior.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is indicated here that even a married person who acts in accordance with scripture is recognized as superior to the false renunciant described in the previous verse. Śrī Bhagavān explains this by speaking this verse beginning with *yas tu*. Here, *karma-yoga* refers to action prescribed in scripture, and *asaktaḥ* means ‘without desire for the fruits of one’s activity’. This means that the person who acts according to the instructions of scripture, with no desire for the fruits of his activities, attains a superior condition. Śrī Rāmānujācārya says, “*asambhāvita-pramādatvena jñāna-niṣṭhād api puruṣād viśiṣṭaḥ* – that householder who has controlled his knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriyas*) and his working senses (*karmendriyas*) is better than a so-called transcendentalist who makes a display of his knowledge.” The pseudo-transcendentalist may deviate because his senses are uncontrolled, but there is no possibility that a householder who has controlled his knowledge-acquiring senses will deviate or be careless while performing his prescribed duties with his working senses.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In order to purify the heart, it is imperative to perform action prescribed in scripture without attachment. Those practitioners, or *sādhakas*, who after controlling their knowledge-acquiring senses (such as the eyes, ears and tongue), perform *karma-yoga* with their working senses (such as the legs, hands and speech) without desiring the fruits of their activities, and who are careful and attentive in their endeavour, are qualified to attain *puruṣārtha*, the supreme goal of human life. Such practitioners, who

aspire for the transcendental goal, are superior to those who accept *sannyāsa* impetuously, forcibly controlling their working senses while enjoying sense objects through their knowledge-acquiring senses.

VERSE 8

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्येदकर्मणः ॥८॥

niyataṁ kuru karma tvam karma jyāyo hy akarmaṇaḥ
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasidhyed akarmaṇaḥ

niyatam – continuously; *kuru* – perform; *karma* – duties such as chanting of the *gāyatrī-mantra* and other forms of worship; *tvam* – you; *karma* – action; *jyāyaḥ* – better; *hi* – because; *akarmaṇaḥ* – than not working; *śarīra* – bodily; *yātrā* – maintenance; *api* – even; *ca* – and; *te* – your; *na prasidhyet* – can not be effected; *akarmaṇaḥ* – without performing inaction.

Perform your prescribed duties, such as the chanting of the *gāyatrī-mantra*, because action is better than inaction. If you refrain from action, you will not even be able to maintain your body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Therefore, O Arjuna, perform your regulated duties, such as your morning, noon and evening *mantras* (*sandhyā*) and your worship (*upāsana*). It is better to do this than to renounce your prescribed duty (*karma*). If you give up all *karma*, you will not even be able to maintain your body.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The above statement is verified in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.26.2):

āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ / sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ
smṛti-lambhe sarvagranthīnām vipramokṣaḥ

It is by the purity of food that one’s mind becomes purified. When the mind is purified, one attains a stable memory. When the memory is stable, all the knots of the heart are untied.

Furthermore it is stated in the *Gītā* (3.13):

bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt

Those who cook grains and other foodstuffs for their own sake are sinful and certainly partake of sin.

It is understood from this and other statements that for the perfection of one's practice (*sādhana*), it is necessary to maintain and protect the body, and for this, it is imperative to follow the scriptural injunctions for the performance of one's prescribed duties. However, those who impetuously give up all action by taking *sannyāsa* do not receive the light of knowledge in their impure hearts. Moreover, if they perform no work at all, they can even leave their bodies because they have not maintained them.

VERSE 9

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥९॥

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara*

yajña-arthāt – for the sake of Śrī Viṣṇu; *karmaṇaḥ* – than (the selfless performance of) *karma*; *anyatra* – other; *lokaḥ* – humanity; *ayaṁ* – this; *karma-bandhanaḥ* – bondage through their work; *tad-arthaṁ* – for His (Viṣṇu's) sake; *karma* – work; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *mukta-saṅgaḥ* – free from attachment (to the fruit of work); *samācara* – perform nicely.

For humanity, all actions other than those selflessly offered to Śrī Viṣṇu are a cause of bondage to this world, O son of Kuntī. Therefore, become free from all desires for the fruits of your actions and perform appropriate action solely for His satisfaction.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, if you quote *karmaṇā badhyate jantuh* from the Smṛtis as evidence that by performing action a soul is bound, and if you think that by performing action you will also become bound, then listen carefully: this is not

always the case. Work (*karma*) offered to Parameśvara, the Supreme Lord, is not a cause of bondage.” The present verse beginning with *yajñārthāt* is spoken to explain this.

Performance of one’s prescribed duties wherein the fruits are offered to Śrī Viṣṇu is called sacrifice, or *yajña*. All action (*karma*) binds a person to the material world, but that action performed for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu does not. Therefore, to attain perfection in one’s religious occupational duty (*dharma*), one must perform such duty properly for the satisfaction of Śrī Viṣṇu. Arjuna may again ask, “Will it be a cause of bondage to make a materially motivated offering, even though I am offering the results of my prescribed duties to Śrī Viṣṇu?” Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus says *mukta-saṅgaḥ*. “Perform action without any desire for the results.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Uddhava in the same way:

*sva-dharma-stho yajan yajñair anāsiḥ-kāma uddhava
na yāti svarga-narakau yady anyan na samācaret*

*asmīḷ loke vartamānaḥ sva-dharma-stho ’naghaḥ śuciḥ
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti mad-bhaktim vā yadṛcchayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.10–11)

O Uddhava, a person who performs his occupational duties without desiring the fruits and who worships Śrī Bhagavān by sacrifice, not engaging in the pursuit of any desirable sense object or any forbidden activity, attains neither heaven nor hell. Such a person, who is situated in his own religious occupational duty, who has given up all forbidden activities and who is free from all attachment and envy, attains pure knowledge, even in his present condition in this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI: The Vedas say, “*yajño vai viṣṇu – yajña*, or sacrifice, is indeed Viṣṇu.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa also tells Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.39): “*yajño ’ham bhagavattamaḥ – I*, the son of Vasudeva, am *yajña*.” The *Tantra-sāra* also states sacrifice to be Śrī Hari Himself:

*yajño yajña-pumāms caiva yajñaśo yajña-bhāvanah
yajña-bhuk ceti pañcātmā yajñeśv ijyo hariḥ svayam*

In the two verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.10–11), which Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has cited in his commentary on the present verse, the word *sva-dharma-stha* (situated in one's prescribed duties) has been used twice. While commenting on these two verses, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says:

- (1) A person does not go to hell if he is situated in his occupational position (*sva-dharma*) and does not transgress the activities prescribed in scripture to engage in forbidden activities. And since he has no desire for the fruits of his activities, he does not go to the heavenly planets, either.
- (2) A person who engages in selflessly offering the fruits of his prescribed duty to the Supreme (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) is called *sva-dharma-stha*, or truly situated in his prescribed religious occupation.

When one's occupational duties (*karma*) are performed in accordance with scripture, without any selfish motive and for the pleasure of Śrī Viṣṇu, they purify the heart. Associating with saintly persons then causes knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva*, the fundamental truth in relation to the Supreme Lord (Bhagavān), to appear in the heart. This allows one to enter the path of devotion to Him that is beyond the modes of material nature (*nirguṇā-bhakti*).

The great saint Śrī Nārada has spoken the same in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.32):

*etat saṁsūcitam brahmaṁs tāpa-traya-cikitsitam
yad īśvare bhagavati karma brahmaṇi bhāvitam*

O knower of the Absolute Truth, that work which is dedicated to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, the controller and master of everyone, removes the three types of miseries.

Śrī Bhagavān also told the Pracetās:

*gṛheṣv āviśatām cāpi puṁsām kuśala-karmaṇām
mad-vārtā yāta-yāmānām na bandhāya grhā matāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.30.19)

Those who know Me to be the enjoyer of the fruits of all activities offer all of their activities to Me alone. Such expert performers of action, as well as those who spend their time hearing of and reciting My pastimes, do not become bound by their actions, even though remaining in household life.

VERSE 10

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥

saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk

saha-yajñāḥ – together with *brāhmaṇas* and others qualified to perform sacrifice; *prajāḥ* – progeny; *sṛṣṭvā* – having created; *purā* – in the beginning of the creation; *uvāca* – said; *prajā-patiḥ* – Lord Brahmā; *anena* – by this sacrifice; *prasaviṣyadhvam* – be more and more prosperous; *eṣaḥ* – this (sacrifice); *vaḥ* – for you; *astu* – may it be; *iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk* – fulfiller of cherished desires.

In the beginning of creation, Lord Brahmā created *brāhmaṇas*, who were qualified to perform sacrifice. He then blessed them, saying, “May you prosper by this sacrifice, and may it fulfil all your desires.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “A person with an impure heart should exclusively engage in selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma*) and not take *sannyāsa*. But if he cannot yet become selfless, then let him perform his prescribed duty with a desire for the fruits (*sakāma-karma*) and offer the results to Śrī Viṣṇu.”

To explain this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks seven verses, the first of which begins here with the word *saha*. *Saha-yajña* means ‘along with sacrifice’. In accordance with the *sūtra*, *vikalpe-upasarjana*, *saha* has not been replaced with *sa*.

Purā implies that in the beginning of creation, Brahmā produced progeny who would perform sacrifice in the form of offering their

religious activities to Śrī Viṣṇu. He then blessed them, saying, “*anena dharmena prasaviṣyadhvam* – by this, may you increasingly prosper in progeny and opulence.” Keeping in mind that the tendency of the general populous is to enjoy, Lord Brahmā said, “Let this sacrifice fulfil all your desired ends.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Offering *kāmya-kāma*, or the results of one’s duty that one has performed with a selfish motive, to Śrī Viṣṇu is better than not performing action (*akarma*).

VERSE 11

देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११ ॥

*devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha*

devān – of the demigods; *bhāvayatā* – by pleasing; *anena* – through this (sacrifice); *te* – those; *devāḥ* – demigods; *bhāvayantu* – should be pleased (bestowing the results); *vaḥ* – you; *parasparam* – one another; *bhāvayantaḥ* – pleasing; *śreyaḥ* – good fortune; *param* – supreme; *avāpsyatha* – you shall attain.

May you please the demigods by this sacrifice, and may they please you in turn by granting you your desired benefits. By satisfying one another in this way, you will attain supreme auspiciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with *devān*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining how sacrifice (*yajña*) can grant all that the heart desires. He says, “May you please the demigods by this *yajña*, and may they please you, also.” In this context the word *bhāva* means *prīti*, or ‘pleasing’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Bhagavān teaches that to please the demigods, oblations of ghee are to be offered to them. This has a hidden meaning. Bhagavān is not instructing us to give up our devotional service and make sacrificial offerings

to worship the demigods, as if they are independent lords. They are not independent. Śrī Viṣṇu empowers qualified living entities (*jīvas*), and giving them the post of protectors of the various directions, He maintains the universe through them. Thus, these demigods are like the limbs of Śrī Bhagavān. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.26) “*bāhavo loka-pālānām* – the arms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the shelter for all the administrative demigods of the world.” Again it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.29) “*indrādayo bāhava āhur usrah* – Indra and the other demigods are the arms of the Lord’s universal form.”

Regarding the worship of Indra, it is seen in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the residents of Vraja used to worship him every year, but once, Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked them to worship the Govardhana mountain instead. When Indra’s arrogance was crushed, he understood, “It was due to pride in my opulence that I considered myself an independent lord. Today, You have showed me great mercy by removing my false ego. Now, having realized that I am the servant of the servant of Your servants, I surrender unto You.” From this context it is evident that the demigods who protect the various directions are the limbs of the universal form.

VERSE 12

इष्टान् भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२ ॥

iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva saḥ

iṣṭān – the desired; *bhogān* – pleasures; *hi* – because; *vaḥ* – unto you; *devāḥ* – the demigods; *dāsyante* – will award; *yajña-bhāvitāḥ* – being pleased by the performance of sacrifices; *taiḥ* – by them; *dattān* – ingredients given; *apradāya* – without offering; *ebhyaḥ* – unto the demigods; *yaḥ* – he who; *bhunkte* – enjoys; *stenaḥ* – a thief; *eva* – certainly; *saḥ* – he.

Being pleased by your performance of sacrifice, the demigods will reward you by making arrangements for your desired enjoyment. Therefore, a person who enjoys the ingredients the demigods have

given, without first offering them to the demigods, is certainly a thief.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Failure to perform *karma* is certainly a defect. Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *iṣṭān* to clarify this point. Grains and other products grow due to rain, which is caused by the demigods. After producing grains and other items, a person who enjoys them without first offering them to the demigods by performing *pañca-mahā-yajña*, five great sacrifices, is a thief.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In regard to these great five sacrifices, or *pañca-mahā-yajña*, it is stated in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*adhyāpanam brahma-yajñah pitṛ-yajñas tu tarpaṇam
homo daivo balir bhauto nṛ-yajño 'tithi-pūjanam*

(1) To give the disciple instructions from scripture is called *brahma-yajña*. (2) To offer oblations to the forefathers is *pitṛa-yajña*. (3) To perform fire sacrifice is *deva-yajña*. (4) To give in charity offerings of fruits, flowers, grains and so on to the living entities is *bali*, or *bhūta-yajña*. (5) To receive guests warm-heartedly is called *nṛ-yajña*.

Many persons think that the word *bali* (offering) in this verse means 'to offer a sacrifice by killing animals and humans', but this is not the opinion of scriptures such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña surā-grahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.11)*

The true meaning of *bali* is to give grains, water, fruits, flowers and animals in charity for the satisfaction of the demigods.

VERSE 13

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥३३॥
*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ
bhujate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

yajña-śiṣṭa – of the remnants of food of sacrifice; *aśinaḥ* – eaters; *santaḥ* – saintly persons; *mucyante* – they are freed; *sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ* – from all sins; *bhuñjate* – eat; *te* – those; *tu* – but; *agham* – sin; *pāpāḥ* – sinners; *ye* – who; *pacanti* – cook; *ātma-kāraṇāt* – for their own sake.

Saintly persons, who only accept the remnants of sacrifice, become free from all sins, but those who cook grains and other foodstuffs for their own sake are sinners, and certainly eat only sin.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who take the grain remnants of sacrifices such as *vaiśvadeva* (a type of sacrifice to the demigods) become free from the sins incurred due to the five unavoidable actions performed by householders, or *pañca-sūnā*. The Smṛtis inform the householder of the following five objects that are *pañca-sūnā*: (1) the cooking fire, (2) the grinding instrument, (3) the mortar and pestle, (4) the water-pot and (5) the broom. The word *sūnā* means ‘the place where animals are slaughtered’. These five household objects are called *pañca-sūnā* because they may inflict violence upon living entities. It is because of this only that householders do not attain the heavenly planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Sacrifice related with the worship of the demigods, who control the various aspects of the universe, are called *vaiśvadeva*.

*vasu-sato kratu-dakṣau kāla-kāmau dhṛtiḥ kuruḥ
purūravā mādravās ca viśvadevāḥ prakīrtitāḥ*

Bharata Muni

The householders unknowingly cause violence to living entities by using the pestle, fire, grinding instrument, water pot and broom.

Those who cook food for themselves become implicated in such sins. Even if they perform their prescribed duties properly, they do not attain the heavenly planets. Therefore, the Smṛtis have prescribed “*pañca-sūnā kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ pañca-yajñair vyapohati* – the sacrifice called *pañca-yajña* nullifies the five unavoidable sins incurred by householders.”

VERSE 14

अत्राद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaād anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñād bhavati parjanya yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

annāt – from grains; *bhavanti* – develop; *bhūtāni* – all living beings; *parjanyaāt* – from rain; *anna* – food grains; *sambhavaḥ* – produced; *yajñāt* – from the performance of sacrifice; *bhavati* – produced; *parjanyaḥ* – rain; *yajñāḥ* – sacrifice; *karma* – from prescribed duties; *samudbhavaḥ* – born of.

All living beings are born of food grains, which are produced from rain. Rains fall because of the performance of sacrifice, and sacrifice is born of the performance of prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “It is still desirable to perform sacrifice (*yajña*), because it maintains the cycle of action in this material world.” To express this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the verse beginning with *annāt*. Living entities are produced from food grains, thus food grains are the cause of the living entities. Grain is transformed into blood, which then turns into semen. This in turn forms the body of the living entity. Clouds are the source of food grains, which are produced from rain. Sacrifice is the cause of the clouds, because when sacrifice is performed, sufficient rain clouds are produced. The cause of the sacrifice is the performance of prescribed action, because a sacrifice is perfectly executed when the priest of the sacrifice and the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is performed both perform the prescribed *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Ṛtvik* – A priest who performs sacrifice in different seasons:

*āgnedheyam pāka-yajñān agniṣṭomādikān makhān
yaḥ karoti vṛto yasya sa tasyartvig ihocyate*

One who feeds the fire god through the performance of a fire sacrifice is called a *ṛtvika*.

There are four prominent *ṛtviks* in the performance of sacrifice: (1) *hotā*, one who chants the *mantras* of the *R̥g Veda*; (2) *adhvaryu*, one who chants the *mantras* of the *Yajur Veda*; (3) *brahmā*, one who chants the *mantras* of the *Atharva Veda* and (4) *udgātā*, one who chants the *mantras* of the *Sāma Veda*.

VERSE 15

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम्।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

*karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi brahmākṣara-samudbhavam
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*

karma – prescribed duties; *brahma* – from *brahma*, or the Vedas; *udbhavam* – originate; *viddhi* – you should know that; *brahma* – the Vedas; *akṣara* – from Acyuta, the infallible Supreme Lord; *samudbhavam* – originate; *tasmāt* – for this reason; *sarva-gataṁ* – the all-pervading; *brahma* – Supreme Absolute Truth; *nityam* – always; *yajñe* – in sacrifice; *pratiṣṭhitam* – situated.

Know that such duties are prescribed within the Vedas and that the Vedas originate from Bhagavān Acyuta. Therefore, the all-pervading Absolute Truth is always situated in the performance of *yajña*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The Vedas only are the cause of that prescribed action, because sacrifice is performed only after hearing Vedic injunctions. Acyuta, the infallible Absolute Reality, is the cause of the Vedas because they originated from the Supreme. In this regard it is said in the Vedas (Śrutis):

*asya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad
ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāmavedo 'tharvāṅgirasah
Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad (4.5.11)*

The *Ṛg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Atharva-veda* are the breath of the Mahāpuruṣa.

Therefore, the all-pervading Supreme Lord is present in acts of sacrifice, or *yajña*. This statement also establishes that one can attain the Supreme by sacrifice. Although a connection of cause and effect has been shown here by linking food grains to *brahma*, still the scriptures describe that only sacrifice is the governing factor, and only sacrifice is glorified. *Manu-smṛiti* also says, “Oblations offered in the fire reach Sūrya-deva, the sun-god. From the sun comes rain, from rain comes food grains, and from food grains progeny is born.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “*Udyama-sthā sadā laksmīḥ* – wealth always resides in endeavour.” Similarly, the all-pervading Supreme is always situated in sacrifice. By engaging in sacrifice and righteous acts, the *jīva* not only becomes free from sin but can also attain the Supreme.

VERSE 16

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
 अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥१६॥
evam pravartitam cakram nānuvartayatīha yaḥ
aghāyur indriyārāmo mogham pārtha sa jīvati

evam – thus; *pravartitam* – set into motion; *cakram* – this cycle (of *karma*); *na anuvartayati* – does not follow; *īha* – in this world; *yaḥ* – one who; *aghāyuh* – a life of sin; *indriya-ārāmaḥ* – delights in the senses; *mogham* – in vain; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *saḥ* – he; *jīvati* – lives.

O Pārtha, in this world, one who does not follow this cycle of action as prescribed in the scriptures delights in the senses and engages in sinful life. Thus he lives in vain.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: By not engaging in this cycle, the fault of irregularity arises. The present verse beginning with *evam* is spoken

to give an understanding of this point. *Cakra*, or cycle, means ‘an ordered series of events’. For example, clouds and rain come from sacrifice, food grains come from rains, and from food grains come mankind, who again performs sacrifice, which produces rain clouds and so on. One who does not engage in sacrifice to continue this cycle is a sinful person. Who does not go to hell? Only one who performs sacrifice, or *yajña*, does not go to hell.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Parameśvara, the Supreme Lord, has established the cycle of *karma* to fulfil the desires of the *jīvas*. Consequently, one who does not perform sacrifice, which perpetuates the cycle of the universe, becomes implicated in sin and goes to hell.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “O Pārtha, they who are qualified to engage in action with a desire for the fruits (*kāmya-karma*) but who do not perform sacrifice to perpetuate the cycle of the universe, become servants of their senses and engaged in sinful life. Thus they live in vain.”

The significance is that in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selfless action which is offered to Śrī Bhagavān, sin or piety are not considered. Scripture has thus established this as the most suitable path to attain pure, transcendental *bhakti* to Bhagavān. A person following this path easily becomes pure at heart and free from material contamination. Those who have not acquired the qualification to offer the fruit of their selflessly performed duty to Śrī Bhagavān are always swayed by material desires and sensual urges. They thus engage in sinful acts. The only way to reduce this sinful tendency is to perform pious action. Those who have acted sinfully should take shelter of the process of atonement. The performance of sacrifice is certainly religious, or pious, activity.

That which is auspicious for all living entities (*jīvas*) and conducive for the harmonious development of the cycle of the universe is called *punya*, or pious deeds. The performance of pious deeds destroys the unavoidable sins that are born of *pañca-sūnā* – the five places where a householder unavoidably kills animals: the fire place, the slab for grinding condiments, the broom, pestle and mortar, and water pot. As long as the performer of *yajña* protects the interests and welfare of

the universe, whatever can be accepted for his happiness and personal maintenance becomes part of the sacrifice and is counted as piety.

The unseen controllers, who cause auspiciousness for the universe, are the specific demigods born from the potency (*śakti*) of Śrī Bhagavān. By satisfying them with the offerings they desire and gaining their favour, one receives their grace and becomes pleased. Thus all of one's sins are destroyed. This is called the *karma-cakra*, the cycle of action. Therefore, what is accepted as *karma*, in the form of worship of these demigods, is called *bhagavad-arpita-kāmya-karma*. Whoever performs these acts, thinking that they are in accordance with materialistic regulations, are simply moralists; they are among those who do not offer their actions to Śrī Viṣṇu. For *jīvas* who have the proper eligibility, it is auspicious to offer all actions to Bhagavān Viṣṇu.

VERSE 17

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७ ॥

yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-tr̥ptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmany eva ca santuṣṭas tasya kāryam na vidyate

yaḥ – one who; *tu* – however; *ātma-ratiḥ* – delighting in the self; *eva* – certainly; *syāt* – is; *ātma* – self; *tr̥ptah* – satisfied; *ca* – and; *mānavaḥ* – the man; *ātmani* – in the self; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *santuṣṭaḥ* – satisfied; *tasya* – for him; *kāryam* – duties; *na* – do not; *vidyate* – exist.

A person who delights in the self, however, and who remains contented and fully satisfied in the self, has no duties to perform.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: So far, it has been explained that those who are unable to perform action (*karma*) in a selfless manner should perform action with the intention of enjoying its fruit (*sakāma-karma*). Those who are situated on the platform of *jñāna*, or realized knowledge, have pure hearts, so they never engage in performing routine, fruitive action. The next two verses, beginning here with *yas tu*, are spoken to explain this.

Ātma-ratiḥ means ‘those who take pleasure in the self’. If a person is satisfied within the self, would he even be slightly satisfied with external sense objects? In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān says, “One who is satisfied within has no need for external sense pleasures and is therefore not obliged to perform prescribed duties.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Living entities who are absorbed in the cycle of *karma*, which has been described above, perform action, knowing it to be their duty. However, those who can discriminate between the self and inert objects engage solely in the cultivation of the self. They remain content within the self, because they are able to take pleasure in the self (*ātmārāma*) and can satisfy all their desires in the self (*āptakāma*). Such exalted personalities are of two types: (1) those who seek the soul through transcendental knowledge (*jñānī-yogīs*) and (2) those who cultivate the path of pure love for the Supreme Lord (*bhakti-yogīs*).

Personalities like the four Kumāras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra) are considered to be in the first category, while personalities like Śrī Nārada fall in the second. They do not perform their prescribed duty, although they know it is obligatory. Instead, they maintain their lives by performing action that is favourable to *bhakti*. Becoming free from the cycle of *karma*, they search for peace in the form of love for Bhagavān. Although they perform all sorts of activities, they perform no material action. Therefore, their activity is not called *karma*, but in accordance with their specific qualification, it is called *jñāna* or *bhakti*. It is also said in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.4) “*ātma-kṛiḍa ātma-ratiḥ kriyāvān eṣa brahma-vidāṁ variṣṭhaḥ* – those who take pleasure in the self, whose attachment is in the self, and who are active only in the self, are the best among those who know the Vedas.”

VERSE 18

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsya sarva-bhūteṣu kaścīd artha-vyapāśrayaḥ

na – no; *eva* – indeed; *tasya* – of one (who takes pleasure in the self); *kṛtena* – by performing one’s prescribed action; *arthaḥ* – pious purpose to be attained; *na* – nor; *akṛtena* – by not performing one’s prescribed duty; *iha* – in this world; *kaścana* – whatsoever; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *aśya* – he has; *sarva-bhūteṣu* – in all the living beings in the world; *kaścit* – any; *artha* – necessity; *vyapāśrayaḥ* – to take shelter.

For a person who is satisfied in the self, there is no pious benefit to achieve by performing prescribed duties in this world, nor is there any fault incurred by not performing them. For attaining his purpose, he does not feel the need to depend on any living being in the universe.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Kṛta* refers to a person who is not obliged to perform his prescribed duty nor has any desire to be fulfilled through them. *Akṛta* means that even though he does not perform his occupational duty, he is not at fault. There is no *jīva* in the universe, either moving or non-moving, who can act as a suitable shelter for him and help him attain his purpose. The word *vyapāśrayaḥ* has been described in the Purāṇas as follows:

*vāsudeve bhagavati bhaktim udvahatām nṛṇām
jñāna-vairāgya-vīryāṇām na hi kaścīd vyapāśrayaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.17.31)*

A person endowed with devotion to Bhagavān Vāsudeva does not take shelter of knowledge, renunciation or strength, nor is he interested in them.

Moreover, it is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18): “*yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ śuddhyanti* – a living entity becomes purified merely by taking shelter of those who are surrendered to Śrī Bhagavān.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A person who derives pleasure exclusively within the self does not achieve piety by performing his prescribed duties, nor does he become implicated in sin by not performing them. Every *jīva*, both moving and non-moving, beginning with Lord Brahmā, remains absorbed in enjoying material

happiness due to the misconception of identifying the body with the self. Their every action is performed for sense enjoyment. But the self-satisfied saintly persons who are free from desire are completely beyond the self-interest of material sense gratification. They do not even care for knowledge and renunciation, which are the natural shelter of the renunciants. This is because they have taken shelter of *bhakti*, devotion to the Supreme Lord, which is the natural function of the self. Knowledge and renunciation manifest in them as a matter of course, since both are subordinate to *bhakti*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42), Śrī Kavi speaks to Mahārāja Nimi:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

With each mouthful of food that a hungry person takes, three effects are simultaneously accomplished: he obtains satisfaction, he is nourished and his hunger ceases. Similarly, surrendered souls who are engaged in the performance of *bhajana*, simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of devotion to Bhagavān, which ultimately develops into *prema*, or pure love for Him; a direct manifestation of Bhagavān's beloved form; and detachment from material objects.

One may raise the following question: In the Vedas it is said, “*tasmād eṣām tan na priyaṃ yad etan manuṣyā viduḥ* – the demigods do not want human beings to attain knowledge of the Supreme” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10). It is also seen in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.18.14):

*viprasya vai sannyasato devā dārādi-rūpiṇaḥ
vighnān kurvanty ayaṃ hy asmān ākramya samiyāt param*

Knowing that *brāhmaṇas* will surpass them by taking *sannyāsa* and obtaining knowledge of the truth of the Supreme, the demigods take birth to become their wives or children and create obstacles on their path.

Is it thus proper to worship the demigods to eliminate these obstacles?

In this regard, the Śrutis state that even though the demigods present these obstacles, they are, in fact, unable to harm the spiritual aspirants, because the *ātmā* Himself protects them. This *ātmā* is the Self of all selves, Paramātmā:

vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ
vāsudeva-parā yogā vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.28)

According to this statement, Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa is the original Soul of all other souls. By worshipping Him one can gain the affection of everyone. All the demigods are ultimately compelled to show affection and respect to those who have *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

In addition it is stated, “*bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-saṅgena parijāyate* – one attains *bhakti* only by the association of the devotees of Bhagavān.” This statement of scripture means that just as, for the devotees, Śrī Bhagavān is the only suitable shelter, if one desires devotion to Him, it is necessary to take shelter of His devotees. For this reason, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23) states:

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

All the hidden meanings of the Śrutis are revealed only in the heart of that great soul who has the highest transcendental devotion for Śrī Bhagavān and also His representative, *śrī gurudeva*.

VERSE 19

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।
 असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara
asakto hy ācāraṁ karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ

tasmāt – therefore; *asaktaḥ* – without attachment; *satatam* – always; *kāryam* – that which ought to be done; *karma* – work; *samācara* – perform nicely; *asaktaḥ* – without attachment; *hi* – because; *ācāraṁ* – performing; *karma* – prescribed duties; *param* – liberation; *āpnoti* – attains; *pūruṣaḥ* – a man.

Therefore, always perform your prescribed duties without attachment. By working in this way, a person attains liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, you are not qualified to be on the platform of *jñāna*, but since you are a man of proper wisdom, you have more qualification than to perform selfish fruitive action (*kāmya-karma*). Therefore, perform selfless *niṣkāma-karma* only.” The verse beginning with *tasmāt* is spoken for this reason. *Kāryam* means ‘that which is prescribed as an obligatory duty’. After performing that prescribed duty, one attains supreme liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: By always performing selfless action, the heart becomes purified. When the practitioner’s heart is purified, he attains *jñāna*, by which he can attain liberation. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “While engaging in *karma*, one attains transcendental *bhakti*, which is the mature state of *karma-yoga*. This has been called liberation here.”

VERSE 20

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २० ॥

karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthitā janakādayaḥ
loka-saṅgraham evāpi sampaśyan kartum arhasi

karmaṇā – by performance of prescribed duties; *eva hi* – most assuredly; *saṁsiddhim* – in supreme perfection; *āsthitāḥ* – became situated; *janakādayaḥ* – Janaka and other saintly kings; *loka-saṅgraham* – the instruction for the people; *eva* – certainly; *api* – also; *sampaśyan* – considering; *kartum* – to do (your prescribed duties); *arhasi* – you ought.

Saintly kings such as Janaka attained supreme perfection by performing their prescribed duties. Therefore, in consideration of setting an ideal for people in general, you should also perform your prescribed duty.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This verse beginning with *karmaṇaiva* evidences the importance of proper conduct (*sadācāra*). Śrī Bhagavān says, “Even if you consider yourself to be qualified to follow the path of *jñāna*, for the purpose of instructing the people in general, you should still perform your prescribed duties.” It is for this reason that Śrī Kṛṣṇa says *loka-saṅgraham* – the people in general.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: To instruct the general populace, the topmost class of persons should perform their prescribed duties. There are many instances in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that support this statement of the *Gītā*:

*atra pramāṇam hi bhavān parameṣṭhī yathātma-bhūḥ
apare cānutiṣṭhanti pūrveṣāṃ pūrva-jaiḥ kṛtam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.8.25)

O Śukadeva Gosvāmī, you are as good as Lord Brahmā, who took birth directly from the Supreme Self, Lord Nārāyaṇa. You directly follow the precepts established by the previous authorities in the science of devotional service, while others follow custom only, or the precepts of previous philosophical speculators.

*na tvaṃ dvijottama-kulaṃ yadi hātma-gopaṃ
goptā vṛṣaḥ svarhaṇena sa-sūnṛtena
tarhy eva naṅkṣyati śivas tava deva panthā
loko 'grahīṣyad ṛṣabhasya hi tat pramāṇam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.16.23)

O Lord, You are the guardian of the most exalted of the twice-born. If not for Your protection – Your offering them worship and gentle words – the general populace would undoubtedly reject the path to their own auspiciousness. Your behaviour is the evidence of proper action.

*yad yad ācarati śreyān itaras tat tad īhate
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.2.4)

People in general emulate exalted leaders of society and copy their conduct, seeing the leader’s behaviour as authoritative.

bhagavān ṛṣabha-saṁjña ātma-tantraḥ svayaṁ nitya-nivṛttānārtha-paramparaḥ kevalānandānubhava īśvara eva viparītavat karmāṅy ārabhamāṅṅaḥ kālenānugataṁ dharmam ācaraṇenopasiḥṣayann atad-vidāṁ sama upaśānto maitraḥ kārūṅiko dharmārtha-yaśaḥ-prajānandāmṛtāvarodhena gr̥heṣu lokāṁ niyamayat.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.4.14)

Being an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Ṛṣabhadeva was fully independent because His form was spiritual, eternal and full of transcendental bliss. He eternally had nothing to do with the four principles of material misery [birth, death, old age and disease]. Nor was He materially attached. He was always equipoised, and He saw everyone on the same level. He was unhappy to see others unhappy, and He was the well-wisher of all living entities. Although He was a perfect personality, the Supreme Lord and controller of all, He nonetheless acted as if He were an ordinary conditioned soul. Therefore He strictly followed the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma* and acted accordingly. In due course of time, the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma* had become neglected; therefore through His personal characteristics and behaviour, He taught the ignorant public how to perform duties within the *varṇāśrama-dharma*. In this way He regulated the general populace in householder life, enabling them to develop religion and economic well-being and to attain reputations, sons and daughters, material pleasure and finally eternal life. By His instructions, He showed how people could remain householders and at the same time become perfect by following the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*.*

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī comments that Śrī Bhagavān instructs Arjuna, “To engage people in their respective prescribed duties and to restrain them from their tendency to follow a degraded path, it is necessary for you to execute your prescribed duty (*karma*).”

VERSE 21

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

yat yat – whatever; *ācarati* – example he sets; *śreṣṭhaḥ* – an exalted person; *tat tat* – that very thing; *eva* – surely; *itaraḥ* – a common; *janaḥ* – person; *saḥ* – he; *yat* – whatever; *pramāṇam* – standard; *kurute* – he sets; *lokaḥ* – the people; *tat* – that; *anuvartate* – follow.

Whatever behaviour a great personality practises, common people follow, and whatever standards he sets, the whole world pursues.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with the words *yad yad*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining how ideals are established for the common people.

VERSE 22

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥२२॥
*na me pārthāsti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana
nānavāptam avāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi*

na – not; *me* – for Me; *pārtha* – O Pārtha (Arjuna); *asti* – there is; *kartavyam* – prescribed duty; *triṣu* – in the three; *lokeṣu* – planetary systems; *kiñcana* – any; *na* – nothing; *anavāptam* – unattainable; *avāptavyam* – needed to be obtained; *varte* – I am engaged; *eva* – still; *ca* – also; *karmaṇi* – in prescribed duties.

O Pārtha, I have no need to perform prescribed duties (*karma*), because there is nothing within the three worlds that I cannot attain, nor is there anything that I desire to attain. Still, I am always engaged in duty.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this and the next two verses, Śrī Bhagavān presents Himself as an example in order to instruct the common people of the world.

VERSE 23

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३ ॥

*yadi hy ahaṁ na varteyaṁ jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

yadi – if; *hi* – certainly; *aham* – I; *na varteyam* – not engage; *jātu* – at any time; *karmaṇi* – in prescribed duties; *atandritaḥ* – with great care; *mama* – My; *vartma* – path; *anuvartante* – would follow; *manuṣyāḥ* – all men; *pārtha* – O Pārtha (Arjuna); *sarvaśaḥ* – in all respects.

O Pārtha, if I ever failed to vigilantly engage in My duty, common people would certainly follow My example in all respects.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *anuvartante* means ‘they will imitate’.

VERSE 24

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४ ॥

*utsīdeyur ime lokā na kuryāṁ karma ced aham
saṅkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ*

utsīdeyuh – would become degraded; *ime* – all these; *lokāḥ* – people; *na kuryām* – I do not perform; *karma* – prescribed duties; *ced* – if; *aham* – I; *saṅkarasya* – of unwanted population; *ca* – and; *kartā* – the instigator; *syām* – would be; *upahanyām* – I would destroy; *imāḥ* – all these; *prajāḥ* – people.

If I did not perform My duty, then all people would become degraded, and indirectly, I would become the cause of generating unwanted progeny. In this way, I would be instrumental in the destruction of the entire human populace.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Utsīdeyuh* means ‘they will become degraded’. Śrī Bhagavān says, “By following My example and not engaging

in their prescribed duties, common people would become fallen. Consequently, I would be the cause of unwanted progeny (*varṇa-saṅkara*). By making humanity impure, I would be its destroyer.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “If I did not perform duties as prescribed in the Vedas, people would see this and imitate Me. In this way, I would be the cause of their deviating from the path of religion and going to hell.” Therefore, it is appropriate for the leaders of society to engage in that *karma* which is prescribed in the Vedas and which promotes the people’s welfare. At the present time, most of the so-called religious, social, national and world leaders have fallen from the path of religiosity, and consequently common men are also deviating from the proper path. The root problem of immorality, violence, envy and so forth is present everywhere. The only solution is the chanting of *hari-nāma* and the cultivation of *bhakti* in the association of genuine saints.

VERSE 25

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥

saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryād vidvāṁs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham

saktāḥ – being attached; *karmaṇi* – to their prescribed duties; *avidvāṁsaḥ* – the ignorant; *yathā* – just as; *kurvanti* – perform; *bhārata* – O scion of Bharata (Arjuna); *kuryāt* – should act; *vidvān* – the learned; *tathā* – in the same way; *asaktāḥ* – without attachment; *cikīrṣuḥ* – desiring to effect; *loka-saṅgraham* – the instruction of the general populace.

O descendant of Bharata, ignorant people perform their duties with attachment. Those who are wise should also work, but without attachment, desiring to instruct the people in general.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Thus, even a person who is firmly situated on the platform of *jñāna* is duty bound to perform his prescribed work

(*karma*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic with this verse beginning with the word *saktāḥ*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: These days, ignorant people perform their prescribed duty with attachment both to the work and its fruits, but one who knows *tattva*, fundamental truths, performs their religious duty without attachment. The activities performed by these two types of people appear to be the same, but there is a difference of heaven and hell between them. The distinction lies in their faith: one is attached to the fruit of their *karma*, while the other is detached.

VERSE 26

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
योजयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६ ॥

na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām
yojayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran

na – not; *buddhi-bhedam* – confusion in the intelligence (with the instruction to practise *jñāna* and abandon *karma*); *janayet* – should create; *ajñānām* – of the ignorant; *karma-saṅginām* – for those attached to fruitive work; *yojayet* – he should engage; *sarva* – all; *karmāṇi* – actions; *vidvān* – the learned person and instructor in *jñāna-yoga*; *yuktaḥ* – with a composed mind; *samācaran* – while acting nicely.

A person who is learned in the path of spiritual advancement through knowledge should not bewilder the intelligence of ignorant people by instructing them to give up their prescribed duties and engage in the cultivation of *jñāna*. Rather, by properly performing his own actions in a composed and detached state of mind, he should engage such people in their prescribed duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, a man of knowledge should not bewilder the ignorant, who are attached to their actions, by telling them, ‘There is no purpose in performing mundane activities. Become perfect like me by renouncing your prescribed duty and

cultivating transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*).’ Such ignorant people are particularly attached to the performance of their prescribed duty because their hearts are impure. Although you may be perfect, by performing selfless action you can encourage others to engage in their prescribed duties. You yourself become an ideal example by performing your prescribed duty properly. You could well say to Me, ‘In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.9.50) You have said:

*svayam niḥśreyasam vidvān na vakty ajñāya karma hi
na rāti rogiṇo ’pathyam vānchato ’pi bhiṣaktamaḥ*

A good physician does not prescribe a diet that is indigestible, even though the patient may desire it. Similarly, a person knowing the highest welfare does not instruct an ignorant person to engage in his prescribed duty.

Thus You have therefore contradicted Your own statements.’

“This is correct,” answers Śrī Bhagavān, “but I gave that instruction in relation to *bhakti*, when the subject of instruction was *bhakti* itself. Now I am giving the instruction in relation to *jñāna*, so there is no contradiction. *Jñāna* depends on purity of heart, and purity of heart depends on the selfless performance of one’s prescribed duty. *Bhakti*, however, is independently powerful; she does not depend upon purity of heart. If one is able to arouse faith in *bhakti*, one can disturb the intelligence of a person who is attached to *karma*, and it is not inappropriate. Those who have developed faith in *bhakti* have surpassed the need to perform their prescribed duty. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.9):

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvataḥ
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

A person should perform his occupational duty as long as he has not developed renunciation or awakened a taste in hearing and reciting topics about Me.

Furthermore:

*dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.32)*

Those who give up all varieties of *varṇāśrama* and worship Me are indeed the most elevated class of saintly persons.

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

Bhagavad-gītā (18.66)

Completely abandoning all bodily and mental *dharmā*, such as *varṇa* and *āśrama*, fully surrender to Me alone.

*tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.5.17)

A person who gives up his prescribed duties to engage in the service of Śrī Hari's lotus feet can never be unsuccessful, even if he falls down while in the immature stage.

One should deliberate upon all these statements.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The purpose of performing *karma*, one's prescribed duty, is to attain that knowledge (*jñāna*) which leads to *bhakti*. Those who do not know this fact are ignorant, and those who are attached to their prescribed duty because of this ignorance are called *karma-saṅgī*. A *jñānī* should only engage such ignorant persons in the duties prescribed for them in scripture, because if their intelligence is bewildered, they will lose faith in the necessity of performing that duty. Under such circumstances even *jñāna* will not be able to manifest in their hearts and thus they will deviate from the paths of performing their duty (*karma*) and seeking knowledge (*jñāna*).

The same does not apply to giving instructions on *bhakti*, however, because according to scripture, instructions on *bhakti* are auspicious for everyone, under all circumstances. Therefore, by giving instructions on *bhakti*, a preacher of *bhakti* will make everyone perfect:

*putrāmś ca śiṣyāmś ca nṛpo gurur vā
mal-loka-kāmo mad-anugrahārthaḥ
ittham vimanyur anuśiṣyād ataj-jñān
na yojayet karmasu karma-mūdhān*

*kaṁ yojayan manujo 'rtham labheta
nīpātayan naṣṭa-dṛṣam hi garte*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.15)

Rṣabhadeva said, “Only My abode and My mercy are worth praying for. Instructions on devotion to Me should be given by fathers to their sons, teachers to their disciples and kings to their subjects. One should not become angry with a person who receives instructions but does not follow them. Even those who are ignorant of knowledge of fundamental spiritual truths (*tattva-jñāna*) and bewildered about their proper duty should not be engaged in *karma*. What goal will be achieved by engaging a person blinded by delusion in fruitive activities, thus throwing him further into the dark well of this material world? Nothing will be achieved.”

While commenting on this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “If someone instructs others about engaging in *karma* instead of giving instruction on *bhakti*, he incurs sin.”

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the present verse, *yojayet sarva-karmāṇi* (*Gītā* 3.26), is not for those who are preaching the message of *bhakti*, but it is to be considered by those who give instructions on *jñāna*.

VERSE 27

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ २७ ॥

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*

prakṛteḥ – of material nature; *kriyamāṇāni* – are performed; *guṇaiḥ* – by the three binding forces; *karmāṇi* – activities; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every respect; *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍha-ātmā* – a person bewildered by false ego; *kartā* – the doer; *aham* – I; *iti* – thus; *manyate* – thinks.

All aspects of material activity are performed by the three binding forces of material nature, but a person whose intelligence is bewildered by false ego thinks himself to be the doer.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: If a learned man also has to perform his prescribed duty, what is the difference between his work and the work of an ignorant man? This doubt is being addressed. The difference is shown in two verses, beginning with the present one, *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni*. Ignorant people believe that they themselves perform all activity (*karma*), but in reality, it is performed by the senses, which are impelled by the modes of material nature.

VERSE 28

तत्त्ववित् तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ २८ ॥
tattvavit tu mahā-bāho guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate

tattva-vit – a knower of the science; *tu* – however; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one; *guṇa-karma* – between the binding forces of material nature and the laws of *karma*; *vibhāgayoḥ* – of the distinctions; *guṇāḥ* – the senses; *guṇeṣu* – in their sense objects, like form, etc.; *vartante* – are engaged; *iti* – that; *matvā* – considering; *na sajjate* – does not become attached.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, a person who knows that the soul is aloof from the three binding forces of material nature, as well as from the laws of *karma*, does not falsely identify himself as the doer. This is because he understands that the senses are engaged in their respective sense objects and are aloof from them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One who knows the distinctive characteristics of the modes of material nature (*guṇa*) and action (*karma*) is called *tattva-vit*, one who knows the Truth.

The modes are divided into three categories: goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and ignorance (*tamas*). Action (*karma*) is divided into four categories: (1) activities that are influenced by these modes, (2) the demigods, (3) the various prominent senses and (4) the objects of the senses. One who is *tattva-vit* knows the truth about both *guṇa* and *karma*. The demigods, or the *guṇas*, are present in the respective

senses, such as sight, and also in the desired sense objects, such as form. However, a learned person knows that he is not the modes of nature nor the effect or action of any mode. He has nothing to do with the modes or their activities. Understanding this, a wise and learned person does not become attached to them.

VERSE 29

प्रकृतेर्गुणसम्मूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नवित्र विचालयेत् ॥ २९ ॥

*prakṛteḥ guṇa-sammūdhāḥ sajjante guṇa-karmasu
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet*

prakṛteḥ – of material nature; *guṇa* – by the modes; *sammūdhāḥ* – bewildered; *sajjante* – become attached; *guṇa-karmasu* – in the sense objects; *tān* – those; *akṛtsna-vidaḥ* – of incomplete knowledge; *mandān* – less intelligent persons; *kṛtsna-vit* – one who is in complete knowledge; *na vicālayet* – should not agitate.

Those bewildered by the three binding modes of nature become attached to sense objects. Those whose knowledge is complete should not unsettle such less intelligent persons, whose knowledge is incomplete.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may raise the question, “If all living entities, *jīvas*, are distinct from the modes and have no relationship with them and their activities, then why are they seen to be attached to sense objects?” In order to reconcile this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, answers with this verse beginning with *prakṛteḥ*. “They become bewildered by the modes of nature they are absorbed in. In other words, they become deluded because of their absorption in the modes. Just as a man haunted by a ghost considers himself to be a ghost, so the *jīvas* absorbed in the modes identify as those very modes. Thus influenced by the effect of those modes, they become attached to sense objects.”

A man of complete knowledge should not unsettle those whose knowledge is incomplete. This means he should not try to force these

understandings on ignorant persons by saying, ‘You are a living entity distinct from the modes. You are not the modes.’ In the same way, a person who is haunted by a ghost will never understand that he is actually not a ghost but a human being, even if he is told hundreds of times. His conviction can only be removed by the medicine of *mantras*.

VERSE 30

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
 निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥
mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ

mayi – unto Me; *sarvāṇi* – all; *karmāṇi* – activities; *sannyasya* – giving up completely; *ādhyātma-cetasā* – with the mind fixed in the self; *nirāśīr* – free from desire; *nirmamaḥ* – without a sense of possessiveness; *bhūtvā* – being; *yudhyasva* – fight; *vigata-jvaraḥ* – without the fever (of lamentation).

With your mind fixed in the self, offering all your activities to Me and being free from desire, possessiveness and lamentation, fight.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Therefore, O Arjuna, fight with your mind fixed in the self, offering all of your actions unto Me and being free from all material hopes and desires. Do not let your mind dwell on the sense objects, and give up any sense of possessiveness of them.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān makes Arjuna the instrument through which He instructs common men to perform their prescribed *karma*, free from the false ego of being the doer and free from the desire for the fruits of their actions. Here the word *karma* refers to all types of *karma*, both *laukika* (mundane) and Vedic (as prescribed in the Vedas). *Nirmamaḥ* indicates that one should perform action without any sense of possessiveness for sense objects such as the body, house, son, wife and brother. Here, the order to fight means that one should engage in prescribed action.

VERSE 31

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१ ॥

*ye me matam idam nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ*

ye – who; *me* – of Mine; *matam* – teaching; *idam* – this; *nityam* – always; *anutiṣṭhanti* – follow; *mānavāḥ* – human beings; *śraddhā-vantaḥ* – who are endowed with faith; *anasūyantaḥ* – free from enmity or fault-finding; *mucyante* – are liberated; *te* – those; *api* – also; *karmabhiḥ* – from (the bondage of) fruitive actions.

Those who are free from the propensity for fault finding, who have complete faith in Me and who always abide by My teachings (to perform *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) are liberated from the bondage of fruitive action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is speaking the present verse beginning with *ye me* in order to induce people to follow His instructions.

VERSE 32

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२ ॥

*ye tv etad abhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāms tān vidधि naṣṭān acetasaḥ*

ye – those; *tu* – but; *etat* – this; *abhyasūyantaḥ* – envious, fault-finding; *na anutiṣṭhanti* – do not follow; *me* – of Mine; *matam* – teaching; *sarva-jñāna* – of all sorts of knowledge; *vimūḍhān* – very confused; *tān* – (all of) them; *vidधि* – know; *naṣṭān* – ruined; *acetasaḥ* – devoid of consciousness (discrimination).

But know that those fault-finding persons who do not follow these instructions of Mine become bereft of discrimination,

cheated of all true knowledge, and ruined in all their endeavours for spiritual perfection.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In speaking this verse beginning with the words *ye tu*, Bhagavān is explaining the ill-effect of not following His instructions.

VERSE 33

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
 प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥

*sadr̥śam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api
 prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*

sadr̥śam – in accordance; *ceṣṭate* – endeavours; *svasyāḥ* – with his own; *prakṛteḥ* – nature; *jñāna-vān* – a man of knowledge; *api* – even; *prakṛtim* – nature; *yānti* – follow; *bhūtāni* – all beings; *nigrahaḥ* – suppression; *kim* – what?; *kariṣyati* – can do.

Even a man of knowledge acts in accordance with his natural disposition, for all beings follow their nature. What can be achieved by repression of the senses?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may raise the following question: “A person who does not obey the order of a king is punished, so if a person does not follow the order of Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller, is he not punished as well? Should he not fear punishment from Him?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “Yes, this is true. However those who are engaged only in satisfying their senses are unable to follow the order of the king or of Parameśvara, even though they can discriminate. Their nature has become like this.” The present verse beginning with *sadr̥śam* is spoken to explain this.

“People may know that sinful activity will lead to punishment from the royal court, or even going to hell, and they may even understand that this will bring infamy and criticism. Still, because of the nature that they have acquired over a prolonged period, they act according

to the temperament resulting from their sinful deeds, which brings only misery. Such people only follow their own disposition. They can, however, be restrained by My discipline or that of a king. A person with an impure heart can receive purifying impressions (*saṃskāras*) by performing selfless action offered to Bhagavān (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*), and a person with a pure heart can receive them through *jñāna-yoga*. Both types of people can be enlightened. It is true that neither process can help a person whose heart is extremely impure, but *bhakti*, which appears by My mercy, can easily deliver even such sinful people.”

As it is said in the *Skanda Purāna*:

*aho dhanyo 'si devarṣe kṛpayā yasya te kṣaṇāt
nīco 'py utpulako lebhe lubdhako ratim acyute*

O Nārada, all glories to you. Because of your mercy, this low-class hunter has, in just one moment, attained deep attachment, or *rati*, for the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, and is manifesting the ecstatic symptom of *pulaka* in which one's bodily hairs stand on end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A person with uncontrolled senses may be able to discriminate but cannot restrain his senses by knowledge of scripture:

*stambhayann ātmanātmānam yāvat sattvaṃ yathā-śrutam
na śaśāka samādhātuṃ mano madana-vepitam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.1.62)

After seeing the prostitute, the mind of Ajāmila became agitated. He tried hard to control his mind by fortitude and knowledge of scripture, but being agitated by Cupid, he was unable to do so.

All uncontrolled, degraded desires can be removed by the powerful influence of the association of saintly persons, or *sādhu-saṅga*.

*tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsya cchindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.26.26)

By their powerful speech, saintly people can completely cut asunder all the unfavourable attachments of the mind.

Vyāsaṅga means ‘attachments that make one averse to Śrī Bhagavān’. Here, the word *eva* implies the powerful speech of saintly persons alone. Pious actions, holy places, demigods and knowledge of scripture are, in and of themselves, not able to destroy unbeneficial attachments. This should be understood.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, do not think that a man of knowledge will attain auspiciousness (liberation from bondage) if he simply deliberates on spirit and matter and accepts the shelter of *sannyāsa-dharma* by impetuously giving up material nature (*guṇa*) and its related activities (*karma*). Even after the conditioned soul has become enriched with knowledge, he will still endeavour in accordance with his long-standing disposition. It is not true that one can give up one’s nature by suddenly restraining it. All bound souls will continue to endeavour according to the disposition they have naturally acquired over a prolonged period. The proper way to give up this nature is to carefully perform all *karma* (action) in accordance with that nature, while being situated in it. As long as the renunciation that accompanies the symptoms of *bhakti-yoga* does not appear in the heart, the only means to attain self-auspiciousness is *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offered to Śrī Bhagavān. This is because in this practice, a person can perform his prescribed duties and also benefit from the purifying impressions generated by them. A person who renounces his prescribed duty will ultimately deviate from the path of perfection.

“When, by My mercy or by the mercy of My devotee, *bhakti-yoga* appears in the heart, there is no need to follow one’s prescribed duty, because this path of *bhakti* is superior to *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. But if *bhakti-yoga* has not awakened, it is auspicious in all cases to follow *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, which is offered to Me.”

VERSE 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ ३४ ॥

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau

indriyasya – of each sense; *indriyasya arthe* – within each sense object; *rāga* – attachment; *dveṣau* – aversion; *vyavasthitau* – are situated; *tayoḥ* – by them; *na* – not; *vaśam* – controlled; *āgacchet* – should become; *tau* – they (attachment and aversion); *hi* – certainly; *asya* – for him (the spiritual practitioner); *paripanthinau* – obstacles.

All the senses are helplessly controlled by one's attachment and aversion to their respective objects. Therefore, one should never come under their sway because such attachment and aversion are impediments for the *sādhaka's* progress upon the path of auspiciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is not possible for scripture to force injunctions upon a person whose nature is extremely wicked. Therefore, as long as the feelings of unhappiness resulting from the performance of sinful action have not arisen, a person should not allow his senses to wander wilfully. Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *indriyasya indriyasya* to explain this. The repetition of the word *indriya* here indicates the sense objects of each respective sense. Although to look at another's wife, touch her, or allure her by giving her gifts is forbidden in scripture, an immoral man is still attracted to doing so. On the other hand, although it is prescribed in scripture to see, touch, serve and offer charity to the *guru*, *brāhmaṇas*, holy places and guests, an impious man is averse to such behaviour. To come under the influence of either of these mentalities is not proper. In other words, it is not proper either to develop attachment to a woman by seeing her, or to be malicious to someone who obstructs that attachment. Similarly, an aspirant on the path of self-realization should neither be attached to rich and palatable foodstuffs that are to his taste nor averse to dry, unpalatable food items and objects that are not to his taste. In the same way, he should not be attached to seeing and hearing about his own son, nor should he be adverse to seeing and hearing about his enemy's son. It is inappropriate to come under the influence of such attachment and aversion. This has been explained.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The senses are of two types: knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriya*) and working senses

(*karmendriya*). There are five knowledge-acquiring senses: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, which accept form, sound, smell, taste and touch as their respective objects of gratification. There are also five working senses: speech, hands, legs, anus and genitals, which perform the actions of speaking, accepting, moving, evacuating and procreating. The practitioner of *bhakti* engages these eleven senses, including the mind, in various types of service for the pleasure of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He does not enjoy the various sense objects separately, for himself. In this way, he can easily overpower the uncontrolled senses, and by engaging his controlled senses in the service of the Lord, he can attain the supreme goal of life.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, if you think that the *jīvas*’ acceptance of sense objects will make most of them more addicted to those sense objects, and as a result, liberation from the bondage of their religious duty (*karma*) will become impossible, then listen to My words.

“It is not true that all objects are detrimental to the spiritual progress of the *jīvas*. It is only the *jīva*’s attachment and aversion to the sense objects that are his greatest enemies. As long as you have this material body, you have to accept sense objects. For this reason, you should accept sense objects, and at the same time control your attachment and aversion to them. If you act in this way, you can deal with sense objects without becoming bound to them. You will become detached from them by gradually eliminating the attachment and aversion that develops when one falsely identifies the body with the self. In brief, you will develop appropriate renunciation, or *yukta-vairāgya*. I have not instructed you to subdue attachment to objects and activities related to Me, Śrī Bhagavān, or to those that stimulate one’s *bhakti*. Nor have I instructed you to not be averse to objects or activities that are obstacles to *bhakti*. Rather, I have only instructed you to control the attachment and aversion that is related to selfish pleasure and that promotes a temperament that is opposed to *bhakti*. This should be understood.”

VERSE 35

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३५ ॥

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt
sva-dharme nidhanam śreyah para-dharmo bhayāvahah*

śreyān – better; *sva-dharmaḥ* – one’s prescribed duties; *viguṇaḥ* – (slightly) defective; *para-dharmāt* – than another’s duties; *su-anuṣṭhitāt* – perfectly performed; *sva-dharme* – in (discharging) one’s prescribed duties; *nidhanam* – death; *śreyah* – is better; *para-dharmaḥ* – duties prescribed for others; *bhaya-āvahah* – bring danger.

It is far better to execute one’s prescribed duties, even though imperfectly, than to perform another’s duty perfectly. It is better to die discharging one’s own duty in accordance with the *varṇāśrama* system than to engage in another’s duty, for it is dangerous to follow another’s path.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān sees that due to attachment and aversion, Arjuna is becoming unable to engage in his own prescribed duty of fighting. Instead, he considers it easier to engage in *ahimsā* (non-violence), which is the duty of another (*para-dharma*). Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with the word *śreyān*. The word *viguṇa* means that, although the performance of one’s own prescribed duties may be defective, and although one may be unable to execute it properly, it is still superior to performing the duties of another, which may contain all good qualities and which one can execute correctly. For this reason, this verse *śreyān sva-dharmaḥ* is spoken.

It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.15.12):

*vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca ābhāsa upamā cchalaḥ
adharmā-sākhāḥ pañcemā dharmā-jño dharmavat tyajet*

The tree of irreligion has five branches – *vidharma* (performing activities opposed to religion), *para-dharma* (engaging in another’s religious principles), *ābhāsa* (making a show of religious principles), *upamā* or *upa-dharma* (practising principles that only appear to be religious) and *chala-dharma* (practising a cheating religion). One who knows religious principles will abandon all of them as forbidden acts.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Activities such as non-violence are prescribed for *brāhmaṇas*, who are situated in the material mode of goodness, or *sattva-guṇa*. For *kṣatriyas*, who are in the mode of passion, or *rajo-guṇa*, the prescribed duty is fighting. Therefore, the prescribed duty for *kṣatriyas* is to engage in battle. Even if a *kṣatriya* dies in battle, he attains the heavenly planets; therefore, it is better for him to fight.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “One who executes his prescribed duties may die before attaining a more elevated qualification. Still his performance of them is auspicious, because to perform the duties of another is always fearful and dangerous in any circumstance. This consideration, however, does not apply to that *bhakti* which is beyond the modes. When a person attains the stage of performing *nirguṇā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* that is beyond the modes of nature, he can give up his occupational duty (*sva-dharma*) without hesitation, because at that time his eternal constitutional nature manifests as his *sva-dharma*. Here *sva* means ‘the real self’ and *dharma* means ‘the *jīva*’s eternal function’. In that stage one’s previous *sva-dharma*, which was related to the body and mind, becomes *para-dharma*, that is, ‘belonging to another’, and it is secondary to the duties of the awakened self.”

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nyṇām pitṛṇām
na kinkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.41)

Those who have taken exclusive shelter of Śrī Mukunda, who is the only shelter, and who have renounced all varieties of *karma*, no longer remain indebted to the demigods, sages, living entities, saintly persons and forefathers.

*tāvāt karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvātā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9)

One who has not become fully detached from enjoying the fruits of his activities (*karma*), and whose faith in the process of *bhakti*

and the hearing of My pastimes is not yet sufficiently developed, must certainly engage in his prescribed duties. The devotees of Bhagavān, the renunciants, on the other hand, have no purpose to achieve by engaging in *karma*.

VERSE 36

अर्जुन उवाच—

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३६ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

atha kena prayukto 'yam pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ

anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *atha* – then; *kena* – by whom; *prayuktaḥ* – is engaged; *ayam* – this; *pāpam* – sin; *carati* – he performs; *pūruṣaḥ* – person; *anicchann* – unwillingly; *api* – even; *vārṣṇeya* – O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, descendant of Vṛṣṇi; *balāt* – by force; *iva* – as if; *niyojitaḥ* – engaged.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, what is it that seems to forcibly impel a person to engage in sinful deeds, even though he is unwilling to do so?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Earlier (in *Gītā* 3.34) it was said, “*rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau* – even a man of discrimination can develop attachment to sensual activities, such as the desire to enjoy another’s wife, which are forbidden in scripture.” In this connection, Arjuna asks this question beginning with the word *atha*. “What is it that impels a man to engage in sinful activities, against his will, as if by force, even though he is well aware of the regulations and injunctions of the scriptures? In other words, who impels a person to desire to engage in sinful activities?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse Arjuna has addressed Śrī Bhagavān ‘O Vārṣṇeya’. Kṛṣṇa appeared in the Vṛṣṇi dynasty of Arjuna’s maternal grandfather and grandmother. Śūrasena

was also born in the same Vṛṣṇi dynasty. His son was Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa's father) and his daughter, Pṛthā, was Arjuna's mother. The hidden indication in Arjuna's prayer to Kṛṣṇa is, "Since I belong to the same dynasty as You, You should not neglect me. At present I have fallen into a pit of doubts. You have just said that the soul (*ātma*) is completely distinct from inert qualities, or mundane relationships (*Gītā* 2.13–31). Who, then, impels the *jīvas* to engage in sinful acts, if such action is not their constitutional nature?"

VERSE 37

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३७॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ

mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

śrī bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; *kāmaḥ eṣaḥ* – this desire (to enjoy sense objects); *krodhaḥ eṣaḥ* – (transformed into) this wrath; *rajaḥ-guṇa* – the binding force of passion; *samudbhavaḥ* – which is born of; *mahā-āśanaḥ* – all devouring; *mahā-pāpmā* – extremely fearsome; *viddhi* – know; *enam* – this; *iha* – in this world; *vairiṇam* – the enemy.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This lust, the desire to enjoy sense objects, which indeed transforms into wrath, is born of passion. It is all-devouring and extremely fearsome. Know it to be the primary enemy of the living entities within this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Kāma*, the desire for sense objects, invariably engages a person in sinful actions. Impelled by it, he acts sinfully. This lust appears in a different form as anger (*krodha*). This is directly seen. When the desire for sense objects is obstructed, it transforms into anger. This lust, which is born from the material mode of passion, gives rise to anger, which is in the mode of ignorance. One may ask, "Will a person's expectations for sense objects be satiated once

his desires are fulfilled?” Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying, “*mahā-śanah* – it is all-devouring.” In the Smṛtis it is said:

*yat pṛthivyām vrīhi-yavam hiranyam paśavaḥ striyaḥ
nālam ekasya tat sarvam iti matvā śamaṁ vrajet*

All the grains, barley, gold, animals, women and so forth on Earth cannot satisfy the lust of even one man.

It is best to understand this and become content. According to the above statement of the Smṛtis, it is beyond a person’s ability to satisfy his lust, or *kāma*. Again, the question is raised, “If there is no possibility of controlling this lust by offering it its desired ends as a truce, then do we have to control it by pacifying it with sweet words, or bringing allies into our ranks to weaken it?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “*mahā-pāpmā* – it is extremely formidable and difficult to control.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Lust and greed have been described as the prime enemies of those *jīvas* on the path toward liberation. *Kāma*, the desire to enjoy sense objects, is specifically the original enemy. *Krodha*, anger, is just one of its transformations. Lust has been described as *mahāśan*, ‘an enemy whose belly is never filled’. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.19.14) this is seen in the life history of Yayāti Mahārāja:

*na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate*

By adding ghee to a fire, the fire becomes intensified. Similarly, by the fulfilment of lusty desires, one’s desires are intensified. They do not disappear.

*yat pṛthivyām vrīhi-yavam hiranyam paśavaḥ striyaḥ
na duhyanti manaḥ-prītiṁ puṁsaḥ kāma-hatasya te*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.19.13)

All the grains, barley, gold, animals, women and so forth on Earth cannot satisfy the lust of even one man.

An enemy is controlled by the four principles: appeasement (*sāma*), bribery (*dāma*), division [of power] (*bheda*) and punishment (*danḍa*).

Here Śrī Bhagavān is explaining that this formidable enemy, lust, cannot be controlled by the principles of appeasement, bribery or dividing it to weaken its force. He is thus indicating that one should use the principle of punishment (*daṇḍa*) to control the desire for sense objects. This will be further clarified in the next verse. The enemy, lust, can be destroyed when one acquires the weapon of knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñāna*).

VERSE 38

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

*dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam*

dhūmena – by smoke; *āvriyate* – is covered; *vahniḥ* – fire; *yathā* – just as; *ādarśaḥ* – a mirror; *malena* – by dust; *ca* – and; *yathā* – just as; *ulbena* – by the womb; *āvṛtaḥ* – is covered; *garbhaḥ* – an embryo; *tathā* – in the same way; *tena* – by that (lust); *idam* – this world (knowledge); *āvṛtam* – is covered.

Just as fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dust, and an embryo by the womb, so the true knowledge of the living being remains covered by different degrees of lust.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Lust is the enemy of all, not just of one particular person. This is explained through these examples. Although fire may be dirty and covered by smoke, it can still perform its function of burning. But when a mirror is covered by dust, it loses the characteristic of cleanliness and cannot perform its function of reflecting the image of the object in front of it, although it is still accepted as a mirror. An embryo covered by the womb cannot move its hands and feet nor can it be recognized as a baby. Similarly, one can remember the supreme goal only when lust is not deep. When lust becomes very deep, such remembrance is impossible. And when it is extremely deep, the world itself appears to be devoid of consciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The knowledge of those *jīvas* averse to self-realization is covered by three degrees of lust: mild (*mṛdu*), moderate (*madhya*) and intense (*tīvra*). A person whose knowledge is covered by a mild degree of lust can accept instruction on *ātma-tattva*, knowledge of the self, to a certain extent. When a person's knowledge is covered by a moderate degree of lust, then it is completely impossible for him to understand even a little knowledge of the self. And when knowledge is covered by an intense degree of lust, knowledge of the self is not perceived at all.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "This whole world is covered by that very lust, in some places mildly, in some places deeply and in some places very deeply. I will illustrate this with an example. Please listen. A conscious *jīva* who is mildly covered by lust, just as a fire is covered by smoke, can perform remembrance of Bhagavān, for example. This is the situation of *jīvas* who have taken shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and whose consciousness is a little open (*mukulita-cetana*) as in the budding stage of a flower. Even if the conscious *jīva* has a human body, when his consciousness is deeply covered by lust, like a mirror covered by dust, then it is not possible for him to remember the Supreme Controller. This is the condition of the extreme moralist and atheist, or *jīvas* whose consciousness is shrunken, or contracted (*saṅkucita-cetana*). Examples of this are animals and birds. A *jīva* whose consciousness is covered by intense lust, like the embryo covered by the womb, possesses completely covered consciousness (*ācchādita-cetana*). Examples are creepers, stones and trees."

VERSE 39

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥३९॥

*āvṛtam jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca*

āvṛtam – covered; *jñānam* – knowledge of discrimination; *etena* – by this; *jñāninaḥ* – of the wise (living entity); *nitya-vairiṇā* – by his eternal enemy; *kāma-rūpeṇa* – in the form of lust; *kaunteya* – O Arjuna; *duṣpūreṇa* – never to be satisfied; *analena* – like fire; *ca* – also.

O Arjuna, the true knowledge of the wise living entity is covered by his eternal enemy in the form of lust. This lust burns like fire and can never be satiated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Lust is indeed ignorance for all *jīvas*, as Śrī Bhagavān is explaining in this verse beginning with *āvṛtam*. The desire to enjoy the sense objects has been described as the eternal enemy; therefore, it must be destroyed by all means. Understand that *kāma-rūpa* (the form of lust) means that ignorance is non-different from lust. It is indeed ignorance that envelops the real nature of the *jīva*. Here the word *ca* has been used to mean ‘like’. Just as fire cannot be satiated by pouring ghee on to it, similarly, lust cannot be fulfilled by enjoying the sense objects.

It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.19.14):

*na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām upabhogena śāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate*

Fire is not satiated by ghee; rather it increases. Similarly, by enjoying sense objects, the thirst for sense enjoyment increases more and more. It does not become pacified.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VRṬTI: Lust is the root cause of lamentation and distress and has been compared to fire:

*kāmānalaṁ madhu-lavaiḥ śamayan durāpaiḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.25)*

Lust can never be satisfied by enjoying the sense objects. It is like a fire that cannot be extinguished by drops of honey in the form of momentary satisfaction.

*evam grheṣv abhirato viṣayān vividhaiḥ sukhaiḥ
sevamāno na cātuṣyad ājya-stokair ivānalaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.6.48)*

The sage Saubhari Muni was not able to attain peace by profusely enjoying sense objects, just as fire is not pacified when drops of ghee are poured on it.

*sevato varṣa-pūgān me urvaśyā adharāśavam
na tṛpyaty ātma-bhūḥ kāmo vahnir āhutibhir yathā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (I I. 26. I 4)*

Even after I had served the so-called nectar of the lips of Urvaśī for many years, within my heart my lusty desires kept rising again and again and were never satisfied, just like fire, which can never be extinguished by the oblations of ghee poured into its flames.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “This lust is indeed ignorance for the *jīvas* and is their eternal enemy. It covers the conscious *jīvas* like an overwhelming fire. Just as I, Śrī Bhagavān, am a conscious being, similarly the *jīva* is also a conscious entity. The difference between My nature and that of the *jīva* is that I am infinitely conscious and omnipotent, whereas the *jīva* is atomically conscious and can only act because of the energy I give him. The eternal occupation of the *jīva* is to be My eternal servant. This is called *prema*, or *niṣkāma-jaiva-dharma*, the eternal, selfless, unalloyed function of the living entity. Every conscious being, by his constitutional nature, is endowed with free will. It is therefore by his own free will that he is My eternal servant. According to the degree to which he properly uses this free will, he can act as My eternal servant. The misuse of that pure free will is called ignorance (*avidyā*) or lust (*kāma*). Those *jīvas* who do not serve Me by correctly using their free will have to accept lust, an enjoying mood, which is the perverted form of the *jīvas*’ pure state, *prema*. As they become more and more covered by degrees of this lust, they gradually become like inert matter. This is called *karma-bandhana*, the bondage of the living entity due to *karma*. It is also called *samsāra-yātanā*, the journey of agonizing birth and death.”

VERSE 40

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

*indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate
etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam*

indriyāṇi – the senses; *manaḥ* – mind; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *asya* – of this lust; *adhiṣṭhānam* – the shelter; *ucyate* – it is said; *etaiḥ* – by these; *vimohayati* – utterly bewilders; *eṣaḥ* – this (lust); *jñānam* – knowledge; *āvrtya* – covering; *dehinam* – the embodied being.

The senses, mind and intelligence are said to be the dwelling places of this lust. Through them, lust covers the knowledge of the living entity and completely bewilders him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Where does this lust reside? In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *indriyāṇi*. The senses, mind and intelligence, which are like a great fort, or capital city, are the abode of this enemy, lust. The sense objects, such as sound, are like the capital of a king. The embodied soul is bewildered by all of them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A person can easily conquer his enemy when he has discovered his enemy's hiding place and destroyed it. The senses are the shelter, or hiding place, of this lust. Therefore, by subduing the senses, lust can be easily defeated. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has compared lust to a very powerful king; the senses to the king's capital, which is protected by a great fort; and the various sense objects to the kingdom and the subjects of the king.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “When the pure cognizant living entity accepts a body, he is known as *dehī* (embodied). As long as lust dwells in the senses, mind and intelligence, it keeps the knowledge of the living entity covered. The subtle state of lust is *avidyā*, or ignorance. It is this ignorance only that originally offers the *jīva*, who is an atomic conscious entity with a pure ego, the initial veil of ignorance – material false ego. Material intelligence acts as a shelter for this lust, or ignorance. Later, when the material false ego has developed, material intelligence provides the mind as a second shelter for lust. The mind that runs after sense objects then provides the senses as the third place of shelter for this lust. Taking shelter of these three places, lust casts the living entity into worldly enjoyment. When a living entity turns towards Śrī Bhagavān by his own will, it is

called knowledge, or *vidyā*, and when he wilfully becomes averse to Śrī Bhagavān, it is called ignorance, or *avidyā*.”

VERSE 41

तस्मात् त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥४१॥

*tasmāt tvam indriyāṅy ādau niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānam prajahi hy enam jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam*

tasmāt – therefore; *tvam* – you; *indriyāṅi* – the senses; *ādau* – first of all; *niyamyā* – by regulating; *bharata-rṣabha* – O Arjuna, best of the descendants of Bharata; *pāpmānam* – evil; *prajahi* – you must destroy; *hi* – certainly; *enam* – this; *jñāna* – of knowledge; *vijñāna* – of realization (of Me); *nāśanam* – destroyer.

Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the descendants of Bharata, in the very beginning of your spiritual life, control your senses in order to completely slay this embodiment of evil (lust), which is the destroyer of both wisdom (*jñāna*) and realization of Me (*vijñāna*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: By conquering the place where the enemy has taken shelter, the enemy is conquered. This is the strategy. It is progressively more difficult to control the senses, the mind and the intelligence, which are the seats of *kāma*, the desire to enjoy. It is very difficult to control the senses, but they are easier to control than the mind and intelligence. “Therefore, first conquer your senses.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *tasmāt*, just to explain this point. Although the mind, which is very difficult to control, runs after enjoying another’s wife and wealth, you should understand what is happening; this is only the work of the senses, such as the eyes, ears, hands and legs. One should control these senses by not allowing them to pursue their respective objects. *Pāpmānam* means ‘to give up this ferocious desire to enjoy’. In this way, if a person gradually controls his senses, his mind will also become free from lust in due course of time.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Assisted by the senses, this powerful lust uses the ropes of delusion to bind the *jīvas* who are averse to Śrī Bhagavān. Therefore, it is imperative from the outset to control the senses such as the eyes. When the external senses are thus controlled, the mind, whose function is *saṅkalpa* (decision, or determination) and *vikalpa* (indecision, or doubt), will also be controlled. Śrī Bhagavān also spoke thus to Uddhava:

viṣayendriya-samyogān manaḥ kṣubhyati nānyathā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (I.1.26.22)

The mind becomes restless only when the senses come in contact with the sense objects, not otherwise.

asamprayuñjataḥ prāṇān sāmyati stimitaṁ manaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (I.1.26.23)

Therefore, the mind of a person who has control over his senses becomes stable and peaceful.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, by first controlling the senses and mind, conquer this extremely formidable lust, which destroys both knowledge and realization of Me. Destroying lust, which is a distortion of pure love of God (*prema*), reinstate yourself in your own constitutional nature by taking shelter of *prema*. The first commendable duty of a conditioned soul is to follow the principles of genuine renunciation and to pursue one’s prescribed duties. Thus, by gradually attaining the stage of *sādhana-bhakti*, he should perform *sādhana* to attain *prema-bhakti*. Unalloyed devotion is attained by My mercy or by the mercy of My devotee. Although it is very rare, in some cases it manifests without any cause.”

VERSE 42

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
 मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेर्यः परतस्तु सः ॥४२॥

indriyāṇi parāṅy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ

indriyāṇi – the senses; *parāṇi* – are higher than dull matter; *āhuḥ* – they (the sages) say; *indriyebhyaḥ* – than the senses; *param* – higher; *manaḥ* – the mind; *manasaḥ* – than the mind; *tu parā* – indeed higher; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *buddheḥ* – than intelligence; *yaḥ* – who; *parataḥ* – still higher; *tu* – but; *saḥ* – he (the soul).

The senses are said to be superior to inert matter, and the mind is superior to the senses. The intelligence is superior to the mind, and he, the soul, is superior even to the intelligence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is inappropriate to try to first control the mind and intelligence in the initial stages; to do so is impossible. Nevertheless, to explain the process, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *indriyāṇi parāṇi*. He is saying, “The senses are more powerful than a courageous warrior who has conquered the ten directions. Indeed, they are superior to him, for even he cannot control his senses. The mind is more powerful than the senses, and it is superior to them, for it remains active even during dreams when the senses are dissolved. Intelligence that is endowed with realization is still more powerful than the mind and superior to it, because resolute intelligence remains active even during deep sleep, when the mind is dissolved. Over and above this, the soul, or *ātmā*, is more powerful than the intelligence and superior to it, for it continues to exist even when the intelligence is dissolved. It is this glorious soul alone that can conquer lust. This *jīvātmā*, which is more powerful than everything else, can definitely control lust, once he has controlled the senses, mind and intelligence. You should not doubt this.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the Śrutis it is also said:

*indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahan paraḥ*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.3.10)

Certainly, the senses are superior to the gross body, and the mind is higher than the senses. Higher than the mind is intelligence, and the great one, the soul, is the highest of all.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am explaining to you in brief that your real identity is that of a soul, a *jīva*. You have accidentally become bound by inert matter, so now you identify yourself with the senses, mind and intelligence. This is delusion and it is created by ignorance. The senses are superior to and more subtle than inert matter. The mind is superior to and more subtle than the senses. The intelligence is superior to and more subtle than the mind, and the soul, or the self, is superior even to the intelligence.”

VERSE 43

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३ ॥

*evam buddheḥ param buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam*

evam – in this way; *buddheḥ* – than intelligence; *param* – superior (the soul); *buddhvā* – having understood; *saṁstabhya* – by fully stabilizing; *ātmanā* – the mind; *ātmanā* – through determined intelligence; *jahi* – destroy; *śatruṁ* – enemy; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one (Arjuna); *kāma-rūpaṁ* – in the form of lust; *durāsadam* – this difficult-to-vanquish.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, knowing the soul to be superior to the intelligence, control the mind with pure intelligence that relates to the true self, and destroy this formidable enemy in the form of lust.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter with this verse beginning with *evam*. “Knowing the living entity, or *jīva*, to be superior to the intelligence and distinct from all mundane designations, and making your self steady by knowledge of your true self, destroy this lust, which is very difficult to conquer.”

In this chapter, the practice of selfless action offered to Bhagavān (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) and the merits of knowledge (*jñāna*), which is its aim, have been described.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Third Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “In this way, with the help of transcendental knowledge of the soul, know yourself to be superior to all mundane identification with the senses, body, mind and intelligence (*aprākṛta-tattva*), and also know yourself to be My eternal servant. Thus become steady by the grace of My transcendental knowledge potency, the *cit-śakti*, and gradually destroy this formidable lust.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Third Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER FOUR



Jñāna-Yoga

Yoga Through Transcendental Knowledge

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम्।

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

imam vivasvate yogam proktavān aham avyayam

vivasvān manave prāha manur ikṣvākave ’bravīt

śrī bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; *imam* – this; *vivasvate* – unto the sun-god; *yogam* – science of *yoga*; *proktavān* – instructed; *aham* – I; *avyayam* – imperishable; *vivasvān* – Vivasvān, the sun-god; *manave* – unto Manu (the father of mankind); *prāha* – told it; *manuḥ* – Manu; *ikṣvākave* – unto Ikṣvāku; *abravīt* – spoke.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I instructed this eternal science of *yoga* to the sun-god Vivasvān, who instructed it to Manu. Manu then instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the Fourth Chapter, Śrī Bhagavān explains the reasons for His appearance, the eternal nature of His birth and activities, and the superiority of transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*) in the form of study of the Vedas. The path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), which is the objective of selflessly performing one’s prescribed duties (*niṣkāma-*

karma), is glorified in this verse beginning with *imam*, as well as in the next chapter.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In every *manvantara*, an incarnation of Manu appears, the initial *manvatara* being Svāyambhuva Manu. The first person to receive instructions on *jñāna-yoga* in the current Vaivasvata-*manvantara* was Manu's father, Vivasvān, the sun-god. In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān introduces the concept of a *sampradāya*, a bona fide succession of self-realized spiritual masters. Without this unbroken spiritual lineage, neither *jñāna-tattva* nor *bhakti-tattva* can manifest in their pure form in the material world. This disciplic succession is also known as *āmnāya-paramparā*. Only by this disciplic line are the gravity, antiquity and significance of the subject specifically proven. It is seen that in India, even the common people have faith in the ancient disciplic lineage and are devoted to it. That *guru-paramparā*, or disciplic succession, which bestows complete knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva*, is called *āmnāya*, or *sampradāya*. *Mantras* that are not received from a bona fide *sampradāya* are fruitless. In this present age of Kali, there are four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*: (1) Śrī (Lakṣmī), (2) Brahmā, (3) Rudra and (4) Sanaka, or the four sons of Brahmā known as the Kumāras. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original source of all four *sampradāyas*. Only from Śrī Kṛṣṇa does real knowledge of the Supreme Person flow into this material world. “*Dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhāgavat-praṇītam* – real religion comes directly from Śrī Bhagavān” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.19).

As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa first instructed this knowledge to Vivasvān, the sun-god, who then instructed Manu. Manu in turn gave these divine instructions to Ikṣvāku. Thus the system of disciplic succession, or *guru-paramparā*, is an ancient and reliable tradition that ensures the continuation of the *sampradāya*, or lineage. By it, divine knowledge has been preserved to the present day. Whenever this line is broken, Śrī Bhagavān again arranges for it to manifest in the material world. Exalted pure devotees, or *mahā-bhāgavatas*, such as Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and others in the *guru-paramparā* of the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, realized this divine knowledge and instructed the common people on it through their realized commentaries. Unless a person is

properly situated in this disciplic succession, he can never understand the real import of *Bhagavad-gītā*, even if he is highly qualified in terms of material knowledge.

It is important to protect oneself from self-made commentators; otherwise, realization of the true meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā* will not be possible. Although milk is pure and nourishing, when it has been touched by the lips of a snake, it acts like poison. Similarly, topics of Śrī Hari are supremely purifying for the material world, but when they are recited by non-devotees such as impersonalists or those who consider the body to be the self, hearing such topics becomes the cause of one's destruction. In this connection, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has also said, “*māyāvādī-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa* – if one hears the commentary of the impersonalists, everything is destroyed” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.169).

VERSE 2

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥ २ ॥

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

evam – in this way; *paramparā* – by disciplic succession; *prāptam* – received; *imam* – this; *rāja-ṛṣayaḥ* – the saintly kings; *viduḥ* – understood; *saḥ* – that; *kālena* – by time; *iha* – in this world; *mahatā* – by the great influence; *yogaḥ* – the process for connecting with the Supreme Lord; *naṣṭaḥ* – lost; *parantapa* – O conqueror of the foe.

O Arjuna, this *yoga* was thus received in disciplic succession and the saintly kings understood it through that process, but after a prolonged lapse of time, it almost become lost to the world.

VERSE 3

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

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

saḥ eva ayam – that very same; *mayā* – by Me; *te* – to you; *adya* – today; *yogaḥ* – science of connection with the Supreme; *proktaḥ* – spoken; *purātanaḥ* – ancient; *bhaktaḥ* – devotee; *asi* – you are; *me* – My; *sakhā* – friend; *ca* – and; *iti* – thus; *rahasyam* – confidential; *hi* – because; *etad* – this; *uttamam* – transcendental.

You are My devotee and My friend; for this reason I am today explaining to you the supremely confidential knowledge of that ancient process of *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “I am telling you this because of two sentiments that are inherent within our relationship. In the first place, you are My devotee, which means you are My servant; and secondly, you are My friend. It is not appropriate to disclose this knowledge to anyone who does not possess these attributes. That is why it is confidential.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A bona fide spiritual master instructs highly confidential principles, such as fundamental knowledge of the Truth (*tattva-jñāna*) and essential principles of devotion (*bhakti-tattva*), only to a disciple who is affectionate, surrendered and endowed with a service attitude. Those bereft of these qualities are unable to retain or realize such knowledge. Here, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “You are My affectionate servant and dear friend; therefore I am explaining this mysterious secret of *karma-yoga* to you.”

VERSE 4

अर्जुन उवाच—

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४॥

arjuna uvāca—

aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvataḥ

katham etad vijānīyāṁ tvam ādau proktavān iti

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *aparam* – recent; *bhavataḥ* – Your; *janma* – birth; *param* – ancient; *janma* – the birth; *vivasvataḥ* – of the sun-god; *katham* – how?; *etat* – this; *vijānīyām* – may I understand; *tvam* – You; *ādau* – in the beginning; *proktavān* – spoke; *iti* – that.

Arjuna said: Your birth took place only recently, whereas the sun-god was born in ancient times. How am I to understand that You spoke this yoga to him in a previous age?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna is questioning Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering His previous statement to be impossible. “You were born recently (*aparam*), and Sūrya, the sun-god, was born long ago (*param*), so how can I believe that You instructed him in this *yoga* in ancient times?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Arjuna is Bhagavān’s great devotee and eternal friend. For this reason, he is referred to as an associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and as such he is completely conversant with the science of Godhead, or *bhagavat-tattva*. Ignorant people generally think that Bhagavān Vāsudeva, the controller of all controllers, is an ordinary human being. Instead of accepting that He is omniscient and ever-existing, they consider Him to be a man of limited knowledge who is subject to death. They also think that the birth and activities of Bhagavān are temporary; they do not know that they are transcendental.

It is said in *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.12):

*param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam ādi-devaṁ ajaṁ vibhum*

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest and the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn and the greatest.

Ignorant persons accept the opposite meaning of this verse. They do not accept that Śrī Bhagavān is the Supreme Absolute Truth, who possesses a spiritual form and the highest purity. They also do not believe that He is an eternal person and the original Godhead, who is unborn and all-pervading, and who is endowed with unlimited

transcendental opulence. Although Arjuna is highly learned, for the welfare of humanity and so that Bhagavān may deliver these truths from His own lotus mouth, he is inquiring from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as if ignorant.

VERSE 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥५॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca—

*bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvam vettha parantapa*

śrī bhagavān – the Lord, complete in six opulences; *uvāca* – said; *bahūni* – many; *me* – I; *vyatītāni* – have passed; *janmāni* – births; *tava* – you; *ca* – and; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *tāni* – them; *ahaṁ* – I; *veda* – remember; *sarvāṇi* – all; *na* – not; *tvam* – you; *vettha* – remember; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the enemy.

The all-opulent Personality of Godhead said: O chastiser of the foe, both you and I have passed many lives. I remember all of them, whereas you do not.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with *bahūni*, Śrī Bhagavān says, “I have also instructed this science in My other incarnations.” *Tava ca* means, “Whenever I have descended, you have also appeared as My associate. Being both omniscient and omnipotent, I remember all of My appearances. For the fulfilment of My pastimes, I have covered your knowledge, and that is why you do not remember your previous births. Now, with the identity of being a son of Kuntī, you are giving pain (*taṭa*) to the enemy (*para*), O Parantapa.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna, “Prior to My present appearance, I descended in many other incarnations and manifested many different names, forms and

pastimes. I remember all of them fully. You also appeared with Me, but because you are in the category of *jīva-tattva* (an individual soul, an atomic conscious particle), you do not remember them.”

At the time of Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony, Śrī Gargācārya also confirmed that Kṛṣṇa has many names, forms, and pastimes:

*bahūni santi nāmāni rūpāṇi ca sutasya te
guṇa-karmāṇi rūpāṇi tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.15)

According to His qualities and activities, your son has many names and forms. I am aware of them, but others are not.

Similarly, Bhagavān told Mucukunda:

janma-karmābhīdhānāni santi me ’nga sahasraśaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.51.36)

My dear Mucukunda, My name, births, activities and other characteristics are unlimited.

VERSE 6

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥६॥

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

ajah – unborn; *api* – although; *san* – being; *avyaya-ātmā* – imperishable body; *bhūtānām* – of all beings; *īśvaraḥ* – the Lord; *api* – although; *san* – being; *prakṛtim* – nature (consisting of eternality, knowledge and bliss); *svām* – My original; *adhiṣṭhāya* – situated; *sambhavāmi* – I fully manifest; *ātma-māyayā* – by My *yogamāyā* potency.

Although My form is unborn and indestructible, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, still I appear through My *yogamāyā* potency in My original form of eternality, cognizance and bliss.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the *tattva*, or reality, of His birth. “Although I am unborn, I manifest in various species, such as demigods, humans and animals.” One may ask, “What is so wonderful about this? In reality, the *jīva* is also unborn, and when his gross body is destroyed, he also accepts another birth.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, *avyayātmā*. “My body is imperishable, whereas the body of the *jīva* is perishable. Moreover, the unborn nature of the *jīva* is of a different type. His birth is due to his bodily identification, which has arisen out of ignorance. As the Supreme Controller, I am non-different from My body, and consequently, My quality of being both born and unborn is perfectly natural. Such a nature, which is impossible to find elsewhere, is wonderful and beyond the scope of logic and reason. Therefore, it is not possible to compare My birth to that of the *jīva*, who takes birth in high and low species as a result of his piety and sin.” To clarify this further, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Even though I am the Supreme Controller of the *jīvas*, which means that I am free from the control of *karma*, still I accept birth.”

The following doubt may be raised: “The *jīva* also takes bodies in various species, such as demigods, humans and animals, as a result of the activities of his subtle body, and these cause his bondage. You, the Supreme Lord, do not have a subtle body. You are all-pervading and the controller of all principles, including time (*kāla*) and action (*karma*). It is said in the Śrūti that You desired to become many: ‘*bahu-syām* – I can become many’. According to this statement, You are everything in the entire universe. However, You specifically express ‘*evam-bhūto ’py ahaṁ sambhavāmi* – although I appear to be everything in the universe, still I personally manifest Myself.’ From this it is understood that You take birth only to manifest Your eternal form, which is categorically distinct from the whole universe.”

This being the case, one may inquire, “What is the nature of these bodies of Yours?” In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān says in the second half of this verse, “*prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy ātmamāyayā* – I appear through My *yogamāyā* potency in My original form of eternity, cognizance and bliss.” If the word *prakṛti* is taken to indicate the external deluding potency, or *māyā-śakti*, the meaning here becomes ‘Parameśvara, the presiding controller of material

nature, becomes the universe with the help of this potency'. However, this does not describe the specific nature of Śrī Bhagavān. In the Sanskrit dictionary it is said, “*samsiddhi-prakṛtis tv ime svarūpaṁ ca svabhāvaś ca – svarūpa* (constitutional form) and *svabhāva* (intrinsic nature) are synonyms for *samsiddhi* (perfection) and *prakṛti*.” For this reason, the word *prakṛti* mentioned in this verse indicates *svarūpa*. The nature of this form of Bhagavān is eternal, full of knowledge and all-blissful (*sac-cid-ānanda*).

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says, “Your *svarūpa* is not composed of the deluding potency but is transcendental and composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*. Therefore, Your *prakṛti*, or constitutional form, is the embodiment of *śuddha-sattva*, pure, transcendental goodness.”

According to Śrī Rāmānujācārya, *prakṛti* means ‘nature’, or *svabhāva*. “Remaining situated in Your *svabhāva*, that is, fully retaining Your divinity, You manifest Your own form by Your independent will only.” If we accept *prakṛti* to mean ‘nature’, or *svabhāva*, then the use of these qualifying adjectives – *sac-cid-ānanda-ghana* (concentrated eternity, knowledge and bliss) and *eka-rasa* (uniformly composed of one substance) distinguish Śrī Bhagavān’s form from *māyā*. *Svām* means ‘one’s own form’. It is said in the Śrutis, “*sa bhagavataḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhitaḥ sva-mahimni – Śrī Bhagavān* is situated in full possession of all His divine glory.” According to Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, when Bhagavān appears, He still remains situated in His *svarūpa*. He behaves like an embodied living entity, although there is no difference between His body and His actual self.

One may raise the question, “Since You are eternal, when You accept indestructible forms such as Matsya and Kūrma, are Your past and present forms also simultaneously perceptible?” In response Bhagavān says *ātma-māyayā*. “This act is performed by My internal potency, or *yogamāyā*. My *svarūpa* is both concealed and manifested by this internal potency, which is the special function of My knowledge potency, or *cit-śakti*. I appear only with the help of this *yogamāyā*, who is manifesting My present *svarūpa* and who is concealing My previous forms.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his commentary, “I appear only by My internal potency, known as *yogamāyā* or *ātmamāyā*, the potency of complete and infallible knowledge, strength, prowess and so on.”

Śrī Rāmānujācārya writes in his commentary, “Śrī Bhagavān appears through His own knowledge potency, *ātmamāyā*. *Māyā vayunaṁ jñānam*. In this context the word *māyā* is a synonym for knowledge. This is also confirmed by the Sanskrit dictionary. Śrī Bhagavān knows the pious and impious actions of the eternal living entities only with the help of this potency.”

According to Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī, “It is simply due to illusion that one applies the conception of the body and the embodied to Me, Bhagavān Vāsudeva, for I am transcendental to all such duality.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *Kūrma Purāṇa* states, “*deha-dehī-vibhāgaś ca neśvare vidyate kvacit* – in regard to Śrī Bhagavān, there is no distinction between the body and the embodied.”

In regard to the living entity, however, the body is different from the embodied soul. In other words, his gross and subtle bodies are different from him, the *jīvātmā*. This is further clarified in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 17.132):

*deha-dehīra, nāma-nāmīra kṛṣṇe nāhi ‘bheda’
jīvera dharma – nāma-deha-svarūpe ‘vibheda’*

In regard to Kṛṣṇa there is no distinction between His name (*nāma*) and the possessor of the name (*nāmī*), nor between His body (*deha*) and the embodied (*dehī*). The embodied living entity’s nature, name and body, however, are different from his eternal, spiritual constitution.

Bhagavān is unborn (*aja*). By His own will He accepts the shelter of His internal potency, or *cit-śakti*, in the form of *yogamāyā*, and by manifesting His eternal body in this material world, He performs simple and natural pastimes as though an ordinary boy. That said, His body consisting of eternality, cognizance and bliss is not covered by a gross or subtle body. The atomic living entity, on the other hand, being overpowered by the influence of Bhagavān’s deluding potency, accepts a subtle and a gross body according to the impressions created by his previous actions, and in this way he again takes birth.

In conclusion, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has commented that Kṛṣṇa is explaining to Arjuna, “Although you and I appear in this world again and again, there is a specific difference between your descent and Mine. I am Īśvara, the controller of all living entities; I am without birth; and My form is immutable. I appear through the agency of My own knowledge potency, the *cit-śakti*, whereas the *jīvas* take birth in this world under the influence of My deluding potency, which deprives them of the memory of their past lives. *Jīvas* have to accept a subtle body as a result of their previous actions, and as a result of taking shelter of that subtle body, they have to repeatedly take birth. My appearance, however, in demigod, animal and other forms, occurs solely by My own will. Unlike the *jīvas*, My supremely pure conscious body is not covered by a subtle and a gross body. In this mundane plane, I manifest that very same eternal body that exists naturally in the spiritual realm of Vaikuṅṭha.

“Someone may inquire, ‘How is it possible for the transcendental Personality to manifest in the material world, along with His realm?’

“Now hear My response. My *yogamāyā-śakti* is inconceivable and consequently beyond comprehension. No amount of reasoning, however clever, will allow one to understand and measure the activities of *yogamāyā*. It is your duty to at least understand by intuitive knowledge that I, Bhagavān, endowed as I am with inconceivable potency, am not bound by any rules governing the mundane plane. By My mere will, all the entities of Vaikuṅṭha can easily manifest their supremely pure forms in this material world. In other words, I can transform the complete material phenomenal manifestation into spiritual existence. My all-spiritual form, which is beyond all material laws, is completely pure, even when it manifests in the material world. What doubt can there be about this? That *māyā*, which controls the *jīva*, is also My energy, but understand that when I use the phrase ‘My energy’, or ‘*prakṛti*’, it only refers to the spiritual potency, or *cit-śakti*. Although My potency is one without a second, in My presence that potency is the spiritual potency, and for the *jīvas* bound by *karma*, it appears as the deluding *māyā* potency. This potency, endowed with its respective influences and various types of majestic, mystic powers, forces them to rotate in the cycle of birth and death.”

VERSE 7

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

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

yadā yadā – whenever; *hi* – assuredly; *dharmasya* – of religion; *glāniḥ* – a decline; *bhavati* – there is; *bhārata* – O descendent of Bharata; *abhyutthānam* – an increase; *adharmasya* – of irreligion; *tadā* – then; *ātmānam* – My eternally perfect spiritual body; *sṛjāmi* – manifest (Myself in a body that looks like a created, material body); *aham* – I.

O descendant of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of religion and an increase in irreligion, at that time I manifest My eternally perfect form in this mundane world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: When does Śrī Bhagavān appear? To answer this question, Bhagavān replies with this verse beginning with *yadā*. “Being unable to tolerate the decline of religion and the increase of irreligion, I appear for the purpose of reversing the situation.”

According to Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *ātmānam sṛjāmi* means ‘I create the body’. “With the help of *yogamāyā*, I exhibit My eternally perfect spiritual body as if it were created by material nature.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In each birth, a *jīva* who is bound by the result of his action takes a new body that is made from inert matter. But Śrī Bhagavān, by His own will and through the agency of His *māyā-śakti*, deludes the demons in such a way that they consider His body to be an object of the material creation. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has confirmed this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.24.56):

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya kṣayo vṛddhiś ca pāpmanah
tadā tu bhagavān īśa ātmānam sṛjate hariḥ*

Whenever there is a decline of religion and an increase of sin, Bhagavān Śrī Hari manifests Himself in this world.

Various spiritual masters have explained the word *dharma* in this verse in different ways. Śrī Rāmānujācārya has accepted the word *dharma* to mean ‘the worship of Bhagavān’. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has explained *dharma* as ‘pure devotion characterized by the performance of *arcana* (formal worship), *dhyāna* (meditation) and other such practices as well as *varṇāśrama-dharma* prescribed in the Vedas’.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has quoted Kṛṣṇa as follows: “The only reason for My appearance is that I desire it; I descend of My own free will. Whenever there is a decline in religion and a prevalence of irreligion, I appear of My own accord. My laws, which govern the activities of this material world, are unconquerable. However, when in due course of time, these rules become ineffective for some indefinable and indescribable reason, irreligion becomes prominent. No one except Me can put an end to this disorder. I thus appear in this mundane plane with the assistance of My spiritual potency and dispel the decline of religion.

“It is not true that I only appear in the land of Bhārata, India. According to necessity I appear, by My will, among demigods, animals, birds and all other species. Therefore, do not think that I do not appear among those outside the Vedic system, such as *mleccha*, *antyaaja* and other outcastes. All those pitiable people also accept a certain degree of religiosity as their natural religion (*sva-dharma*). When their religion declines, I also appear among them as an empowered incarnation (*śaktyāveśa-avatāra*) by investing a certain living entity with My potency, to protect their religion. In India, people regularly perform their religious duties in the form of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. I therefore make a special endeavour to establish this system of religion (*dharma*) among them. For this reason, all the charming incarnations, such as the *yuga-avatāras* (who appear in this world in every age so as to establish religious principles) and the *aṁśa-avatāras* (partial incarnations) are seen to manifest only in India. In places where there is no *varṇāśrama-dharma*, people cannot properly practise *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* or its goal, *jñāna-yoga*, and its highest fruit, *bhakti-yoga*. Still, any tinge of *bhakti* that manifests among those outside the *varṇāśrama* system can be attributed to the sudden appearance of faith generated by the mercy of My devotee.”

VERSE 8

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दूष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥८॥

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge

paritrāṇāya – for the protection; *sādḥūnām* – of My (one-pointed) devotees; *vināśāya* – for the destruction; *ca* – and; *duṣkṛtām* – of evil-doers; *dharma-saṁsthāpana* – establishing religion; *arthāya* – for the purpose; *sambhavāmi* – I appear; *yuge yuge* – in every age.

To protect My unalloyed devotees, to annihilate the wicked and to firmly establish religion, I appear in every age.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, a question may arise in your heart regarding the need for Me to appear when saintly kings, highly learned *brāhmaṇa* sages and My devotees are capable of rectifying the decline of religion and the increase of irreligion. Listen to My answer. Although it is true that they can do this work, I personally appear in order to perform acts that are impossible for others. To explain this, I have spoken this verse beginning with *paritrāṇāya*. *Paritrāṇāya* (protecting the saintly devotees) refers to protecting the acutely eager hearts of My exclusive, one-pointed devotees who are suffering from an intense hankering to take *darśana* of Me. Just to remove that suffering I manifest Myself. *Duṣkṛtām* means that I appear to annihilate Rāvaṇa, Kamsa, Keśi and the other demons who give pain to My devotees and who cannot be killed by anyone else. *Dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya* means that I advent in order to perfectly establish the supreme, eternal religion, which is endowed with the characteristics of *bhajana*, meditation, service to Me, the congregational chanting of the holy name and so forth. It is impossible for others to do this. *Yuge yuge* means that I appear in every *yuga* (age) or *kalpa* (day of Lord Brahmā). Although I punish the miscreants, one should not assume that I am guilty of being biased. By killing these miscreants with My own hands, I protect them from going to hell for their sinful deeds, and I deliver

them from material existence. You should consider this punishment to be My mercy.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān establishes *varṇāśrama-dharma* by transmitting His potency into the hearts of His prominent saintly devotees in the royal and brahminical orders. However, Bhagavān Himself descends for three reasons: (1) to pacify the afflictions of those devotees who are suffering in separation from Him, (2) to kill demons like Kāṁsa who strongly oppose the saintly persons and who cannot be killed by others, and (3) to propagate the message of pure devotion.

While defining the word *avatāra*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda writes, “*avatāras ca prakṛta-vaibhave ’vatarāṇam iti* – Śrī Bhagavān’s descent to this material creation is known as *avatāra*.”

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has elucidated on the same point in different words: “*aprapaṅcāt prapaṅce ’vatarāṇam khalv avatārah* – Bhagavān’s descent from His unmanifest eternal abode to the mundane plane is called *avatāra*.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *avatārī*, the origin of unlimited *avatāras*. He is therefore called Svayam Bhagavān, the Original Supreme Person who has no cause other than Himself. His *avatāras* are of six types: (1) *puruṣa-avatāra*, (2) *guṇa-avatāra*, (3) *līlā-avatāra*, (4) *manvantara-avatāra*, (5) *yuga-avatāra* and (6) *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*. This is all stated in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter Twenty.

There are four ages, or *yugas*: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.20), it is stated that Kṛṣṇa appears in all of them:

*kṛtam tretā dvāparam ca kalir ity eṣu keśavaḥ
nānā-varṇabhidhākāro nānaiva vidhinejyate*

One day of Lord Brahmā’s life span is called a *kalpa*. There are fourteen different incarnations of Manu called *manvantaras* in each *kalpa*. There are one thousand *catur-yugas* (complete cycles of the four ages) in one day of Brahmā. According to the calculations of human solar years, one day of Brahmā equals 4,320,000,000 years. Three hundred and sixty such days make one year of Brahmā, and Brahmā lives for one hundred such years.

Although Bhagavān kills the wicked demons, He remains aloof from their faults. In other words, He is free from the imperfection of being biased; His killing them is only an exhibition of His mercy upon them. Commenting on the verse *ajasya janmotpatha-nāśanāya* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.44), Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, “Although Bhagavān is unborn (*aja*), He descends to annihilate and liberate the demons, who impede the path of truth.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has also commented in a similar manner:

*lālāne tāḍane mātur nākāruṇya yathārbhake
tadvad eva maheśasya niyantur guṇa-doṣayoḥ*

Just as an affectionate mother is not considered hard-hearted or harsh if she chastises her child in the course of raising and caring for him, the Supreme Lord, Parameśvara is also not cruel when He disciplines the *jīvas* to bring out their good qualities and diminish their bad ones.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has quoted Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows: “I establish *varṇāśrama-dharma* by infusing My potency into the royal and brahminical saints who are devoted to Me. However, in order to protect My foremost pure devotees from non-devotees, there is a need for My incarnations to appear. Thus appearing as the *yuga-avatāra*, the incarnation for each age, I protect the saintly devotees. By eliminating the wicked demons, I redress the decline in religion, and by preaching the limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*), I establish the eternal religion of the living entities.

“I descend in every age.’ From this statement, one should understand that I also descend in Kali-yuga, and in My incarnation as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I will establish that extremely rare *prema*, the eternal religion of divine love, solely by the process of chanting the holy name. This incarnation has no other purpose, and therefore, it is the greatest incarnation of all. Even so, I will remain concealed from the common man. My pure devotees will naturally be attracted to Me, and you, Arjuna, will realize this when you appear with Me in that age. The most wonderful feature of this hidden *avatāra*, who delivers the people of Kali-yuga, is that I reform the miscreants’ wicked natures by blessing them with divine love through the chanting of the holy name

(*nāma-saṅkīrtana*). I do not reform them by completely annihilating them, as I did in My previous incarnations.”

VERSE 9

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥९॥

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

janma – birth; *karma* – activities; *ca* – and; *me* – My; *divyam* – transcendental; *evam* – thus; *yaḥ* – who; *veti* – knows; *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *tyaktvā* – having given up; *dehaṁ* – the present body; *punaḥ* – again; *janma* – birth; *na eti* – does not accept; *mām* – Me; *eti* – attains; *saḥ* – he; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

O Arjuna, My birth and activities are transcendental. One who knows this in truth does not take another birth after giving up the present body; rather he assuredly attains Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “One will only become perfectly successful when he has understood the essence of the transcendental nature of My birth and activities, which are endowed with the characteristics described in the previous verses.” This verse, beginning with the word *janma*, is spoken to explain this. Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya and Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī explain that the word *divya* means ‘non-material’, or ‘transcendental’ (*aprākṛta*) – and Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has translated it as *alaukika*, ‘not of this material world’. The material world (*loka*) is created by material nature; therefore, the word *alaukika* means ‘not of this material world’. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda also implies that Bhagavān’s birth and activities are non-material, or *aprākṛta*. [Literally, *a* means ‘not’, and *prākṛta* means ‘of material nature’.] Consequently, because the birth and activities of Śrī Bhagavān are *aprākṛta* and beyond the modes of nature, they are eternal.

In the *Bhagavat-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī refers to this subject in his explanation of the verse, “*na vidyate yasya ca janma karma*

vā – the Supreme Personality of Godhead has no material birth or activities” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.3.8). He explains that, although this matter cannot be reconciled by logic, it must be accepted on the strength of statements from the Vedas and from the Smṛtis, even though it is beyond reason and argument.

In this regard, it is also said in the *Puruṣa-bodhinī Śruti* of *Pipalāda-sākhā*:

eko devo nitya-līlānurakto bhakta-hṛdy antar-ātmā

Eternally engaged in His own pastimes, the one Lord in His form as the indwelling witness of all enters within the hearts of His devotees.

Regarding the eternity of Śrī Bhagavān’s birth and activities, detailed descriptions have been given in various places in the nectarean *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

“After hearing My statements such as *yo vetti tattvataḥ* (*Gītā* 4.9), *ajo ’pi sann avyayātmā* (*Gītā* 4.6) and *janma karma ca me divyam* (*Gītā* 4.9), one who understands the eternal nature of My birth and activities with theistic intelligence, not depending on empiric knowledge, does not have to take birth again in this material world.”

“There is a *Gītā* statement (17.23), ‘*om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ* – the Vedas and *yajñas* were originally created from these three words [*om tat sat*] of the *brāhmaṇas*.’ They who understand the word *tat* in this statement to mean *brahma*, the Supreme, do not have to take birth again after giving up their present body. Rather, it is assured that they attain Me.” Here, a superior meaning is attributed to the phrase, ‘giving up the body’. “Such a person does not take another birth after quitting the body. Instead, he attains Me even without giving it up.”

Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya writes, paraphrasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “True knowledge of My transcendental birth and activities completely destroy all sins that impede one on the path to attaining My full shelter. Only those dear devotees who have taken shelter of Me attain Me, even in this very life.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: They who, by the grace of the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas, realize that Śrī Bhagavān takes a

transcendental birth and performs transcendental activities through the medium of His potency of inconceivability, or *acintya-śakti*, attain eternal service to Him in this very life by the mercy of His pleasure-giving potency (the *hlādinī-śakti*). On the contrary, they who consider the birth and activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be mundane are overpowered by ignorance. They wander in the cycle of birth and death, afflicted by the threefold miseries.

Lord Brahmā has also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.7.29) “*tat karma divyam iva* – the activities of Śrī Bhagavān are indeed divine.” Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has clarified this point in his *Bhāgavatam* commentary on this verse. “In reality, all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s activities are transcendental.” Furthermore, it is stated:

*na vidyate yasya ca janma karma vā
na nāma-rūpe guṇa-doṣa eva vā
tathāpi lokāpyaya-sambhavāya yaḥ
sva-māyayā tāny anukālam ṛchati*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.3.8)

For the Supreme Lord, there is no birth, action, name, form, qualities, fault and so forth. Nonetheless, He perpetually accepts these attributes by His transcendental potency (*māyā*) for the creation and destruction of the material world.

The explanation of the above verse by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī is significant and can be referred to in his *Bhāgavat-sandarbhā* and *Krama-sandarbhā*.

The Śrutis have described Bhagavān as devoid of a fruitive mentality (*niṣphala*), inactive (*niṣkriya*), without material contamination, or faultless (*nirāñjana*), formless (*nirākāra*), indescribable (*aśabdām*), imperishable (*avyaya*) and so forth. It is stated like this because He is beyond material qualities. Thus, in specific Śrutis such as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (3.14.4), He is called *sarva-karmā*, He who performs all activities; *sarva-kāma*, He who has all types of desires; *sarva-gandha*, He from whom all fragrance emanates, *sarva-rasa*, He who embodies all transcendental mellows; and so on. This is corroborated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.4.33):

*yo 'nugrahārtham bhajatām pāda-mūlam
anāma-rūpo bhagavān anantaḥ
nāmāni rūpāṇi ca janma-karmabhir
bheje sa mahyam paramaḥ prasīdatu*

To bestow mercy upon those who worship His lotus feet, Bhagavān – though free from material names, forms and other attributes – accepts various transcendental forms and names through His different incarnations and activities. May that unlimited Lord, whose opulence is inconceivable, be pleased with me.

They who are Bhagavān's devotees achieve Him even while living within this body. Kṛṣṇa says, “*yānti mām eva nirguṇāḥ* – they who are free from the modes attain Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.25.22). While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that the word *laya* (dissolution) is not mentioned here. This clarifies Kṛṣṇa's point: “Upon becoming transcendental, My devotees attain Me, even in their present body.”

VERSE 10

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ १० ॥

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

vīta – devoid; *rāga* – of attachment; *bhaya* – fear; *krodhāḥ* – and anger; *mat-mayāḥ* – absorbed in Me; *mām* – to Me; *upāśritāḥ* – surrendered; *bahavaḥ* – many (devotees); *jñāna-tapasā* – by austerities (in the form of cultivating knowledge); *pūtāḥ* – purified; *mad-bhāvam* – *prema-bhakti* for Me; *āgatāḥ* – attained.

Being devoid of attachment, fear and anger, their concentration fixed on Me, being completely surrendered to Me, and purified by austerity in the form of knowledge, many devotees have attained *prema-bhakti* for Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, it is not that only they who have full knowledge of My birth and activities and who are present during My current *avatāra* attain Me. Even in previous ages, I was attained by those endowed with transcendental knowledge of the birth and activities of My incarnations.” To explain this, the present verse beginning with *vīta-rāga* is being spoken. *Jñāna-tapasā* means ‘purified by austerity in the form of knowledge’. In the opinion of the great spiritual authority, Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “This knowledge is realization of the absolute nature of My birth and activities. People attain Me when they have been purified by realizing My birth and activities in terms of the characteristics described earlier.” In other words, “While trying with determination to realize the eternal nature of My birth and activities, they attain *prema-bhakti* to Me. However, they are first purified by the austerity of tolerating the burning poison of the serpents of various types of wrong opinions, misguided logic and fallacious arguments.”

In Śrī Rāmānujācārya’s commentary he cites the Śruti statement “*tasya dhīrāḥ parijānanti yonim* – one who is fixed, or intelligent, has full knowledge of the nature of Śrī Bhagavān’s birth.”

Vīta-rāga refers to those who have given up attachment to persons who engage in mundane talk and who advocate bogus opinions. “My devotees do not become angry with them nor do they fear them. If one asks why, the answer is that they are intensely absorbed in deliberating and meditating on My birth and activities, and in hearing and chanting about them.” *Mad-bhāvam* means ‘*prema* for Me’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “There are three reasons why foolish people are not inclined to deliberate on the transcendental and supremely pure nature of My birth, activities and form: (1) attachment to other [or worldly] objects, (2) fear and (3) anger. Those whose intelligence is tightly bound by mundane thoughts are so deeply absorbed in materialism and attached to it that they do not accept that an eternal entity known as *cit-tattva* (transcendental reality) exists. According to such persons, *svabhāva* (nature itself) is the Absolute Truth. Some of them maintain that inert matter is the eternal cause and the source of

spirit. The *jaḍavādīs* (who declare that inert matter is the all-in-all), the *svabhāvavādīs* (who support the theory that everything is occurring due to the inherent properties within all phenomena), and the *caitanya-hīna-vidhivādīs* (who advocate a system of ethics that is based on the conception that there is no consciousness) are all impelled by an attachment to their respective theories. Being deluded by objects other than transcendental Reality, they gradually become bereft of any transcendental attachment to the Supreme Absolute Reality.

“Although some thinkers do accept spiritual principles as eternal, they can have no realization of them at all, because they reject the very principles by which transcendental knowledge is easily attained and perpetually take shelter of mundane logic and reasoning. Whatever attributes and activities they see in inert matter they designate as unreal (*asat*) and very carefully abandon them. Thus, in the name of identifying what is uncontaminated by inert matter, they imagine an Absolute Reality (*brahma*) that is beyond definition. This, however, is nothing more than an indirect manifestation of My *māyā*; it is not My eternal form. Later they give up meditating on My actual form (*svarūpa*) and worshipping My deity form, fearing that this may cause them to come under the influence of material conceptions. Because of this fear, they lose the opportunity to realize the true form of the Absolute Truth and are deprived of pure love for Me. There are others who, being unable to discern any substance beyond matter, become possessed by anger. Impelled by such anger, they maintain that the Absolute Reality is just a void, nothingness and the complete annihilation of all existence. The doctrine of the Buddhists and Jains has appeared from this principle of nihilism, or *nirvāṇa*.

“Many wise men, however, do become free from attachment, fear and anger and see nothing but Me everywhere. They are genuinely surrendered to Me, purified by the fire of transcendental knowledge and by the penance of tolerating the burning poison of false reasoning. Thus they have attained pure, sublime love for Me.”

VERSE 11

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ११ ॥

*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmś tathaiiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

ye – they; *yathā* – as; *mām* – Me; *prapadyante* – as they serve; *tān* – them; *tathā* – so; *eva* – certainly; *bhajāmi aham* – I love and serve; *mama vartma*– My path; *anuvartante* – follow; *manuṣyāḥ* – all men; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *sarvaśaḥ* – in all respects.

O Pārtha, in whichever way a person renders service to Me I reciprocate with him accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may ask the following question: “Only Your exclusive, one-pointed devotees understand Your birth and activities to be eternal. Others, who have an inclination toward *jñāna* and other processes, take shelter of You to perfect a particular process, but they do not accept the eternality of Your birth and activities. What will happen to them?” In response, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *ye yathā*. “Those who take shelter of Me perform *bhajana*, and I reciprocate by granting them the result of that *bhajana*. I am the Supreme Master, and My birth and pastimes are eternal. To those who understand this and who also worship Me by serving My pastimes specifically to please Me, I as the Supreme Controller, being independent to act or not act as I choose, also make their birth and activities eternal. I make them My eternal associates (*parikaras*) and at the appropriate time, I become manifest and unmanifest in this material world, along with them. In this way, I bestow My mercy upon them at every moment by giving them *prema* as the fruit of their service.

“There are others, such as the *jñānīs*, who take shelter of Me, considering My birth and activities to be temporary and My deity form to be a product of the external energy. In turn, I repeatedly throw them into the net of the cycle of repeated birth and action, which is subject to destruction. There, in the snare of illusion, I give them misery in the form of birth and death. However, those *jñānīs* who consider My birth and activities to be eternal and My deity to be composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss take shelter of Me to perfect their knowledge.

For such liberationists, who desire *mukti* through abandoning their gross and subtle bodies, I destroy their stay in the cycle of birth and death, which is born of ignorance, and grant them *brahmānanda* (the bliss of liberation) as the fruit of their worship. Thus, not only My devotees take shelter of Me, but also *jñānīs*, *karmīs*, *yogīs*, renunciants, worshippers of the demigods and all others follow My path. Since I am *sarva-svarūpa*, the form of everything, all paths, including *jñāna* and *karma*, are paths to Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI:

*tāms tān kāmān harir dadyād yān yān kāmayate janah
ārādhito yathavaiṣa tathā puṁsām phalodayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.13.34)

It is understood from this verse that according to the intention with which people worship Bhagavān Śrī Hari or take shelter of Him, He rewards them accordingly. The pure devotees worship Him to attain eternal service to His spiritual form, which is *sac-cid-ānanda*, composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss. Making such loving devotees His eternal associates, Bhagavān Śrī Hari fulfils their desire to attain loving service to Him. In accordance with the desire of the impersonalist empiric philosophers, Bhagavān grants them liberation in the form of *nirvāṇa*, in the featureless *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, which is the unvariegated manifestation of His personality. Bhagavān appears to those desirous of material enjoyment as He who bestows the fruits of their prescribed duty. And He appears to the *yogīs* as Īśvara, the Supreme Lord, and gives them mystic powers or liberation. However, of all the various achievements, the ultimate is to attain service to Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vraja.

It should be clearly understood from the present verse of *Bhagavad-gītā* that the results of different types of *bhajana* depend on the desires of the practitioners and are not the same. Some explain the words *manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ* to mean that everyone is following the path of service to Bhagavān and that all will attain the same result, whatever action they perform. This conception is completely incorrect. The idea that the miscreants, the *jñānīs*, the devotees and the *premi-bhaktas* ultimately achieve the exact same destination has been refuted in

scriptures such as the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is stated later in the *Gītā* (9.25):

*yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām*

Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, those who worship the forefathers go to their planet, those who worship the ghosts and spirits go to the planet of the spirits, and those who worship Me attain Me.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as follows, “I reciprocate with the mood in which one accepts shelter of Me and worships Me. Everyone can certainly attain Me, because I am the ultimate objective of all paths. Those who are pure devotees attain transcendental bliss by eternally rendering confidential eternal service to My spiritual form, which is composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*, eternity, cognizance and bliss, in the Supreme Abode. To the worshippers of My featureless aspect, the impersonalists, I award *nirvāṇa-mukti*, total absorption in the *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, by way of self-annihilation. Since they do not accept the eternity of My *sac-cid-ānanda* form, they consequently lose their own eternal, blissful form.

“According to their degree of conviction, I cast some of them into the cycle of birth and death. I appear as void to the nihilists, or *śūnyavādīs*, merging their existence with the void. I completely cover the consciousness of the materialistic empiricists, as well as those who identify themselves as being born of nature, by making their consciousness almost inert. I am only attainable to them in the form of inert nature. I appear as Īśvara to the *yogīs*, rewarding them with mystic powers or impersonal liberation. In this way, as the intrinsic form of everything (*sarva-svarūpa*), I am the object of achievement for all types of beliefs. Among them all, the only one that should be considered supreme is attainment of transcendental service to Me. All human beings follow one of My various paths.”

VERSE 12

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ १२ ॥

*kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhim yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣīpraṁ hi mānuṣe loke siddhir bhavati karmajā*

kāṅkṣantaḥ – those desiring; *karmaṇām* – of fruitive acts; *siddhim* – the fruit; *yajante* – worship; *iha* – in this world; *devatāḥ* – the demigods; *kṣīpraṁ* – speedily; *hi* – because; *mānuṣe loke* – in this world of men; *siddhiḥ* – fruitful; *bhavati* – becomes; *karmajā* – that arises from fruitive work.

Those who desire the fruits of their activities in this world worship the demigods, because the results of their fruitive work are quickly achieved.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Among those with whom I reciprocate, those desiring material enjoyment give up the path of direct devotion to Me and follow the path of *karma*, which quickly bears fruit.” To explain this point, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *kāṅkṣantaḥ*. The word *karmajā* means ‘born of *karma*’ and refers to perfections such as the attainment of the heavenly planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Karma* is of three types: (1) *nitya* – daily or prescribed, (2) *naimittika* – occasional and (3) *kāmya* – with fruitive desire. Actions prescribed in the Vedas, such as *sandhya*, or reciting prayers at the three junctions of the day, are obligatory, daily religious duties, or *nitya-karma*. Activities such as offering oblations to the forefathers are known as occasional duties, or *naimittika-karma*, and those actions performed with a desire for the fruits are called *kāmya-karma*, or *sakāma*. *Kāmya-karma* is superior to both abstaining from prescribed duties (*akarma*) and performing prohibited, sinful action (*vikarma*):

*kāmais tais tair hrta-jñānāḥ prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ
Bhagavad-gītā (7.20)*

People who desire the fruits of their actions give up the worship of Bhagavān Śrī Vāsudeva and worship the different demigods.

*labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiiva vihitān hi tān
Bhagavad-gītā (7.22)*

By the arrangements of Bhagavān, they receive their desired results from those demigods.

Those who, by the association of pure devotees, realize the insignificance of *karma* and its fruits, adopt the path of *nirguṇā-bhakti*. They quickly become successful and attain service to the Lord. According to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21), this is because Śrī Bhagavān is achieved only by *bhakti*: *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.20) also says “*na sādhayati mām yogah* – Bhagavān is not achieved by such processes as *yoga* or the performance of austerities.”

VERSE 13

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

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

cātur-varṇyam – the system of the four social orders, such as the *brāhmaṇas*; *mayā* – by Me; *sṛṣṭam* – was created; *guṇa* – of quality; *karma* – work; *vibhāgaśaḥ* – according to divisions; *tasya* – of this; *kartāram* – the creator; *api* – although; *mām* – Me; *viddhi* – you should know; *akartāram* – non-doer; *avyayam* – the unchanging.

The fourfold system of *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*) was created by Me according to divisions of quality (*guṇa*) and work (*karma*). Although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am the immutable non-doer.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may ask, “The paths of *bhakti* and *jñāna* give liberation as their fruit, yet the path of *karma* gives bondage. You, the Supreme Controller, have introduced all these paths, so how is it that this partiality exists in You?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “No, no, it is not like this.” To justify this, He has spoken this verse beginning with the word *cātur-varṇyam*, which indicates the four *varṇas*.

The qualities of the four castes, or *varṇas*, are now described. The priestly class (*brāhmaṇas*) possess a predominance of the mode of goodness, and their work (*karma*) is to control the mind, senses and so forth. The warrior class (*kṣatriya*) is predominated by the mode of goodness mixed with the mode of passion, and their duty is to be chivalrous and to engage in warfare. The mercantile community (*vaiśyas*) is predominated by the mode of passion mixed with ignorance, and their work is business, farming and cow protection, etc. The class of servants (*sūdras*) is predominated by the mode of ignorance, and their prescribed duty is to work for others.

“I have created the four castes, *guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*, according to divisions based on quality (*guṇa*) and work (*karma*), which is the basis of the path of fruitive work. Although I am the doer and the creator of this system, you should know that I am not in fact the doer or the creator, for I am not directly concerned with this system. Material nature (*prakṛti*) is My potency, but I am transcendental to the modes of material nature. Therefore, although I am the creator, I am also not the creator, because I am free from the false ego of being the doer. It is My *prakṛti* which, as the material cause, is directly concerned with establishing this system. I am immutable. In other words, I remain unchanged; although I am the creator, I remain completely impartial and unconcerned in regard to introducing the *varṇa* system.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān alone is the creator and direct initiator of the whole universe. Accordingly, He alone is the creator of castes and the fourfold social system of *varṇa-dharma*. By His constitutional nature, the *jīva* is an eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Bhagavān has bestowed upon him an invaluable treasure in the form of independence. When the *jīva* misuses his independence by deciding to not serve Kṛṣṇa, Bhagavān’s deluding potency, *māyā*, immediately covers his eternal nature with gross and subtle bodies and throws him into the cycle of repeated birth and death. To deliver such souls, Śrī Bhagavān, being causelessly merciful, creates the path of prescribed duty (*varṇāśrama-dharma*) through the agency of His illusory potency. At the same time, He is eternally engaged in enjoying through His spiritual potency, the *cit-śakti*. In this way, He remains both unchangeable and the non-doer.

For further details about the four *varṇas*, one should read *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.41-44) and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.21-24) and (11.17.16-19).

VERSE 14

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ १४ ॥

*na mām karmāṇi limṇanti na me karma-phale sṛhā
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate*

na – no; *mām* – Me; *karmāṇi* – all actions; *limṇanti* – bind; *na* – not; *me* – for Me; *karma-phale* – for the results of action; *sṛhā* – hankering; *iti* – in this way; *mām* – Me; *yaḥ* – who; *abhijānāti* – factually understands; *karmabhiḥ* – by actions; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *badhyate* – is bound.

Karma can never bind Me because I have no desire for the fruit of action. They who actually comprehend this truth about Me are also never bound by their activities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Even if Arjuna accepts the arguments given in the previous verse, he still may say to Bhagavān, “But You have appeared in a dynasty of *kṣatriyas*, and every day You perform the activities of a *kṣatriya*, so how can I accept You as the non-doer (*akartā*)?” In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *na mām*. “This action does not bind Me as it does the living entities. Although the living entity desires the fruits of his prescribed duty, in the form of residence in the heavenly planets and so on, I have no such desire. As the Supreme Controller, I am complete in My own bliss. I perform work simply to set an example. Those who do not know Me as such become bound by *karma*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is the complete Absolute Reality, composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss. The living entity, the *jīva*, is an atomic, conscious reality (*aṇu-cit*). Bhagavān is replete with six types of opulence, but the *jīva* who is adverse to the service of Bhagavān is bereft of opulences. Bhagavān is

the master of *māyā*, while the *jīva* is subject to *māyā*'s control. These are the differences between the two. The *jīva* can never, under any circumstance, become *brahma*, or Bhagavān. When the *jīva* performs *bhagavad-bhakti*, however, knowing that Śrī Bhagavān is all-powerful, independent, imperishable and free from all desire, he becomes freed from the bondage of *karma* and attains service to Bhagavān in his constitutional spiritual form. This is the living entity's eternal position.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "The path of *karma*, which is created due to *adrṣṭa* (fate, the unseen destiny of the *jīva*) does not affect Me. Nor do I desire to enjoy the petty fruits of *karma*, because I, Bhagavān, am full in all the six opulences. Those who deliberate on the *jīva*'s path of *karma* and on My absolutely independent nature, understanding that nature to be imperishable, are never bound by *karma*. By performing pure devotion, or *śuddha-bhakti*, they attain Me."

VERSE 15

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात् त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ १५ ॥

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

evam – thus; *jñātvā* – knowing; *kṛtam* – performed (to give an example to the world); *karma* – work; *pūrvaiḥ* – by the sages (in ancient times); *api* – even; *mumukṣubhiḥ* – who desired liberation; *kuru* – you must perform; *karma* – action; *eva* – certainly; *tasmāt* – therefore; *tvam* – you; *pūrvaiḥ* – by those ancients; *pūrvataram* – previously; *kṛtam* – performed.

Even the seekers of liberation in ancient times performed their prescribed duties simply to set the standard for common men. Therefore, you should also perform your work, following the example of these predecessor authorities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: "Previous authorities such as Janaka, knowing Me in this way, have also performed their prescribed duty to set an ideal for humanity."

VERSE 16

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६ ॥

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

kim – what?; *karma* – action; *kiṁ* – what?; *akarma* – inaction; *iti* – thus; *kavayah* – discriminating persons; *api* – even; *atra* – on this point; *mohitāḥ* – are confused; *tat* – that (science); *te* – to you; *karma* – action; *pravakṣyāmi* – I shall explain; *yaj* – which; *jñātvā* – having understood; *mokṣyase* – you shall be freed; *aśubhāt* – from the inauspicious (bondage caused by *karma*).

Even men of discrimination become bewildered in their efforts to determine what constitutes action and what constitutes inaction. For this reason, I shall explain the science of *karma* to you, knowing which you will become liberated from the most inauspicious cycle of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Even the wise should not perform prescribed duty (*karma*) simply by imitating the previous spiritual authorities. Rather, they should act only when they have understood its specific nature. For this reason, the complex subject of *karma-tattva*, the science of performing one's prescribed duty, is being explained.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: In Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary, the logic of *gatānugatika-nyāya* means 'working by imitating the actions of others without trying to deeply understand the subject matter of the purpose of the action'.

VERSE 17

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७ ॥

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

karmaṇaḥ – action; *hi* – because; *api* – also; *boddhavyam* – should be understood; *boddhavyam* – should be understood; *ca* – and; *vikarmaṇaḥ* – of prohibited action; *akarmaṇaḥ* – of inaction; *ca* – and; *boddhavyam* – should be understood; *gahanā* – profound; *karmaṇaḥ* – of action; *gatiḥ* – the science.

Action, prohibited action and non-action should be distinctly understood, for the science of *karma* is most profound.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Forbidden action (*vikarma*) leads to a miserable destination. This is the principle. *Akarma* means ‘to not perform one’s prescribed action (*karma*)’. Why is it auspicious for *sannyāsīs* to refrain from their prescribed duty? In other words, how will they attain the highest welfare without performing action? The principle of *karma* is extremely deep and difficult to understand. The word *karma* implies all three aspects: action (*karma*), inaction (*akarma*) and forbidden action (*vikarma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is difficult to understand the fundamental principle of *karma*. Only the *karma* prescribed in scripture is the cause of liberation (*mokṣa*). Forbidden action (*vikarma*), which is the opposite of prescribed duty, leads the living entities to a miserable destination. To not perform the *karma* prescribed in the scriptures is called *akarma* (inaction). There are three levels of inaction:

- (1) The ignorant do not perform the *karma* prescribed in the Vedas, due to laziness.
- (2) Those who know the result of *karma*, or prescribed duties, to be perishable and miserable become resentful. Being disgusted with *karma*, they act to attain liberation.
- (3) After hearing topics of Śrī Bhagavān (*hari-kathā*), some persons abandon prescribed *karma* and cultivate *bhakti*.

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvataḥ
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9)

A person should perform his prescribed duty as long as he has not developed renunciation (from *karma*) or faith in hearing and reciting topics about Me.

In this current verse of the *Gītā*, the word *karmaṇo* in the phrase *gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ* implies all three aspects – *karma*, *akarma* and *vikarma*.

VERSE 18

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
 स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥
karmany akarma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt

karmaṇi – within action; *akarma* – inaction; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyet* – can see; *akarmaṇi* – within inaction; *ca* – and; *karma* – action; *yaḥ* – who; *saḥ* – that; *buddhimān* – intelligent person; *manuṣyeṣu* – among mankind; *saḥ* – he; *yuktaḥ* – yogī; *kṛtsna-karma* – of all activities; *kṛt* – the performer.

One who sees action in inaction and inaction in action is truly wise among men. He is a yogī and transcendently situated, even though he performs all sorts of activities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Of the three types of action, the *tattva* of action and inaction is explained in this verse beginning with the word *karmaṇi*. Personalities such as Janaka Mahārāja, who were pure in heart, did not take *sannyāsa*, even though they were endowed with *jñāna*. Instead, they performed non-action (*akarma*) by selflessly offering the fruit of their activity to Bhagavān (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). Those who can see that this is not really action (*karma*) are themselves not bound by *karma*. A *karma-sannyāsī* whose heart is impure, who lacks real knowledge, and who possesses a mere intellectual knowledge of the scriptures, can only deliver exalted speeches. But those who can see action in the non-action of such *sannyāsīs*, and who realize that bondage to action, or *karma*, only leads to a miserable destination, are actually wise.

The pure-hearted person mentioned above performs all types of *karma* but does not completely reject the performance of prescribed

duties, meaning he does not accept *karma-sannyāsa*. On the other hand, there are so-called *karma-sannyāsīs* who consider themselves to be knowledgeable but who are actually proud and garrulous. They do not seek higher association or follow the instructions of the scriptures; rather they only praise themselves. Those impure-hearted persons suffer miserably.

Śrī Bhagavān has also said:

*yas tv asaṁyata-ṣaḍ-vargaḥ pracandendriya-sārathih
jñāna-vairāgya-rahitas tri-daṇḍam upajīvati
surān ātmānam ātma-sthaṁ nihnute mām ca dharmā-hā
avīpakva-kaṣāyo 'smād amuṣmāc ca vihīyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.18.40–41)

Sometimes, a person who is bereft of real knowledge and renunciation makes a show of accepting *tridaṇḍa*, the symbol of *sannyāsa*, to maintain his life. This is condemned if his intelligence, which should direct the senses, is instead controlled by the fiercely strong senses and by the six invincible enemies (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy). Such a person is the killer of his own soul. Completely immersed in endless material desires, he denies the worshipable demigods, his own self and even Me, who am situated within his heart. Thus he is ruined both in this world and in the next.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All *karma* performed by a *niṣkāma-karma-yogī* is inaction (*akarma*), in the form of *karma-sannyāsa*. Renunciation of the fruits of action constitutes his performance of *niṣkāma-karma*. Although *niṣkāma-karma-yogīs* perform all types of action, they are not considered *karmīs*, or fruitive workers. For them action and inaction are the same. On the other hand, so-called *jñānīs* who have artificially renounced their prescribed duties but whose conduct is poor due to their impure hearts, who are proud, and who praise themselves are condemnable.

VERSE 19

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ १९ ॥

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

yasya – whose; *sarve* – every; *samārambhāḥ* – endeavour; *kāma-saṅkalpa* – of motivation and lust; *varjitāḥ* – devoid; *jñāna-agni* – by the fire of knowledge; *dagdha* – is burned up; *karmāṇam* – action; *tam* – him; *āhuḥ* – call; *paṇḍitam* – a learned person; *budhāḥ* – the wise.

He whose every action is free from desire and hankering for sense pleasure, having burned all fruitive desires within the fire of pure knowledge, is called a learned man, or *paṇḍita*, by the wise.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In five verses (*Gītā* 4.19–24), the subject of *karma* is now being explained in detail, the first beginning with the word *yasya*. *Kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ* means ‘devoid of the desire for the fruits of action’, and *samārambhāḥ* refers to all actions that are properly instigated. *Jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇam* indicates those in whom the reactions to all their previous actions, or forbidden actions, have been burned by the fire of knowledge. The fate of those who perform forbidden action, as described in the *Gītā* (4.17), should be understood in this way. As explained in the previous verse, it is proper to see the action of a wise person as inaction. Similarly, it is also proper to see his forbidden action as inaction. This is congruent with the previous verse and will be explained in later verses (*Gītā* 4.36–37).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who perform prescribed duties and at the same time become free from fruitive desires, as well as from their forbidden acts, burn up all the results of those duties in the fire of transcendental knowledge. This results from their performance of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Such exalted souls are called *jñānāgni-dagdha-karmā*, ‘those who have burned all their *karma* in the fire of transcendental knowledge’.

VERSE 20

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ २० ॥

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

tyaktvā – having given up; *karma-phala* – the fruits of action; *asaṅgam* – attachment; *nitya-tṛptaḥ* – being satisfied by his own eternal bliss; *nirāśrayaḥ* – and without dependence (on anyone for his maintenance); *karmaṇi* – in action; *abhipravṛttaḥ* – perfectly performing; *api* – although; *na* – not; *eva* – certainly; *kiñcit* – anything; *karoti* – does; *saḥ* – he.

One who has renounced attachment to the fruits of his work, who is always satisfied by his own internal bliss, and who is not dependent on anyone for his maintenance, performs no action, even though fully engaged in all types of action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Nitya-tṛptaḥ* means that internally such a person remains blissfully content. *Nirāśrayaḥ* means not depending on anyone for one's maintenance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The word *yoga*, cited in the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* [the original Sanskrit commentary written by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura] means 'to attain, or acquire, that which one lacks'. The word *kṣema* means 'to protect what one possesses'.

VERSE 21

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१ ॥

***nirāśīr yata-cittātmā tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
sārīram kevalam karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam***

nirāśīḥ – who does not hanker; *yata* – is controlled; *citta* – whose mind; *ātmā* – the soul; *tyakta* – who has abandoned; *sarva-parigrahaḥ* – all ingredients for sense pleasure; *sārīram* – for bodily maintenance; *kevalam* – solely; *karma* – his work; *kurvan* – so doing; *na āpnoti* – does not acquire; *kilbiṣam* – sinful reaction.

A person who can control his mind and senses, who is devoid of fruitive desires, who renounces all varieties of sense pleasure and who works only for bodily maintenance, does not become affected by sinful reactions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here the word *ātmā* refers to the gross body. *Śārīram* refers to performing acts such as accepting donations from dishonest persons to maintain the body. Such people do not incur sin even if they act like this. This further describes the phrase of the *Gītā* (4.17) “*vikarmaṇaḥ boddhavyam* – one should understand the fundamental principles of forbidden action (*vikarma*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Nirāśiḥ* means ‘those who are devoid of fruitive desires’. Although such people may accept charity from dishonest persons to maintain their body, still they do not incur sin; nor do they incur piety by accepting charity through the proper means. This is because they control the mind and gross body and are free from any effort to accumulate objects meant for sense enjoyment.

VERSE 22

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२ ॥

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

yad-ṛcchā – which comes of its own accord; *lābha* – with gain; *santuṣṭaḥ* – satisfied; *dvandva* – duality (such as heat and cold); *atītaḥ* – tolerates; *vimatsaraḥ* – free from envy; *samaḥ* – equipoised; *siddhau* – in success; *asiddhau* – failure; *ca* – and; *kṛtvā* – acting; *api* – although; *na nibadhyate* – he is not bound.

He who is satisfied with objects that come of their own accord, who tolerates dualities such as heat and cold, who is free from

envy, and who remains equipoised in success and failure even while performing action, is not bound by it.

VERSE 23

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३ ॥

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

gata-saṅgasya – has given up attachment; *muktasya* – liberated; *jñāna* – in knowledge; *avasthita* – is situated; *cetasah* – whose consciousness; *yajñāya* – for the worship of Viṣṇu; *ācarataḥ* – of one who performs; *karma* – fruitive action; *sagram* – completely; *pravilīyate* – is nullified.

For a person devoid of material attachments, whose mind is situated in transcendental knowledge, and who performs his every action for the worship of the Supreme, all the reactions to his past fruitive work are nullified. He becomes liberated and attains the stage of non-action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The characteristics of sacrifice, or *yajña*, will be explained later. Action performed for the sake of *yajña* is dissolved, and this results in a state of inaction (*akarma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: *Karma* (work) performed for the pleasure of Śrī Bhagavān never becomes a cause of bondage to the material world. Such action for the pleasure of Bhagavān is described here as *akarma-bhāva*, the state of inaction.

Mere performance of religious activities, in the form of action as prescribed in the Vedas, does not in itself lead to the higher planets, nor do sinful activities lead to hell. Those who know *karma* who accept the principle of *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* (that the cycle of birth and death is perpetual and the best one can aim for is a higher birth among the demigods) claim that actions produce an unseen subtle potency called *apūrva*, and it is this *apūrva* that causes the *karma* to give its

results, life after life. Their conception – that these results can later be shared by others – is meant to establish the eternality of *karma*. This consideration, however, does not apply to one who selflessly performs work without attachment and offers the fruit of that work to Bhagavān.

VERSE 24

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविर्ब्रह्मग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ २४ ॥

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

brahma – to the supreme spiritual reality; *arpaṇam* – the offering (that is, with sacrificial spoons and other paraphernalia); *brahma* – (becomes) spirit; *haviḥ* – the ghee (and other ingredients for offering); *brahma* – becomes spirit; *agnau* – into the fire; *brahmaṇā* – by that *brāhmaṇa*; *hutam* – his offering (of foods); *brahma* – (becomes) spirit; *eva* – certainly; *tena* – by that; *gantavyam* – is worthy to be attained; *brahma-karma* – with spiritual action; *samādhinā* – by trance.

In the performance of a fire sacrifice (*yajña*), in which the instruments for offering (such as spoon), the ingredients to be offered (such as ghee), the place where the offering is made (the sacrificial fire), the person making the offering (the priest) and the act of offering itself are *brahma*, or spiritual in nature, and meant for the revelation of *brahma* (transcendence). Indeed *brahma* is the fruit obtained by a person who is one-pointedly absorbed in seeking revelation of *brahma* in the performance of such action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The previous verse states that one should perform work as an act of sacrifice (*yajña*) to the Supreme. What is the nature of such sacrifice? In anticipation of this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *brahmārpaṇam*. *Arpaṇam* refers to the instrument with which the offering is made. The ladle used in the sacrifice and other such instruments are transcendental, or *brahma*.

What is offered, such as the ghee and grains, is also *brahma*. *Brahmāgnau* means that the resting place of the sacrificial fire and the sacrificial fire itself are *brahma*. The *brāhmaṇa* who performs the *yajña* is also *brahma*. Thus *brahma* (the Supreme) is the only desirable object for a wise man. There is no other result. If one asks why, the answer is that this activity is identical to *brahma*, and therefore, it leads to *samādhi*, exclusive concentration of the mind. No other fruit is obtained.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In sacrificial acts, the special instrument used to offer ghee into the fire is called a *sruva*. The ingredients offered to the demigods in the sacrifice are called *havi*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Hear how work in the form of sacrifice gives rise to knowledge. I will explain various types of sacrifice later. Now, I will explain the fundamental principle behind it. Material actions are compulsory for the living entity who is bound to material consciousness. In such mundane activities, the faithful discharge of prescribed duties in which one can deliberate on spiritual reality, or *cit-tattva*, is called *yajña*. When conscious reality manifests in matter, it is called *brahma*. That *brahma* is merely My bodily effulgence. Spiritual reality (*cit-tattva*) is quite distinct from the whole material universe. *Yajña* is perfect when its five constituents, namely *arpaṇam* (the instrument for offering), *havi* (the ingredients), *agni* (the fire), *hotā* (the doer) and *phala* (the fruit), are the resting place of *brahma*, that is, when they are meant for the revelation of *brahma*. A person’s activity is known as *brahma-yajña* when he seeks revelation of *brahma* in his actions with concentrated meditation. The instruments of offering, the ingredients, the fire, the doer (that is, his very own existence) and the fruits are all *brahma*. Thus their ultimate destination is also *brahma*.”

VERSE 25

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥ २५ ॥

daivam evāpare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāv apare yajñam yajñenaivopajuhvati

daivam – the demigods; *eva* – indeed; *apare* – other; *yajñam* – sacrifice; *yoginah* – *karma-yogīs*; *pari-upāsate* – perfectly worship; *brahma-agnau* – in the fire of the Absolute Truth; *apare* – others (*jñāna-yogīs*); *yajñam* – sacrifice; *yajñena* – through sacrifice; *eva* – indeed; *upajuhvati* – make offerings.

Karma-yogīs perfectly worship the demigods in the form of offering ceremonial sacrifices to them, while others, jñāna-yogīs, offer all their activities as oblations through sacrifice into the sacrificial fire of the Absolute Truth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “There are various types of *yajña* according to the various desired goals. Now hear of them all.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks eight verses beginning with the present one, *daivam eva*, to explain these different types of *yajña*. *Yajña* in which demigods such as Indra and Varuṇa are worshipped is called *daivam*. The performers of such *yajña* do not consider demigods like Indra and others to be *brahma*. This is being explained here. According to the statement *sāsyā-devatetyaṇa*, the demigods are the only worshipable deities for those who perform *deva-yajña*, sacrifice to the demigods; *brahma* is not mentioned here. In this verse, *yoginah* means *karma-yogīs*, while *apare* implies *jñāna-yogīs*. *Brahmāgnau* means that *brahma*, or Paramātmā Himself, is the sacrificial fire. In that sacrificial fire, or the Absolute Truth (*tat-padārtha*), the oblation of the *jīva* (*tvam-padārtha*) is offered by the means (ladle) of chanting the *praṇava-mantra*, *om*. This very *jñāna-yajña* will be glorified later. Here, the words *yajñam* and *yajñena* have been used for the object offered (such as ghee) and the instrument of the offering (the ladle) respectively. In other words, it is understood that the pure *jīva* and *praṇava* are indicated by a superior understanding of *yajña* and *yajñena*, respectively.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses Kṛṣṇa’s mood as follows, “Those who take the vow to perform *yajña* are called *yogīs*. There are various types of *yajña* according to the different aptitudes of the *yogīs*. In fact, there are as many varieties of *yajñas* as there are types of *yogīs*. Based on scientific understanding, all *yajñas* can be divided into two general divisions:

(1) *karma-yajña*, consisting of sacrificial offerings and (2) *jñāna-yajña*, sacrifice in the form of deliberation on the spiritual reality, *cit-tattva*. This will be explained further on.

“Now, please hear as I explain some varieties of *yajñas*. The *karma-yogīs* perform their worship through the worship of My authorized representatives such as Indra and Varuṇa who, by My external potency, are gifted with specific powers. By such worship, these *karma-yogīs* gradually come to the stage of selflessly offering the fruit of their endeavours to Bhagavān (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). The sacrifice of the *jñāna-yogīs* consists of offering themselves (*tvaṁ-padārtha*) as the ghee into the fire of the Absolute (*tat-padārtha*) by reciting the *praṇava-mantra*, *om*, or having taken shelter of the great axiom *tat-tvaṁ asi* – you are His servant. The superiority of this sacrifice in the form of deliberation on spiritual reality will be explained later on.”

VERSE 26

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।
शब्दादीन् विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥ २६ ॥

śrotrādīnīndriyāṅy anye saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīn viṣayān anya indriyāgniṣu juhvati

śrotra-ādīni – beginning with the ear; *indriyāni* – the senses; *anye* – others (lifelong celibate students); *saṁyama* – of the controlled mind; *agniṣu* – into the fire; *juhvati* – offer; *śabda-ādīn* – beginning with sound; *viṣayān* – the sense objects; *anye* – others (householders); *indriya-agniṣu* – into the fire of the senses; *juhvati* – offer.

The lifelong celibates offer their hearing and other senses into the fire of the controlled mind, while the householders offer sense objects, such as sound, into the fire of the senses.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The resolute celibates, or *brahmacārīs*, offer their hearing and other sense functions into the fire of the controlled mind. In this way, they completely dissolve the senses into the pure mind. The irresolute celibates, or *gṛhasthas* (religious householders) offer the objects of the senses such as sound into the fire of the senses.

VERSE 27

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ २७ ॥

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

sarvāṇi – of all; *indriya* – of the senses; *karmāṇi* – the functions; *prāṇa-karmāṇi* – the functions of breath; *ca* – and; *apare* – others (*yogīs*); *ātma-saṁyama* – of the self-controlled (pure) soul; *yoga-agnau* – in the fire of connection; *juhvati* – offer; *jñāna-dīpīte* – which is illuminated by transcendental knowledge.

Other *yogīs* offer the activities of all their senses and life-airs into the fire of the controlled self, which is illumined by knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Apare* means ‘the knower of pure self, the *jīva*’. These *yogīs* offer all of their senses, the activities of the senses such as hearing and seeing, the ten types of life-airs (*prāṇa*), and the actions of the life-airs into the fire of the controlled self, or the fire of the *jīva*’s purified existence. In other words, they completely dissolve the mind, the intelligence, the senses and the ten life-airs in the pure self. Their understanding is that there is one pure soul in all that exists, and that the mind and so on do not have any real existence.

The ten types of life-airs and their actions are as follows:

NAME	ACTION
(1) <i>prāṇa</i>	breathing out
(2) <i>apāna</i>	breathing in
(3) <i>samāna</i>	adjusting the equilibrium of all objects eaten or drunk
(4) <i>udāna</i>	going upwards
(5) <i>vyāna</i>	moving everywhere
(6) <i>nāga</i>	belching
(7) <i>kūrma</i>	opening the eyes
(8) <i>kṛkara</i>	coughing
(9) <i>devadatta</i>	yawning
(10) <i>dhanañjaya</i>	remaining in the body even after death

VERSE 28

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

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

dravya-yajñāḥ – sacrifice of possessions in charity; *tapo-yajñāḥ* – sacrifice in the form of austerities; *yoga-yajñāḥ* – sacrifice in the form of yoga; *tathā* – and; *apare* – others; *svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāḥ* – sacrifice in the form of study of transcendental knowledge from the Vedas; *ca* – and; *yatayaḥ* – (all these) ascetics; *saṁśīta-vratāḥ* – follow strict vows.

Some perform sacrifice by giving their possessions in charity, some by performing austerities, some by practising the *yoga* of eightfold mysticism and others by studying the Vedas and acquiring transcendental knowledge. All who make such endeavours follow strict vows.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who perform sacrifice by offering their material possessions in charity are called *dravya-yajñāḥ*. Those who perform sacrifice by performing difficult austerities, such as the *cāndrāyana-vrata*, are called *tapo-yajñāḥ*. Those who perform sacrifice by the eightfold process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* are called *yoga-yajñāḥ*, and those whose sacrifice is to study the Vedas only in order to acquire knowledge are called *svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāḥ*. All those who make such endeavours are described as *saṁśīta-vratāḥ* (performers of strict vows).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ VṚTTI: Here Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is describing various types of sacrifice. *Karma-yogīs* give food grains, cloth and so on in charity. This is their *dravya-yajña*. They perform welfare activities that are described in the Smṛtis, such as digging wells and ponds, establishing temples of the demigods, giving food in charity, and making parks and gardens. There are others who perform activities such as protecting their dependants and taking a vow of non-violence towards all. Their charitable activity is called

datta-karma. There are others who perform sacrifice for the purpose of pleasing the demigods. This is called *iṣṭa-yajña*. And some perform painfully austere vows, such as *cāndrāyaṇa*, which are explained in *Manu-saṁhitā*:

***Kṛcchra-vrata*:**

*ekaikam grāsam aśnīyāt try-ahāni trīṇi pūrvavat
try-ahañ copavased antyam atikṛcchram caran dvijaḥ*

Manu-saṁhitā (11.214)

For the first three days a person eats one mouthful of food during the day. For the next three days, he eats one mouthful daily in the evening, and for the three days after that, he takes one morsel of food a day without begging. For the last three days, he fasts completely. This austere vow is called *kṛcchra-vrata*.

***Cāndrāyaṇa-vrata*:**

*ekaikam hrasayet piṇḍam kṛṣṇe śukle ca vardhayet
upasṛśamś tri-śavaṇam etac cāndrāyaṇam smṛtam*

Manu-saṁhitā (11.217)

On the full moon day, a person should take only fifteen mouthfuls of food per day and take bath in the morning, noon and evening. From the first day of the lunar month onwards, he should reduce his food by one mouthful each day, and on the fourteenth day he should eat only one mouthful. He is to fast completely on the dark moon day. From the first day of the bright fortnight onwards, he increases his meal by one mouthful each day, eating fifteen mouthfuls on the full moon day. This is called *cāndrāyaṇa-vrata*.

There are others who perform sacrifice by devoting themselves to *yoga*. Their sacrifice is to perform *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* while residing in a pious place or holy place. Patañjali has said, “*yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodha – yoga* means to control the various activities of the mind.” The eight limbs of *yoga* are *yama* (adhering to regulative principles), *niyama* (abstaining from actions to be avoided), *āsana* (sitting postures), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi*

(trance), the performance of which is called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Other *karma-yogīs* call the study of the Vedas *jñāna-yajña*; this is their exclusive engagement.

VERSE 29

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।
 प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ।
 अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ॥ २९ ॥

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

apāne – into the down-going; *juhvati* – he offers; *prāṇam* – the up-going breath; *prāṇe* – into the up-going; *apānam* – the down-going breath; *tathā* – and; *apare* – others (who have faith in the process of *prāṇāyāma*); *prāṇa-apāna-gatī* – the movement of these two airs; *ruddhvā* – having blocked; *prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ* – devoted to expansion of their life-energy; *apare* – others; *niyata-āhārāḥ* – restraining eating; *prāṇān* – their up-going breaths; *prāṇeṣu* – into the up-going breaths; *juhvati* – offer.

Others, who are steadfast in controlling the life force (*prāṇāyāma*), offer the up-going breath (*prāṇa*) into the down-going breath (*apāna*) and conversely offer the down-going breath into the up-going breath. Having stopped both the up-going breath and the down-going breath, they dedicate themselves to controlling the various life-airs. Others, while checking the eating process, offer their up-going breath into down-going breath itself, as a sacrifice.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Some *yogīs*, who are devoted to the control of their life-airs, sacrifice the up-going breath (*prāṇa*) into the down-going breath (*apāna*). This means that at the time of inhalation they combine them. Similarly, at the time of exhalation, they offer the down-going breath into the out-going breath, and as they hold their breath, they stop the movement of both the up-going breath and down-going breath and become fixed in the practice of *prāṇāyāma*.

Others, who want to control the senses, sacrifice their senses into their life-air by moderating their food intake. The senses are under the control of *prāṇa*, the life-air. When the life-air becomes weak, naturally the senses also become weak and unable to enjoy their sense objects. In this way, these persons offer their disabled senses into their life-air, living only on their life-air.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (the eightfold path of *yoga*) is being explained in more detail. *Yogīs* sacrifice the up-going breath into the down-going breath through inhalation. In other words, as they inhale, they combine them. Similarly, as they exhale, they offer the down-going breath into the up-going breath, and as they hold their breath, they stop the movements of both the up-going and down-going life-air.

The word *prāṇāyāma* has two components. *Prāṇa* means ‘a special type of air’ and *āyāma* means ‘expansion’. Here, expansion means to control the *prāṇa* (life-air) from the tip of the toenails to the hair on top of the head. In *Garuḍa Purāṇa* it is said, “*prāṇāyāmo maruj-jayah* – to control the *prāṇa* is called *prāṇāyāma*.” Therefore, *prāṇāyāma* means expanding *prāṇa* for the purpose of controlling the activities of the senses.

Similarly, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.15.1) explains, “When a person controls his senses and his breathing process and fully absorbs his mind in Me, all the mystic perfections naturally come under his control.” For more information on this subject, readers should study the book *Prema-pradīpa* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

The *Smṛtis* describe sacrifices such as *dravya-yajña* (offering material possessions in charity), *tapo-yajña* (performing difficult austerities), *yoga-yajña* (performing the eightfold process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) and *svādhyāya-jñāna-yajña* (studying the Vedas to acquire knowledge), while the *tantra-śāstra* describes *haṭha-yoga* and various other types of vows for controlling the senses. However, the best type of sacrifice in this Kali-yuga, when people have but short life spans and very little intelligence, is the natural and easily perfected *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the chanting of the holy names. Not only every human but every living entity has the right to perform *saṅkīrtana-yajña*:

*harer nāma, harer nāma, harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva, nāsty eva, nāsty eva, gatiḥ anyathā*

Bṛhad-Nāradya Purāṇa

In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way.*

This is also explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32):

*kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

By performing the sacrifice of the chanting of the holy names, intelligent persons worship that Personality in whose mouth the two syllables *kṛ* and *ṣṇa* are dancing, whose bodily colour is like brilliant gold, and who is surrounded by His associates, servitors, weapons and confidential companions.

VERSE 30

*सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ।
यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ॥३०॥*

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

sarve – all; *api* – also; *ete* – those; *yajña-vidah* – who are conversant with the principle of sacrifice; *yajña* – through sacrifice; *kṣapita* – cleansed; *kalmaṣāḥ* – of sins; *yajña-śiṣṭa* – remnants of sacrifice; *amṛta-bhujah* – they enjoy the immortal; *yānti* – they attain; *brahma* – spirit; *sanātanam* – eternal.

All those who know the principle of sacrifice become free from sin by performing it. Having tasted the nectarean remnants of sacrifice, they attain the eternal *brahma*, the stage of transcendence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: All who know the principles of sacrifice and who perform sacrifices as described above gradually advance in

knowledge, by which they can attain *brahma*. Here, the secondary result of such sacrifice is explained; they also taste the nectarean remnants of sacrifice, such as mundane enjoyment, opulence and mystic perfections. Similarly, the primary fruit is described as *brahma-yānti* (the attainment of *brahma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The primary fruit of sacrifice is the attainment of *brahma*, the stage of transcendence, and the secondary fruit is to achieve mundane, or worldly, enjoyment and mystic perfections, such as *aṇimā-siddhi* (becoming atomic in size).

VERSE 31

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१ ॥

nāyam loko 'sty ayajñasya kuto 'nyah kuru-sattama

na – not; *ayam lokah* – this world; *asti* – there is; *ayajñasya* – for one who does not perform *yajña*; *kutaḥ* – what then?; *anyah* – of the other world; *kuru-sattama* – O best of the Kurus.

O best of the Kurus, a person who does not perform sacrifice cannot even attain this Earth planet with its meagre happiness. How, then, can he attain the planets of the demigods and others?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: By not performing sacrifice, fault (sin) is incurred. To explain this, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is speaking this verse beginning with *nāyam*. If one cannot even attain the Earth planet, which provides very little happiness, how can one attain the higher planets such as those of the demigods?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses Kṛṣṇa's mood as follows, "Therefore, Arjuna, O best of the Kurus, one who does not perform sacrifice cannot even attain this world, what to speak of the next. Therefore, sacrifice is certainly an obligatory duty. From this you should understand that the caste-rules enjoined in the Smṛtis (*smārta-varṇāśrama*), the eightfold *yoga*

process, Vedic sacrifices and so on are all part of sacrifice. Even *brahma-jñāna* is a special type of sacrifice. There is no prescribed duty in this world other than sacrifice. Everything else is prohibited, or sinful, activity.”

VERSE 32

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ३२ ॥

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

evam – thus; *bahu-vidhāḥ* – many kinds; *yajñāḥ* – of sacrifices; *vitatāḥ* – are described extensively; *brahmaṇaḥ* – of the Vedas; *mukhe* – from the mouth; *karma-jān* – born from action; *viddhi* – you should know; *tān* – them; *sarvān* – all; *evam* – thus; *jñātvā* – knowing; *vimokṣyase* – you shall be liberated.

The various types of sacrifice are elaborately explained in the Vedas. Knowing all of them to be born of prescribed duty (*karma*), you will attain liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Brahmaṇaḥ* means ‘of the Vedas’ and *mukhena* means ‘from the mouth’. *Vedena* means ‘clearly spoken from My own mouth’. *Karma-jān* means ‘born of the action of speech, mind and body’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The sacrifices described in the Vedas are performed by the activities of the body, mind and speech; therefore, they have no relationship with the true nature of the self. The soul (*ātmā*) remains indifferent to and detached from all of these processes. Attainment of this knowledge frees one from bondage to this material world.

VERSE 33

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ ३३ ॥

*śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj jñāna-yajñāḥ parantapa
sarvam karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate*

śreyān – better; *dravyamayāt* – of material possessions; *yajñāt* – than the sacrifice; *jñāna-yajñāḥ* – the sacrifice of knowledge; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the foe (Arjuna); *sarvam* – all; *karma-akhilam* – complete action; *pārtha* – O Pārtha; *jñāne* – in transcendental knowledge; *parisamāpyate* – culminates.

O Parantapa, sacrifice resulting in realizing transcendental knowledge (*jñāna-yajñāḥ*) is superior to the mere performance of ceremonial rites and sacrifices (*dravyamaya-yajña*) because, O Pārtha, the performance of all prescribed action culminates in transcendental knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Jñāna-yajña* (as described in *Gītā* 4.25) is superior to *karma-yajña*, or *dravyamaya-yajña*, which consists of material rituals and sacrifices (as described in *Gītā* 4.24). One may ask why. The answer is that the attainment of transcendental knowledge is the fruitful culmination of all action. In other words, fruitive action (*karma*) ceases to exist, or loses its fruitive aspect, after one attains transcendental knowledge, or *jñāna*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Although all these sacrifices gradually lead to transcendental knowledge, then peace, and finally auspiciousness in the form of *bhakti* as it dawns on the living entity, still there is something to be considered. From the above group of sacrifices, a person may sometimes perform either *dravyamaya-yajña*, ceremonial rites and sacrifices, or at other times, depending on his faith, he may perform *jñāna-maya-yajña* (a sacrifice resulting in transcendental knowledge). This second type of sacrifice is far superior to the first because, O Pārtha, all prescribed duty (*karma*) culminates in transcendental knowledge. When the performance of any sacrifice does not involve deliberation on that which is transcendental, then the whole activity is simply ritualistic. However, when the goal is spiritual progress, despite being ceremonial,

the sacrifices become spiritualized, or transcendental, and lose their fruitive materialistic nature. The aspect of sacrifice which consists of material rituals (*dravyamaya*) only, is called *karma-kāṇḍa*. One must remain very conscious of this distinction while performing *yajña*.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has also said, “Only those who worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the sacrificial process of chanting the holy names, or *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, make their lives successful and are most intelligent. All others are foolish slayers of the self.” The *yajña* of chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is supreme among all types of *yajña*. Performance of millions of *aśvamedha-yajñas* cannot be equated with once chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa. Those who make such comparisons are religious impostors, or hypocrites, and Yamarāja punishes them in various ways. This is emphasized in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 3.77–79):

*saṅkīrtana-pravartaka śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya
saṅkīrtana-yajñe tāṅre bhaje, sei dhanya*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the initiator of the sacrifice of *saṅkīrtana* (chanting the holy name). One who performs this *saṅkīrtana* is fortunate indeed.*

*sei ta' sumedhā, āra kubuddhi saṁsāra
sarva-yajña haite kṛṣṇa-nāma-yajña sāra*

Such a person is truly intelligent, whereas others are certainly foolish and must endure the cycle of repeated birth and death. Of all sacrificial performances, the chanting of the Lord's holy name is the very essence.*

*koṭi aśvamedha eka kṛṣṇa nāma sama
yei kahe, se pāsaṅḍī, daṅḍe tāre yama*

One who says that ten million *aśvamedha* sacrifices are equal to the chanting of one name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is undoubtedly an atheist. He is sure to be punished by Yamarāja.*

Moreover, one's bondage to the material world is easily untied by chanting the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*, and by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa one attains loving devotional service to Him. Thus, in the age of Kali, all *yajñas* except the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name are useless,

because they do not fall into the category of the eternal occupation of the soul. This is further clarified in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.73-74)*:

*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe samsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

By chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa one can obtain freedom from material existence. Indeed, by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra one will be able to attain the lotus feet of the Lord.*

*nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma, ei śāstra-marma*

In this Age of Kali there is no religious principle other than the chanting of the holy name. This name of Kṛṣṇa is the essence of all the Vedas. It is the conclusion of all scriptures.*

VERSE 34

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४ ॥

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

tat – this knowledge; *viddhi* – understand; *praṇipātena* – by offering prostrated obeisances (to the *guru* who gives instructions about transcendental knowledge); *paripraśnena* – by relevant inquiries on every aspect; *sevayā* – by rendering devotional service; *upadekṣyanti* – they will reveal; *te* – unto you; *jñānam* – that knowledge; *jñāninaḥ* – those in knowledge; *tattva-darśinaḥ* – who have seen the Absolute Truth.

Understand this transcendental knowledge by offering your prostrated obeisances to the spiritual master, who imparts such knowledge, by asking him relevant questions and by rendering service to him. Those who have direct perception of the Supreme Absolute Truth and who are well-versed in the imports of the scriptures can enlighten you by instructing you on this science.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: How can this knowledge be attained? Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *tad-viddhi* to give this information. After offering prostrated obeisances unto a *guru* who gives instructions in transcendental knowledge, one should inquire as follows: “O Bhagavān [*gurudeva* is addressed as Bhagavān here because he is *āśraya* Bhagavān, the supreme receptacle of love for Bhagavān; the *sad-guru*, being *sākṣāt-haritvena*, has the qualities of Bhagavān] why am I in this material condition? How can I become free from it?” One must satisfy him by service and by attending to his personal needs (*paricaryā*). It is also said in the scriptures:

tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet

samit-pāṇiḥ śrotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭham

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.2.12)

To acquire knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān, one should approach a *guru* who knows the real import of the Vedas by carrying the fuel wood of sublime faith as an offering to him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes knowledge of Bhagavān as extremely rare and difficult to understand. It can only be understood by the mercy of a perfected soul who is a *tattva-jñānī*, one who knows the Truth, and more specifically a *tattva-darśī*, one who has realized that Truth. Sincere and non-duplicitous practitioners (*sādhakas*) should inquire from such an exalted soul about this *tattva* and please him by offering prostrated obeisances, by asking relevant questions and by rendering service to him.

Pranīpātena means ‘to affectionately offer *praṇāmas* with either eight or five limbs of the body’. *Praṇāma*, or *namaskāra*, means ‘to give up one’s false ego and bow down’. Here *sevā* means ‘to render favourable service for the pleasure of the *guru*’. This verse describes two symptoms of a *guru* who bestows transcendental knowledge: he is both a *jñānī* and a *tattva-darśī*. One who has studied scripture and understood the knowledge in it is called a *jñānī*, while a *tattva-darśī* is a perfected soul who has direct realization of the Truth.

Some persons possess complete knowledge but do not have direct realization of *tattva* (philosophical truths) and of *tat* (the Absolute Truth, Śrī Bhagavān). The instructions of such unrealized persons

cannot bear fruit. Only the instructions of an exalted, realized personality can do so. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) also says “*tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ* – to understand one’s highest welfare, an inquisitive *sādhaka* must seek the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*.” Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments on this verse as follows: “To know their supreme auspiciousness and eternal well-being, *sādhakas* should accept the shelter of a spiritual master who is expert in the imports of Vedic scriptures (*śabda-brahma*), who has realized Parabrahma, and who has no material attachments. If he is not expert in or knowledgeable of the imports of the Vedic scriptures, he will not be able to dispel the doubts of his disciples and they will lose faith in him. If a *guru* has no direct realization of Parabrahma (Bhagavān), his mercy does not fructify to the fullest extent, nor yield the highest result. Here the word *upāsamāśraya* (11.3.21) refers to the *guru* who is endowed with realization of the Absolute. This means that he does not fall under the sway of lust, anger, greed, etc., because he has no material attachments.”

This is further clarified in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.18):

*śabda-brahmaṇi niṣṇāto na niṣṇāyāt pare yadi
śramas tasya śrama-phalo hy adhenum iva rakṣataḥ*

Taking shelter of a *guru* who is expert in knowledge of the Vedic scriptures but who is bereft of Parambrahma realization is like keeping a barren cow. It is useless labour because one does not achieve any transcendental result.

Bhagavad-gītā states that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Transcendental Reality. There are those who say that the word *tat* in this verse refers to the *jīvātmā*, but such understanding is completely incorrect because it contradicts the next verse. *Vedānta-darśana* also states “*anyārthaś ca parāmarśaḥ* – one reflects on the *jīva* for the sake of understanding the Paramātmā” (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.3.20). This *sūtra* confirms that the word *tat* refers to knowledge of the Supersoul, or Paramātmā.

VERSE 35

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषाणि द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥३५॥

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

yat – which (was taught by the *tattva-darśis*); *jñātvā* – after understanding; *na* – not; *punaḥ* – again; *moham* – into illusion; *evam* – so; *yāsyasi* – shall enter; *pāṇḍava* – O son of Pāṇḍu; *yena* – by which (knowledge); *bhūtāni* – all souls; *aśeṣāṇi* – all; *drakṣyasi* – you shall perceive; *ātmani* – within Paramātmā; *atho* – that is to say; *mayi* – in Me.

O Pāṇḍava, after understanding such knowledge, you will never again be deluded. Through it, you will perceive all living beings as spirit souls, and you will see them in Me, the all-pervading Supersoul.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ; In the next three and a half verses beginning here with the words *yaj jñātvā*, Śrī Bhagavān explains the fruit of knowledge. “After you have attained this knowledge, by which one knows the soul to be different from the body, your mind will not become deluded again. Upon attaining natural and eternally perfect knowledge of the self, your delusion will be removed and you will see all living beings – humans, animals, birds, etc. – as souls, separate from their external material coverings, or designations. In addition, you will see all of them situated in Me, the ultimate cause, as My effect (the *jīva-śakti*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses Kṛṣṇa’s mood. “Now, due to delusion, you are trying to give up your prescribed duty, which is to participate in battle, but when you have attained knowledge of the Absolute from your *guru*, you will no longer take shelter of delusion. By that knowledge you will be able to understand that all entities – human beings, animals, birds – are the same spiritual reality, as *jīva-tattva*. The gradations of their external forms, qualities and actions have occurred due to their material appearances, or mundane egoism. All *jīvas* are situated in Me, the Supreme Lord, who am the ultimate cause of everything. The individual *jīvas* are the effect of My potency.”

VERSE 36

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि ॥ ३६ ॥

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

api – even; *cet* – if; *asi* – you are; *pāpebhyaḥ* – sinners; *sarvebhyaḥ* – of all; *pāpa-kṛttamaḥ* – the most sinful; *sarvam* – all; *jñāna-plavena* – by taking shelter of the boat of transcendental knowledge; *eva* – certainly; *vṛjinam* – ocean of sin; *santariṣyasi* – you will cross over completely.

Even if you are the most sinful of sinners, you will be able to completely cross over the ocean of all sins by taking shelter of this boat of transcendental knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ; Now, by speaking this verse beginning with *api cet*, Śrī Bhagavān describes the glories of transcendental knowledge. The word *pāpebhyaḥ* indicates, “Even if you are the worst of sinners, this *tattva-jñāna* will liberate you from all past sins.” Here, a question arises. “How is it possible that the mind will become purified when so many sins exist in it? And if the mind is not pure, how will transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*) manifest? There is no possibility that a person in whom transcendental knowledge has appeared will misbehave, or commit any sin.”

Here, Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī explains, “The words *api cet* are spoken to indicate the possibility of the impossible by going against the rule. Although it is not possible, it has been spoken of as a promise, in order to explain the fruit, or glory, of *jñāna*. In other words, the impossible has also been mentioned as a possibility.”

VERSE 37

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ ३७ ॥

*yathaidhāmsi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā*

yathā – as; *edhāmsi* – firewood; *samiddhaḥ* – a blazing; *agni* – fire; *bhasmasāt* – to ashes; *kurute* – turns; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *jñāna-agniḥ* – the fire of transcendental knowledge; *sarva-karmāṇi* – all reactions of fruitive work; *bhasmasāt* – to ashes; *kurute* – turns; *tathā* – similarly.

O Arjuna, just as a blazing fire burns firewood to ashes, in the same way, the fire of transcendental knowledge burns to ashes the reactions to all types of *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: When *jñāna* manifests in a pure mind, it burns up all reactions except *prārabdha-karma*, or those that are manifesting in this present body. This is explained with an example in this verse beginning with the word *yathā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Transcendental knowledge destroys the reactions of all sorts of *karma* such as obligatory duties (*nitya-karma*), occasional duties (*naimittika-karma*), fruitive action (*kāmya-karma*), sinful action (*vikarma*) and accumulated *karma* that has not yet fructified (*aprārabdha-karma*), but it does not destroy the *karma* that is fructifying in this present body (*prārabdha-karma*). This has been verified in *Vedānta-darśana*:

tad-adhigama uttara-pūrvārghayor aśleṣa-vināśau tad-vyāpadeśat
Brahma-sūtra (4.1.13)

This means that even a *jñānī* has to face the results of his fructifying *karma*.

According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, however, a person who has taken shelter of the holy name, even if his chanting is just a semblance of the pure name (*nāmābhāsa*), not only destroys the results of all his *karma*, such as the reactions that are accumulating but have not yet borne fruit (*aprārabdha*) and the sinful tendencies of the heart that have not yet been acted upon (*kūṭa*), but he also destroys his fructifying reactions (*prārabdha-karma*). What, then, is to be said about the effects of chanting the pure holy name? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written in *Śrī Nāmāṣṭaka* (Verse 4):

yad-brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi vināsam āyāti vinā na bhogaḥ

O Nāma Prabhu, Your appearance on the tongue of Your devotees burns up the results of their fructifying reactions (*prārabdha-karma*). This is otherwise unavoidable, even after *brahma* has been realized by performing unbroken meditation. This is declared adamantly and repeatedly in the Vedas.

VERSE 38

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ ३८ ॥

*na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayam yoga-samsiddhaḥ kālenātmani vindati*

na – not; *hi* – verily; *jñānena* – to be compared with transcendental knowledge; *sadṛśam* – such a thing; *pavitram* – purifying thing; *iha* – in this world; *vidyate* – exists; *tat* – that (*jñāna*); *svayam* – spontaneously manifest; *yoga-samsiddhaḥ* – one who has attained complete perfection of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *kālena* – in due course of time; *ātmani* – within his heart; *vindati* – achieves.

In this world, there is nothing more purifying than transcendental knowledge. A person who has attained complete perfection in worshipping the Supreme Lord by working without attachment to the fruit of his prescribed duty spontaneously receives such knowledge within his heart, in due course of time.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here it is said that the performance of austerities, *yoga* and other processes are not as purifying as transcendental knowledge. Not everyone can attain this knowledge. It is not achieved immediately nor is it achieved in the immature stage. It is achieved after attaining complete perfection in worshipping Bhagavān by working without attachment to the fruit of action (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) over a prolonged period of time. This knowledge reveals itself within oneself. One does not receive this transcendental knowledge merely by accepting the renounced order.

VERSE 39

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९ ॥

*śraddhāvān labhate jñānam tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānam labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇādhiḡacchati*

śraddhāvān – a faithful person; *labhate* – obtains; *jñānam* – transcendental knowledge; *tat-paraḥ* – devoted to that practice; *saṁyata-indriyaḥ* – who has fully controlled senses; *jñānam* – transcendental knowledge; *labdhvā* – after obtaining; *parām* – the Supreme; *śāntim* – peace (which stops the cycle of birth and death); *acireṇa* – without delay; *adhiḡacchati* – he attains.

A person who is faithful, who has conquered his senses and who is devoted to the practice of worshipping the Supreme Lord by working without attachment to the fruit of his prescribed duty (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) attains transcendental knowledge, whereupon he quickly attains supreme peace in the form of the destruction of bondage to the material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How and when does one attain this knowledge?” Śrī Bhagavān answers this question by saying, “That knowledge is attained when a person becomes faithful, that is, when his mind becomes purified by the performance of selflessly offering the fruit of his prescribed duty to Bhagavān (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) and when he is endowed with proper intelligence, having faith in the instructions of the scriptures. *Tat-paraḥ* means that when one undergoes the practice of *niṣkāma-karma* with staunch determination and faith, he simultaneously gains control over his senses and achieves supreme peace. In other words, he becomes free from bondage to the material world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The word *acireṇa* in the original verse means ‘without any delay’, or ‘immediately’. For example, when a lamp is lit in a room that has long been in darkness, the darkness is immediately dispelled. No separate endeavour is required. Similarly, as *tattva-jñāna* arises, it simultaneously dispels ignorance.

VERSE 40

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥४०॥

ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyam loko 'sti na paro na sukham saṁśayātmanah

ajñah – a fool; *ca* – and; *āśraddadhānah* – faithless; *ca* – and; *saṁśaya-ātma* – a doubting soul; *vinaśyati* – is ruined; *na* – not; *ayam lokah* – in this world; *asti* – there is; *na* – nor; *parah* – in the next; *na* – not; *sukham* – happiness; *saṁśaya-ātmanah* – for a doubting soul.

Those who are ignorant, faithless and who have a doubting nature are ruined. A sceptic cannot achieve his well-being in this world or the next, nor can he even achieve happiness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After explaining the qualification needed to attain transcendental knowledge, Śrī Bhagavān describes one who is not fit to attain such knowledge. *Ajñah* means ‘foolish, like an animal’. *Āśraddadhānah* refers to one who has knowledge of scripture but does not have faith in any *siddhānta* because he cannot reconcile the contradictions between the various philosophers. *Saṁśaya-ātma* means ‘one who, despite having faith, still doubts whether his efforts will become successful’. Of these three, the line beginning with *nāyam* specifically condemns one who is doubtful.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After explaining the types of people who are qualified to attain transcendental knowledge and its subsequent result, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the ignorant, who are not qualified to attain it. He also explains the degraded result of such disqualification. A man who is ignorant, faithless and cynical perishes.

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, *ajñah* here means ‘ignorant of the topics instructed by *śrī guru*’. According to Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, it means that one who does not have knowledge of the scriptures is like an animal.

Those who do not have faith in the words of the scriptures, *guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas are called *āśraddhālu*, or faithless. One who always

doubts the instructions of Hari, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas is called *saṁśaya-ātmā*, a man of doubt. Such doubtful persons are more fallen than the ignorant and faithless, and they cannot attain happiness and peace anywhere, either in this world or in the next.

VERSE 41

योगसन्न्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१ ॥

yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayam
ātma-vantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya

yoga – through worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering the result of one’s actions to Him; *sannyasta-karmāṇam* – one who has renounced fruitive action by following the principles of the renounced order; *jñāna* – by transcendental knowledge; *sañchinna* – are slashed; *saṁśayam* – and one whose doubts; *ātma-vantaṁ* – who has realized the unique form of his self (the soul); *na* – not; *karmāṇi* – his collective *karma*; *nibadhnanti* – bind; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth (Arjuna).

O Dhanañjaya, winner of riches, a person who, while practising *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, has given up the tendency for fruitive action through the principle of renunciation, who has dispelled all his doubts by transcendental knowledge, and who has realized the nature of his real self is not bound by *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *yoga-sannyasta* to explain the kind of person who can be *niṣkāma*, or free from the desire for results of his action. Those who have realized the nature of their real self are not bound by *karma*. A person achieves this stage by performing *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, giving up fruitive action through the process of *sannyāsa* (renunciation of attachment to the fruits of action) and then removing his doubts by the cultivation of transcendental knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In these last two verses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is bringing this subject to a conclusion. According to the

instructions of Bhagavān, one takes shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* by offering all his actions unto His lotus feet. When the heart is purified by this process, it is illuminated by knowledge, and this cuts asunder all doubts. At that time, such a person is completely freed from the bondage of *karma*.

The word *pratyak-ātmā* mentioned in the commentary indicates the living entity who has given up sense of enjoyment and who has attained a devotional attitude towards Bhagavān. Otherwise, a living entity who is averse to Bhagavān and who is absorbed in sense gratification is called *parāk-ātmā*.

VERSE 42

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वेनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥४२॥

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

tasmāt – therefore; *ajñāna-sambhūtam* – born of ignorance; *hṛt-stha* – situated in the heart; *jñāna-asinā* – with the sword of knowledge; *ātmanaḥ* – of the self; *chittvā* – slashing; *enam* – this; *saṁśayam* – doubt; *yogam* – of the *yoga* (of non-fruitive action); *ātiṣṭha* – take shelter; *uttiṣṭha* – arise (for battle); *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata.

Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, with the sword of knowledge, slash the doubts in your heart which are born of ignorance. Take shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and prepare for battle.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān concludes this chapter with this verse beginning with *tasmād*. *Hṛt-stha* refers to cutting the doubt in the heart, *yoga* means ‘taking shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*’ and *ātiṣṭha* means ‘be ready for the battle’. Of all the processes recommended for attaining liberation, transcendental knowledge is glorified here; and *niṣkāma-karma* is the only means to attain transcendental knowledge. This is the essence of this chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Fourth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “This chapter gives instructions on two divisions of the eternal *yoga* system. The first is the *jaḍa-dravyamaya* division, which consists of the sacrifice of material possessions. The second is the *ātma-yathātma-rūpa-cinmaya* division, or knowledge of the self and of Bhagavān. When the *jaḍa-dravyamaya* division is performed separately, it simply becomes *karma*. Those who are bound in this division are known as *karma-jaḍa*, deeply engrossed in mundane enjoyment. However, those who perform *jaḍa-karma* (materialistic action) with the sole purpose of attaining spiritual advancement are properly situated, or *yukta*.

When we specifically deliberate on the true nature of spiritual activities, we understand that there are two aspects. One is knowledge of the fundamental principle of the living entity (*jīva-tattva*) and the other is knowledge the fundamental principles regarding the Supreme Lord (*bhagavat-tattva*). Only those who experience and realize *bhagavat-tattva* attain the essence of knowledge of the real nature of the self, which is to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa's servant. This experience is perfected by realization of the transcendental birth and activities of Bhagavān and of the *jīva*'s eternal association with Him, as described in the beginning of this chapter. Bhagavān Himself is the first instructor of this eternal *dharma*. Because the *jīva* has become bound to inert matter by the defect of his own intelligence, Bhagavān descends by the prowess of His own knowledge potency, or *cit-śakti*, and, by giving instruction on the fundamental truth of Himself, He makes the *jīva* eligible to participate in His pastimes.

“Those who say that the body, birth and activities of Bhagavān are products of the deluding potency, *māyā*, are extremely foolish. People attain Me according to the degree of purity with which they worship Me. All the activities of the *karma-yogīs* are called *yajña*, or sacrifice. The various types of *yajña* in the world, such as *daiva-yajña*, *brahmacarya-yajña*, *gṛhamedha-yajña*, *saṁyama-yajña*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga-*

yajña, *tapo-yajña*, *dravya-yajña*, *svādhyāya-yajña* and *varṇāśrama-yajña*, all constitute *karma*.

“The only useful factor that is to be sought after in all these *yajñas* is the conscious part, knowledge of the real nature of the soul. Doubt is the greatest enemy of this knowledge. A person who is endowed with faith and who takes instructions on this knowledge from one who is fully conversant with *tattva*, realizes the self and can dispel all doubts. As long as one has affinity for the material world, one should take shelter of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* in order to achieve the stage of self-realization.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Fourth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER FIVE



Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga Yoga Through Renunciation of Action

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—
सन्न्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –
sannyāsam karmaṇām kṛṣṇa punar yogam ca śamsasi
yac chreya etayor ekam tan me brūhi suniścitam

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *sannyāsam* – renunciation; *karmaṇām* – of actions; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *punaḥ* – thereafter; *yogam* – of *karma-yoga*; *ca* – and; *śamsasi* – You are praising; *yat* – which; *śreyaḥ* – auspicious; *etayoḥ* – of these two; *ekam tat* – that one; *me* – for me; *brūhi* – please tell; *suniścitam* – positively.

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, after first praising the renunciation of action, You are now praising *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, action offered to Bhagavān without attachment to its fruit. Please tell me definitively which of these two is auspicious for me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Karma* has been described as being superior to *jñāna* in order to encourage ignorant people to perform their prescribed duty properly and thus ultimately achieve unswerving perfection in knowledge. This Fifth Chapter explains knowledge of the Absolute Truth (*tat-padārtha*) and the characteristics of those

whose nature is even-tempered. After hearing the last two verses of the previous chapter, Arjuna has become doubtful, thinking that Kṛṣṇa has contradicted Himself, and in this verse beginning with *sannyāsaṁ karmaṇām*, he poses a question: “In the verse *yoga-sannyasta* (Gītā 4.41), You spoke of the renunciation of prescribed duties, or *karma-sannyāsa*, which appears when knowledge comes by worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering him the fruits of one’s work (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). In the verse *tasmad ajñāna* (Gītā 4.42), You have again spoken about *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. But the renunciation of action and the *yoga* of selfless action are opposite in nature, like moving and non-moving entities. It is not possible for a person to perform them simultaneously. Should a *jñānī* renounce his prescribed duty or should he worship the Supreme Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruit of that duty? I have not understood Your intention on this subject and am asking You to please tell me for certain which of these two is auspicious for me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the Second Chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna how to perform *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* in order to attain knowledge, which dispels ignorance. In the Third Chapter, He explained that when one has attained knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñāna*), there is no need to engage in one’s prescribed duties (*karma*), because *karma-yoga* is included in *jñāna-yoga*. It is a sign of ignorance to consider *jñāna* to be separate from *karma*. Upon concluding this, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa went on to say in the Fourth Chapter that to attain steadiness in transcendental knowledge, by which one obtains knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñāna*), it is appropriate to first adopt *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly offering the fruit of one’s work to Bhagavān. Arjuna knows that these topics are very difficult to grasp, and he is inquiring from Kṛṣṇa as if ignorant, so that common people may easily understand. Initially, Kṛṣṇa declared the renunciation of prescribed duty, or *jñāna-yoga*, to be superior. Now, however, He is again giving instructions on *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Arjuna has said, “Since these instructions are contradictory, it is impossible for someone to follow both at once; it is as impossible as simultaneous movement and stillness, or light and darkness. Please can you tell

me clearly which of these two will bring me auspiciousness?" This is Arjuna's fifth question.

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

sannyāsaḥ karma-yogaś ca niḥśreyasa-karāv ubhau

tayos tu karma-sannyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *sannyāsaḥ* – renunciation of activities; *karma-yogaḥ* – worshipping the Supreme by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's prescribed duty; *ca* – and; *niḥśreyasa-karau* – bring about auspiciousness; *ubhau* – both; *tayoḥ* – of the two; *tu* – but; *karma-sannyāsāt* – than renunciation of work; *karma-yogaḥ* – worshipping the Supreme by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's prescribed duty; *viśiṣyate* – is better.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Both renouncing one's prescribed duty – *karma-sannyāsa* – and worshipping the Supreme Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's prescribed duty – *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* – bring auspiciousness, but *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is certainly superior to *karma-sannyāsa*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Worshipping the Supreme Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's prescribed duty is superior to renouncing one's prescribed duty. Even if a *jñānī* performs *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, there is no defect. Actually, its performance further purifies his heart, thereby establishing him more firmly in knowledge. One may ask, "If a *karma-sannyāsī*, someone who has renounced his prescribed duty, is experiencing some disturbance at heart due to worldly desires, is he forbidden to engage in action (*karma*) to mitigate it?" Śrī Bhagavān answers that for a *karma-sannyāsī* such a disturbance of heart is an obstacle in the cultivation of transcendental knowledge. One who

accepts sense objects, having previously given them up, becomes a *vāntāśī*, one who eats his own vomit.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In answer to Arjuna's question, Śrī Bhagavān is saying that both renouncing one's prescribed duty (*jñāna-yoga*) and selflessly offering the fruit of that prescribed duty to the Supreme Lord (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) are auspicious. However, *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is superior to *karma-sannyāsa*, or *jñāna-yoga*, because in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, there is less possibility of fall-down. If a person who has abandoned his prescribed duty develops a desire for sense gratification and falls down, he is called a *vāntāśī*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.15.36) also confirms this:

*yaḥ pravrajya gṛhāt pūrvam tri-vargāvapanāt punaḥ
yadi seveta tān bhikṣuḥ sa vai vāntāśy apatrapaḥ*

If a person renounces the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, which is the perfection of religion, economic development and sense gratification, and again enters household life, he is called a *vāntāśī*, a shameless person who eats his own vomit.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam further says that one may criticize an ill-behaved *jñānī*, but one is not to condemn a one-pointed devotee, even if the devotee's conduct is extremely poor. This is also confirmed in the *Gītā* (9.30) *api cet sudurācāraḥ*. "Even if a man of abominable character engages in one-pointed devotional service to Me, he is still to be considered a *sādhu* because he is rightly situated in *bhakti*."

It should be clearly understood that *karma-kāṇḍa* is not the same as *karma-yoga*. The actions prescribed in scripture are called *karma*. When a *jīva* engages in such action, considering himself the doer of action and the enjoyer of its fruits, it is called *karma-kāṇḍa*. Even when the pious activities prescribed in the Vedas are performed in this way, they bind one to the material world. *Karma-kāṇḍa* does not lead one to union (*yoga*) with Śrī Bhagavān, and for this reason it is condemned in all scriptures. Only by selflessly offering the fruit of one's actions to Bhagavān can *yoga* with Him be established. This is called *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. It can be referred to as a semblance, or beginning, of *bhagavad-dharma*. It can also be called the gateway to *bhakti*. In

other words, an indirect connection with Bhagavān is established by *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. Therefore the *Gītā* (2.48) states, “*yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi...* – O Dhanañjaya, in a devotional mood, relinquish attachment to the results of your work and perform your prescribed duties, being equipoised in success and failure. Such equanimity is called *yoga*.”

VERSE 3

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसन्न्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न कांक्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

jñeyah sa nitya-sannyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati
nirdvandvo hi mahā-bāho sukham bandhāt pramucyate

jñeyah – should be understood; *saḥ* – he; *nitya-sannyāsī* – as the standard qualification for the renounced order; *yah* – who; *na dveṣṭi* – neither despises; *na kāṅkṣati* – nor hankers; *nirdvandvaḥ* – free from duality (such as attachment and aversion); *hi* – because; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed; *sukham* – easily; *bandhāt* – from material bondage; *pramucyate* – is completely liberated.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, one who neither hates nor desires anything is worthy to be known as a *sannyāsī*, because one who is free from the dualities of aversion and attachment easily becomes liberated from bondage to this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is possible to achieve liberation, which is attained by *sannyāsa*, without entering the *sannyāsa* order. For this purpose, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *jñeyah*. “O mighty-armed Arjuna, you should understand that a pure-hearted *niṣkāma-karma-yogī* is always a renunciant.” The address, ‘O mighty-armed one’ implies that one who is able to conquer the realm of liberation is certainly a great hero.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse establishes why worshipping the Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one’s action is superior. Due to the purity of his heart, a *niṣkāma-karma-yogī*

is called a fixed renunciant. Although he has not accepted the dress of a *sannyāsī*, he remains blissfully absorbed in service to Bhagavān by offering himself and all sense objects at Bhagavān's lotus feet. Detached from sense enjoyment and without any desire for the result of his actions, he remains free from attachment and envy. In this way he is easily liberated from bondage to the material world.

VERSE 4

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

sāṅkhya-yogau pṛthag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam

sāṅkhya-yogau – renouncing one's prescribed duty and worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's action; *pṛthag* – different; *bālāḥ* – the ignorant; *pravadanti* – declare; *na* – reject; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the learned; *ekam* – in one; *api* – even; *āsthitaḥ* – being situated; *samyag* – properly; *ubhayoḥ* – of both; *vindate* – one obtains; *phalam* – the result.

Only the ignorant say that the renunciation of action (*sāṅkhya*) and worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one's action (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) are different. The wise reject such opinions. By following either path correctly, one attains the result of both, in the form of liberation from material bondage.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: "O Arjuna, you have asked which of these two is superior, but this is not actually a question at all; the wise see no difference between them." For this purpose, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *sāṅkhya*. Here, *sāṅkhya*, which means 'being fixed on the platform of knowledge (*jñāna-niṣṭhā*)', indicates one of its limbs, *sannyāsa*. Only children or fools say that *sannyāsa* is different from *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*. The wise do not think like this. This has been described in the previous verse, *jñeyaḥ sa nitya-sannyāsī* (*Gītā* 5.3). Thus, by taking shelter of either, the result of both is attained.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: When the heart becomes purified by properly engaging in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, knowledge appears, after which one eventually achieves liberation. This is also the fundamental purpose of renouncing one's prescribed duty (*karma-sannyāsa*). Since the end result of both *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and *karma-sannyāsa* is liberation, they are non-different. By following one of them, the result of both is achieved. Although externally, the directions for enjoying the material world according to the regulative principles of the scriptures (*pravṛtti*) appears to be different from the directions for giving up the material world for higher spiritual understanding (*nivṛtti*), the wise do not see a difference between them, since the result of both processes is the same.

VERSE 5

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥५॥

*yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sāṅkhyam ca yogam ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati*

yat – which; *sāṅkhyaiḥ* – by the principles of *sāṅkhya-yoga* (or by *sannyāsa*); *prāpyate* – is obtained; *sthānam tat* – that position; *yogaiḥ* – by the principles of offering the results of one's activities to the Supreme Lord (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*); *api* – also; *gamyate* – is obtained; *ekam* – the same (result); *sāṅkhyam ca yogam* – analytical philosophy and selfless action offered to the Supreme; *ca* – and; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyati* – sees; *saḥ* – he; *paśyati* – sees (or is a *tattva-darśī*).

The result attained by renunciation, or analytical study, is also attained by offering the fruits of one's action to the Supreme Lord. Those who know the Truth and who see that both award the same result actually sees.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The previous subject is being clarified in this verse beginning with *yat*. *Sāṅkhya* means 'renunciation', and *yoga* means 'selflessly offering the fruits of one's action to the Lord'.

Here the words *sāṅkhyaiḥ* and *yogaiḥ* are plural to emphasize their importance. [In Sanskrit, plural is used to show honour.] Those with the eyes of wisdom, who see that these two different processes are the same, see correctly.

VERSE 6

सन्न्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥६॥

sannyāsas tu mahā-bāho duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ
yoga-yukto munir brahma na cireṇādhigacchati

sannyāsaḥ – renunciation; *tu* – however; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one; *duḥkham* – distress; *āptum* – brings; *ayogataḥ* – without selflessly offering the results of one’s action to the Supreme Lord; *yoga-yuktaḥ* – one who is engaged in selflessly offering the results of one’s action to the Supreme Lord; *munir* – a sage; *brahma* – the stage of transcendence; *na cireṇa* – without delay; *adhigacchati* – he attains.

O mighty-armed one, renouncing one’s prescribed duty without selflessly offering the fruit of that duty to the Supreme brings distress, but one who worships the Lord by *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly offering Him the fruits of one’s action, becomes a *jñānī* and very quickly attains the stage of transcendence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The *jñānī*’s acceptance of *karma-sannyāsa* – the renunciation of his prescribed duty – before his heart is completely purified leads to misery. Selflessly offering the results of one’s activities to the Supreme Lord, however, brings happiness. In other words, it helps attain transcendence (*brahma*). This feature was indicated earlier and is further clarified in this verse beginning with *sannyāsas tu*. When the heart is disturbed by worldly desires, renunciation becomes miserable. Only selflessly offering the fruits of one’s endeavours to the Lord brings peace to the disturbed heart. The word *ayogataḥ* means ‘in the absence of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*’. Thus the renunciation of one who is not qualified to take *sannyāsa* becomes a cause of misery. The author of *Vārttika-sūtra* says:

*pramādino bahiścittaḥ piṣunāḥ kalahotsukāḥ
sannyāsino pi dṛṣyante daiva-sandūṣitāṣayāḥ*

It is seen that even *sannyāsīs* have agitated minds, are unsteady, troublesome to others and eager to quarrel if, due to their long association with the illusory energy, their hearts are impure.

It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.18.40), “*Tridaṇḍī-sannyāsīs* who are bereft of proper knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*) and who have not controlled their five senses and the mind, lose both worlds.” Therefore when a *niškāma-karma-yogī* (one who links with the Supreme through the selfless discharge of prescribed action) becomes a *jñāna-yogī* (one who links with transcendence through transcendental knowledge), he quickly achieves transcendence (*brahma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is better to engage in the selfless offering of the results of one’s endeavours to Bhagavān than to take *sannyāsa* before the heart is pure.

VERSE 7

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥७॥

*yoga-yukto viśuddhātmā vijitātmā jiteन्द्रियḥ
sarva-bhūtātmā-bhūtātmā kurvann api na lipyate*

yoga-yuktaḥ – one who offers the fruits of his actions to the Supreme; *viśuddha-ātmā* – who has a purified mind; *vijita-ātmā* – whose intelligence is under his own control; *jita-indriyaḥ* – controlled senses; *sarva-bhūta* – for all living beings; *ātmā-bhūta-ātmā* – and is the object of affection; *kurvan* – acting; *api* – although; *na lipyate* – is unaffected.

A person who performs *niškāma-karma-yoga* with a purified mind and controlled intelligence and whose senses are also under his control is the object of affection for all living entities. He is unaffected by action, even though engaged in action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here in this verse beginning with *yoga-yuktaḥ*, Śrī Bhagavān is informing Arjuna that even when a *jñānī* engages in

his prescribed duty, he remains unaffected. Such *jñānīs* are of three types: (1) those with pure intelligence, *viśuddhātma*, (2) those with a pure mind, *vijitātmā* and (3) those with controlled senses, *jitendriyah*. They are listed in descending order of their spiritual advancement. All *jīvas* are affectionate to that householder who is properly engaged in *niškāma-karma yoga* and who does not reject his prescribed duty (*karma-sannyāsa*). *Sarva-bhūtātmā* means 'he whom all living entities love like their own selves'.

VERSES 8–9

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
 पश्यञ् शृण्वन् स्पृशञ् जिघ्रन्श्नन् गच्छन् स्वपन् श्वसन् ॥ ८ ॥
 प्रलपन् विसृजन् गृह्णन् उन्मिषन् निषिन्नपि ।
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattva-vit
paśyañ śṛṇvan sprśañ jighrann aśnan gacchan svapan śvasan
pralapan viśṛjan gr̥hṇann unmiṣan niṣiṣann api
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan

na – not; *eva* – certainly; *kiñcit* – anything; *karomi* – I am doing; *iti* – that; *yuktaḥ* – one who is worshipping the Supreme Lord by selflessly offering Him the fruits of one's occupational duty; *manyeta* – he would consider; *tattva-vit* – a knower of the Truth; *paśyan* – while seeing; *śṛṇvan* – hearing; *sprśan* – touching; *jighran* – smelling; *aśnan* – eating; *gacchan* – walking; *svapan* – sleeping; *śvasan* – breathing; *pralapan* – speaking; *viśṛjan* – evacuating; *gr̥hṇan* – grasping; *unmiṣan* – opening (the eyes); *nimiṣan* – and shutting (the eyes); *api* – although; *indriyāṇi* – the senses; *indriya-artheṣu* – in their sense objects; *vartante* – are engaged; *iti* – that; *dhārayan* – considering.

When a person who selflessly offers the results of his endeavours to the Supreme becomes situated in knowledge, he concludes through his intelligence that even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, evacuating, grasping

and opening and closing his eyes, he actually does nothing; rather, his senses are engaged with their respective sense objects.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In this verse beginning with *naiva*, Śrī Bhagavān gives instruction about actions that implicate one in the functions of the senses. *Yuktaḥ* refers to the *niṣkāma-karma-yogīs* who conclude with their intelligence that when they use their senses such as the sense of sight, their senses are simply engaging with their objects. Free from a mood of false ego, such *yogīs* think, “I am not doing anything.”

VERSE 10

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १० ॥

brahmaṇya ādhāya karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā

brahmaṇi – to Me, the Supreme Lord; *ādhāya* – having offered; *karmāṇi* – his activities; *saṅgam* – attachment (to the fruit of action); *tyaktvā* – giving up; *karoti* – acts; *yaḥ* – who; *lipyate* – affected; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *pāpena* – by sin; *padma-patram* – the lotus leaf; *iva* – as; *ambhasā* – by water.

One who has renounced attachment to the fruit of action and who offers that fruit to Me, the Supreme Lord, does not become affected by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains untouched by water.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “A person who gives up attachment to the fruits of his prescribed duty does not become bound by any action if he dedicates his work to Me, the Supreme Lord, even while he still has a false ego.” Here the word *pāpa* (sin) is used to indicate that such a person does not become implicated in any sinful action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The pure soul has no connection with material activities. *Niṣkāma-karma-yogīs* become endowed with transcendental knowledge as their heart is gradually purified. They then realize the nature of the self and understand that even when

they perform bodily activities, they are not the doers. They think that according to their impressions from previous births, all the activities of the material body are automatically performed by the inspiration of the Lord. Due to the existence of the material body they may feel that they themselves are the performers of action, yet when they give up the body after attaining perfection, the feeling that they are the doers of action does not remain. They are unable to perform any action that binds them to the material world.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoḍa Ṭhākura has said, “When the *sādhaka* gives up the false ego of being the doer, he performs all bodily-related activities naturally, out of habit.”

VERSE 11

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ११ ॥

*kāyena manasā buddhyā kevalair indriyaiḥ api
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgam tyaktvātma-śuddhaye*

kāyena – with the body; *manasā* – with the mind; *buddhyā* – and with the intelligence; *kevalaiḥ* – with only; *indriyaiḥ* – the senses; *api* – even; *yoginaḥ* – the yogīs; *karma* – action; *kurvanti* – performs; *saṅgam* – attachment; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *ātma-śuddhaye* – for the purification of the mind.

A *yogī* gives up all attachment and acts with his body, mind and intelligence, just to purify the mind. Sometimes he performs action only with his senses, not even engaging his mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Yogīs* also engage their senses in performing action. For example, as a person makes an offering to a fire sacrifice, his mind may wander as he chants the *mantras*. Still, the activity goes on. *Ātma-śuddhaye* means that *yogīs* perform action only to attain purity of mind.

VERSE 12

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ १२ ॥

**yuktaḥ karma-phalam tyaktvā śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm
ayuktaḥ kāma-kāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate**

yuktaḥ – one linked up in *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*; *karma-phalam* – the fruit of work; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *śāntim* – peace (liberation from the struggle for existence); *āpnoti* – obtains; *naiṣṭhikīm* – perpetual; *ayuktaḥ* – one who is not so linked (the person who performs his prescribed duty with material desires, the *sakāma-karmī*); *kāma-kāreṇa* – because of the impetus of lust; *phale* – to the fruit of work; *saktaḥ* – being attached; *nibadhyate* – becomes entangled.

Having given up attachment to the fruits of his actions, the *yogī* who selflessly offers the results of his prescribed duty to the Supreme attains unadulterated peace in the form of liberation from material existence. The *sakāma-karmī*, however, who is attached to the fruits of his activities and impelled by material desires, becomes entangled.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the performance of *karma*, detachment causes liberation and attachment causes bondage. This verse beginning with the word *yuktaḥ* is spoken to clarify this. A *jñānī* who engages in selfless action gradually attains peace, or liberation. *Ayuktaḥ* refers to *sakāma-karmīs*, who are attached to the results of their actions because of their material desires. In this way they are bound to the material world.

VERSE 13

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा सन्न्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वार पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्नकारयन् ॥ १३ ॥

**sarva-karmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukham vaśī
nava-dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan**

sarva-karmāṇi – all activities; *manasā* – by his mind; *sannyasya* – having completely renounced; *āste* – remains; *sukham* – happily; *vaśī* – the person whose senses are under his control; *nava-dvāre* – of nine gates; *pure* – in the city (body); *dehī* – the embodied soul; *na* – not; *eva* – certainly; *kurvan* – doing anything; *na kārayan* – nor causing any action.

The sense-controlled soul, the *niṣkāma-karma-yogī*, having renounced within his mind attachment to the fruits of all prescribed duty happily dwells in the city of nine gates, neither performing action himself nor causing anyone to act.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to the previous statement, *jñeyah sa nitya-sannyāsī* (*Gītā* 5.3), a person who performs action without attachment is in fact a real *sannyāsī*. To explain this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is speaking this verse beginning with *sarva-karmāṇi*. Even though a self-controlled man performs external activities related to the body, because he has completely renounced all actions through his mind, he is happily situated. Where does such a person live? Kṛṣṇa replies, “In the city of nine gates.” In other words, he lives in a body free of the false ego. In this case, the word *dehī* refers to the *jīva* who has attained this knowledge. Although he may perform his prescribed duty, he knows that in reality he is not the cause of the happiness that results from his actions, and he therefore understands that actually he performs no work. Similarly, while engaging others in work, he does not make them act, because he has no purpose to fulfil. In other words, he remains unconcerned by their actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.43) states “*grhaṁ śarīraṁ mānuṣyam* – the human body is like a house.” This subject can be specifically studied in the narration of Purañjana [narrated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*]. The house of the human body has nine gates: the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one mouth are the seven gates in the head, and there are two lower gates for evacuation and procreation. A *yogī* sees his self, his *svarūpa*, as being different from this body of nine gates. Like a traveller, the *yogī* does not become attached to his body, which is likened to a hotel, or possessive of it. Instead, he performs service to Bhagavān, the master of all the senses.

VERSE 14

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥१४॥

*na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karma-phala-saṁyogam svabhāvaḥ tu pravartate*

na – not; *kartṛtvam* – tendency to act; *na karmāṇi* – nor the actions; *lokasya* – of a person; *sṛjati* – creates; *prabhuḥ* – Parameśvara, the Supreme Lord; *na* – nor; *karma-phala* – with the fruits of action; *saṁyogam* – connection; *svabhāvaḥ* – their own acquired nature; *tu* – only; *pravartate* – enacts.

The Supreme Lord has neither created the individuals’ tendency to act, nor the actions themselves, nor the resultant fruits. All this is performed by their acquired nature, the nature impelled by the ignorance, or illusion, that has covered them since time immemorial.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Someone may question Bhagavān’s partiality. They may consider, “Throughout the material world, which God created, it is seen that *jīvas* consider themselves the doers of action and the enjoyers of the fruits of action. If the *jīva* truly has no implicit tendency to act as the doer, it would seem that the Supreme has created this tendency and forced it upon him. If this is so, then it means that He carries the defect of being partial and without mercy.”

In response to this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “No, no, no. *Na kartṛtvam.*” He has used the word *na* three times to stress and emphatically refute this point. He has neither created the consciousness of being the doer, nor has He created the *karma* in the form of prescribed duties, nor the result of those prescribed duties, which is sense enjoyment. It is only the conditioned nature of the living entity, in other words, his ignorance since time immemorial, that induces him to think of himself as the performer of action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “The *jīvas* are not initiators of their own actions.” One should not conclude from this statement that the *jīvas*’ every action is inspired by the Supreme Lord. If this were the case, He would possess defects such as being biased and cruel. Furthermore, Bhagavān is not the agent who unites the *jīva* with the results of his actions. This union occurs only because of the *jīva*’s ignorance from time immemorial. The external, material

energy in the form of ignorance activates the acquired nature of the *jīva*. Only those *jīvas* who possess such a conditioned nature, which is born of ignorance, are engaged in action by the Supreme Controller, Parameśvara. He Himself does not create the initiative within the living entities to act or not act.

“*Vaiṣāmya-nairghṛṇye doṣair na sāpekṣatvāt tathā hi darśayati* – the Supreme Person is neither cruel nor unjust, for the individual souls suffer or enjoy according to their own *karma*” (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.1.34). According to this *sūtra*, the Supreme Lord is completely free from such defects as being biased or cruel.

It is mentioned in the Vedas that, just as spirit (*brahma*) is without beginning, the *jīvas*’ impressions, which are the result of their previous actions, are also without beginning. The *jīvas*’ actions create impressions, and the Supreme Lord simply engages them in activities according to these impressions. Thus it is illogical to say that the Supreme has the defect of partiality. “*Sad eva saumyedam* – O gentle one, in the beginning the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone existed” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1).

The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* also states, “It is only according to the living entities’ impressions from their past actions that Śrī Viṣṇu engages them in mundane activities. Since the living entities’ impressions are without beginning, the Supreme Lord is not guilty of any defect.”

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains in his *Govinda-bhāṣya*, “Someone may conclude that since the Supreme Lord engages a *jīva* in action according to the *jīva*’s past impressions of his actions, we can conclude that the Lord is also not independent but also under the influence of *karma*. The response is, ‘No, this is not correct, since in reality even *karma* exists under His control.’ The Lord engages the *jīva* in action according to the nature he has acquired since time immemorial. Although the Lord can change this nature, He never does. Thus, in all circumstances, He is free from partiality.”

VERSE 15

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ १५ ॥

***nādatte kasyacit pāpaṁ na caiva sukṛtaṁ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ***

na ādatte – does not accept; *kasyacit* – of anyone; *pāpam* – the sinful reaction; *na* – neither; *na* – nor; *eva* – certainly; *sukṛtam* – the pious reaction; *vibhuḥ* – the great (Supreme Controller); *ajñānena* – by ignorance; *āvṛtam* – covered; *jñānam* – (spontaneous) transcendental knowledge; *tena* – for that reason; *muhyanti* – are bewildered; *jantavaḥ* – the living beings.

The Supreme Lord does not accept anyone’s sinful or pious reactions. Ignorance covers the inherent true knowledge of the living entities and bewilders them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The Supreme Lord does not prompt, or inaugurate, the living entity’s good or bad actions for the same reason that He Himself does not incur sin or piety. To explain this, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *nādatte*. It is only the deluding potency, the *avidyā-śakti*, that covers the fine knowledge of the *jīva*. He thus says *ajñānena*, meaning that the inborn, or natural, knowledge of the living entity becomes covered by ignorance, and it is only due to this that the *jīva* becomes deluded.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān is *vibhu*, all-pervading and boundless. He is complete in realization, bliss and unlimited energy. He is always absorbed in His own nature, the ocean of bliss. He does not prompt good or bad deeds in anyone, because He is indifferent to everything. Śrī Bhagavān is self-satisfied (*ātmārāma*) and His every desire is fulfilled (*āptakāma*). It is His *avidyā-śakti*, deluding potency, that covers the natural and inborn knowledge of the *jīva*, and by it, the *jīva* in the conditioned state identifies his self with his body. The *jīva* develops the ego of being the doer of his actions only because he falsely identifies his body to be his self.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.16.11) states:

*nādatta ātmā hi guṇaṁ na doṣaṁ na kriyā-phalam
udāsīnavad āsīnaḥ parāvara-drg īśvaraḥ*

The soul of Citraketu Mahārāja's dead son gave this instruction to his father, who was suffering from lamentation: "The Supersoul does not accept happiness or distress or the results of actions such as the attainment of a kingdom. He witnesses the cause and effect of one's actions, and because He is not under the control of the material body and material events, He remains indifferent."

VERSE 16

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६ ॥

*jñānena tu tad ajñānam yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ
teṣām āditya-vaj jñānam prakāśayati tat param*

jñānena – by knowledge; *tu* – but; *tat* – that; *ajñānam* – ignorance; *yeṣāṃ* – whose; *nāśitam* – is destroyed; *ātmanaḥ* – of the soul; *teṣām* – for those; *āditya-vaj* – like the sun; *jñānam* – knowledge; *prakāśayati* – reveals; *tat* – that; *param* – Bhagavān, the transcendental Supreme Truth.

But for those whose ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge of Bhagavān, that knowledge, luminous like the sun, reveals the non-material, transcendental Absolute Truth, Śrī Bhagavān.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Just as Śrī Bhagavān's deluding potency, the *avidyā-śakti*, covers the living entity's knowledge, so His knowledge potency, the *vidyā-śakti*, destroys ignorance and reveals pure knowledge. Just as the sun's rays dispel darkness and illuminate the earth, sky and other objects, similarly this knowledge destroys ignorance and illuminates transcendental knowledge. Therefore, the Lord neither binds nor liberates anyone. Rather, according to the qualities of material nature, it is only ignorance and knowledge that bind and liberate respectively. The tendency to enjoy or to initiate action is the cause of bondage. Similarly, detachment, peace and so forth are liberating. These are qualities of *prakṛti*. The Lord is only partly responsible for instigating action, because all the qualities of material nature become manifest due to His being the all-pervading

Supersoul. For this reason, there is no possibility that the imperfections of partiality or cruelty exist in Him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: According to his own material desires, the living entity acquires a body from the material nature, which is without beginning, and engages in *karma*. The Lord does not determine the living entity's sinful or pious actions. Both the piety of the advancing *sādhaka* and the sin which degrades him occur as a result of his previous impressions. To punish the living entity, Śrī Bhagavān's *māyā-śakti* covers his constitutional nature. The living entity then begins to identify his self with his body and subsequently considers that he is the doer of all his actions. The Lord can in no way be blamed for this condition of the *jīva*.

Māyā-śakti's two functions, ignorance and knowledge, are instrumental in the bondage and liberation of the living entity, respectively. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.3) it is said:

*vidyāvidye mama tanū viddhy uddhava śarīriṇām
mokṣa-bandha-karī ādye māyayā me vinirmite*

O Uddhava, both ignorance (*avidyā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*) are functions of My *māyā-śakti*.

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, here knowledge bestows liberation, and ignorance is the cause of bondage. *Māyā* is endowed with three faculties: the unmanifest three modes of material nature (*pradhāna*), ignorance (*avidyā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*).

The unmanifest material energy creates a designation for the living entity that is not real, although it appears to be so. Ignorance falsely superimposes such designations to be real, and by knowledge, such superimpositions are easily removed. Here, it must be properly understood that the gross and subtle bodily designations of the living entity, which are created by *pradhāna*, are not false. Rather, the concept of 'I' and 'mine' within both of them is false. In the Vedas and Upaniṣads this is called *vivarta*, or illusion.

The natural ego of being the doer is eternally present within the Supreme Lord. *Prakṛti* is His inert, material potency. Simply by His

glance, the function of the material nature (*prakṛti*) is instigated. Consequently, material nature is the secondary cause of the creation of the material world. The Lord is indeed its instigator but only in an indirect, or partial, manner.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Knowledge is of two types: mundane (*prākṛta*) and transcendental (*aprākṛta*). *Prākṛta*, means ‘knowledge related with inert matter’ and is called *avidyā*, or the ignorance of the *jīva*. Transcendental knowledge, or *aprākṛta-jñāna*, is called *vidyā*. When the material knowledge of the *jīva* has been destroyed by spiritual knowledge, then that supreme spiritual knowledge awakens within and enlightens him about the supra-mundane Absolute Truth.”

VERSE 17

तद्बुद्ध्यस्तदात्मानस्तत्रिष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ १७ ॥

tad-buddhayas tad-ātmānas tan-niṣṭhās tat-parāyaṇāḥ
gacchanty apunar-āvṛttim jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ

tad-buddhayāḥ – whose intelligence is fixed in Him; *tad-ātmānaḥ* – whose minds are absorbed in meditation upon Him; *tan-niṣṭhāḥ* – who are dedicated only to Him; *tat-parāyaṇāḥ* – who are devoted to hearing and chanting about Him; *gacchanti* – they attain; *apunaḥ āvṛttim* – freedom from further rebirth; *jñāna* – through transcendental knowledge, or *vidyā*; *nirdhūta* – have been cleansed away; *kalmaṣāḥ* – whose inebriety, or ignorance.

Those whose intelligence is fixed on the Supreme Lord, whose minds are absorbed only in meditation on Him, who are exclusively devoted to Him, who are dedicated to hearing and chanting about Him, and whose ignorance has been completely destroyed by knowledge, attain liberation, from which there is no return.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Vidyā* illuminates knowledge of the living entity only, not of the Supreme Lord. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) it is said, “*bhakti-yāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I can only be attained by *bhakti*.”

To attain knowledge of the Supersoul, the *jñānīs* must specifically practise *bhakti-sādhana*. Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *tad-buddhayaḥ* to explain this. Here, the word *tat* (*tad*) refers to the same all-pervading Lord described earlier. *Tad-buddhayaḥ* means that those whose intelligence is fixed upon the Lord meditate only on Him. *Tad-ātmā* means ‘those who are solely absorbed in Him’. “*Jñānam ca mayi sannyaset – a jñānī should surrender his knowledge to Me*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.19.1).

According to this statement, only those who have knowledge that the self is separate from the body, who have given up their determination to cultivate knowledge of the self in the mode of goodness, and who have fixed faith in Bhagavān, are called *tan-niṣṭhāḥ*, those with fixed faith in *bhakti*. *Tat-parāyaṇāḥ* means ‘those who are devoted to hearing and chanting about Him’.

It is said later in the *Gītā* (18.55):

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

It is only through devotion that one can know Me as I am and thus attain Me. Therefore, those whose ignorance has been completely destroyed by knowledge attain knowledge of the Supersoul.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *Gītā* (14.17) states, “*sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam – knowledge is in the mode of goodness.*” The Supersoul, however, is beyond the three modes and is also their controller. That is why although knowledge, in the form of knowledge in the mode of goodness, can destroy ignorance, it cannot manifest knowledge of Paramātmā. The *Gītā* (18.55) states, “*bhaktiā mām abhijānāti – only bhakti can manifest knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān.*” In this context, one should carefully consider Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentary on this verse (18.55).

VERSE 18

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

vidyā-vinaya-sampanne – equipped with knowledge and gentle qualities; *brāhmaṇe* – within a *brāhmaṇa*; *gavi* – in a cow; *hastini* – in an elephant; *śuni* – in a dog; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *śva-pāke* – in a dog-eater; *ca* – and; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the enlightened (*jñānīs*); *sama-darśinaḥ* – have equal vision of the soul.

Enlightened persons (*jñānīs*) perceive with equal vision a gentle and learned *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog eater.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The wise, who are extremely devoted to Parameśvara, as mentioned in the previous verse, then transcend the material modes, becoming disinterested in accepting those modes, which exist in every entity to varying degrees. In this way they become equipoised. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *vidyā-vinaya*. A cow and a *brāhmaṇa* are said to be in the mode of goodness and are thus superior to the elephant, which is in the mode of passion. They are also superior to a dog and a dog-eater, which are in the mode of ignorance. But learned persons who have transcended the modes of nature do not notice such differences. Rather, they see spirit (*brahma*), which exists beyond these three modes of nature, everywhere. They are known as *sama-darśī*, those with equal vision.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The vision of the wise *jñānī* is being explained in the above verse. Here the word *sama-darśiḥ* means ‘to see that in every material body, Bhagavān’s marginal potency, the *taṭasthā-śakti*, has manifested as a *jīva* with a specific eternal form and nature’. Only they who perceive the self in this way are known as *sama-darśī*. Bhagavān has clarified this further in the *Gītā* (6.32) and it is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.14):

*brāhmaṇe pukase stene brahmaṇye ṛke sphulingake
akrūre krūrake caiva sama-dṛk paṇḍito mataḥ*

In My opinion, one who sees with equal vision a *brāhmaṇa* and a *caṇḍāla*, a thief and a devotee of the Supreme, the sun rays and the sparks of a fire, a cruel person and a kind person, is wise.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains *sama-dṛk* to mean ‘realizing the eternal existence of Me, Parabrahma, in every living entity’. One who has such a vision is called *sama-darśī*.

VERSE 19

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥

ihaiva tair jitaḥ sarga yeṣāṃ sām्यe sthitaṃ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṃ hi samam brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ

iha eva – in this very world; *taiḥ* – those; *jitaḥ* – is conquered; *sargaḥ* – the material creation of birth and death; *yeṣāṃ* – whose; *sām्यe* – in equanimity; *sthitam* – are situated; *manaḥ* – minds; *nirdoṣam* – flawless; *hi* – because; *samam* – and equipoised; *brahma* – spirit; *tasmāt* – therefore; *brahmaṇi* – in transcendence; *te* – they; *sthitāḥ* – are situated.

Those whose minds are fixed in equanimity are said to have conquered birth and death in this very life. Since they are flawless like *brahma* – the Absolute Spirit – and possess equanimity, they are verily situated in *brahma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is glorifying equal vision. *Sargaḥ* refers to what has been created in this world. *Jitaḥ* means ‘to defeat’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Ihaiva* means ‘indeed, while living in this world’. In other words, it is in the stage of *sādhana* that one becomes free from bondage to this material world.

VERSE 20

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम्।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ २० ॥

na prahṛṣyēt priyam prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam
sthira-buddhir asammūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ

na prahṛṣyet – he is not excessively elated; *priyam* – something pleasant; *prāpya* – on receiving; *na udvijet* – he is not disturbed; *prāpya* – on obtaining; *ca* – and; *apriyam* – an unpleasant thing; *sthira-buddhiḥ* – a person of steady intelligence; *asammūḍhaḥ* – and not deluded; *brahma-vit* – a knower of transcendence; *brahmaṇi* – in transcendence; *sthitaḥ* – situated.

One who knows *brahma* – the Absolute Spirit – and who is firmly situated in *brahma*, has steady intelligence and is not deluded. He neither rejoices upon obtaining something pleasant nor despairs upon receiving something unpleasant.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the words *na prahṛṣyet* to describe the equal vision of the wise in relation to pleasant and unpleasant mundane events. *Na prahṛṣyet* means that one is not elated, and *nodvijet* means that one is not dejected. The purport is that one must practise like this in the stage of *sādhana*. With this intention, the imperative case has been used. Because of the false ego, people become deluded by happiness and lamentation. Being free from such ego, the wise remain undeluded.

VERSE 21

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१ ॥

*bāhya-sparśeṣu asaktātmā vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā sukham akṣayam aśnute*

bāhya-sparśeṣu – to external sense pleasures; *asakta-ātmā* – a person unattached; *vindati* – finds; *ātmani* – within the self; *yat* – whatever; *sukham* – happiness; *saḥ* – that; *brahma-yoga* – transcendental communion with Absolute Spirit; *yukta-ātmā* – soul united; *sukham* – happiness; *akṣayam* – limitless; *aśnute* – attains.

He who is not attached to external sense pleasure finds happiness within the self. Being united with the Supreme Lord through *yoga*, he attains unending happiness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The bliss attained by a living entity who has achieved Paramātmā is unending, so the mind of such a living entity, who has united with that Absolute Spirit (*brahma*) through *yoga*, is not at all attached to sense pleasure. Only they can experience this. Why would a person who continuously tastes nectar be interested in eating mud?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: External sense objects such as sound and touch are only experienced with the help of the corporeal senses, which are not the direct faculties of the *ātmā* proper. Those who remain detached from external sense objects dwell in the bliss within derived from the experience of Paramātmā. They do not even think of sense objects, what to speak of enjoy them. According to the verse *param dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate* (*Gītā* 2.59), since they remain absorbed in the superior taste, or *rasa*, which is the bliss of serving Bhagavān, they remain completely indifferent to mundane enjoyment, which comes from material sense objects.

VERSE 22

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥२२॥

*ye hi saṁsparśa-jā bhogā duḥkha-yonaya eva te
ādy-antavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*

ye – which; *hi* – certainly; *saṁsparśa-jāḥ* – born of sensual contact with the sense objects; *bhogāḥ* – all pleasures; *duḥkha-yonayaḥ* – sources of misery; *eva* – certainly; *te* – they; *ādi-antavantaḥ* – a beginning and an end; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *na* – not; *teṣu* – in them; *ramate* – delights; *budhaḥ* – an enlightened man.

O son of Kuntī, pleasures born of contact with the senses are certainly the cause of misery. Since they have a beginning and an end, an enlightened person does not become attached to them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: A wise man does not become attached to sense enjoyment. For this reason, this verse beginning with *ye hi* is spoken.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The happiness derived from the contact of the senses with sense objects is called *saṁsparśa-mokṣa*. Such happiness has a beginning and an end, for when the contact is broken, the happiness ceases. For this reason, the wise do not become attached to such sense enjoyment, which is transient and which only appears to be pleasant. It is only to maintain the body that such wise persons engage their senses in action, doing so with a mood of detachment.

VERSE 23

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ २३ ॥

śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhumṁ prāk śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt
kāma-krodhodbhavaṁ vegam sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ

śaknoti – is able; *iha eva* – in this very life; *yaḥ* – who; *soḍhum* – to tolerate; *prāk* – before; *śarīra* – the body; *vimokṣaṇāt* – giving up; *kāma-krodha* – of lust and anger; *udbhavam* – born; *vegam* – the urges; *saḥ* – he; *yuktaḥ* – is a yogī; *saḥ* – he; *sukhī* – is a happy; *naraḥ* – man.

Before giving up the body, he who, in this very life, can tolerate the urges born of lust and anger is a yogī and is indeed happy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Despite having fallen into the ocean of material existence, the persons described in this verse are *yogīs* and are happy. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *śaknoti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The intense desire, or hankering, to attain sense objects that are favourable for sense pleasure is referred to here as lust (*kāma*), or greed. The deepest meaning of the word *kāma*, which in this context indicates all types of desires, is the desire to derive pleasure from union with the opposite gender. The mind's excessive repulsion towards that which is unfavourable to sense enjoyment is called anger, or *krodha*. Those who can tolerate the urges of lust and anger until the time of death are known as *yogīs*, and they are happy.

VERSE 24

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ २४ ॥

*yo 'ntaḥ-sukho 'ntar-ārāmas tathāntar-jyotir eva yaḥ
sa yogī brahma-nirvāṇam brahma-bhūto 'dhigacchati*

yaḥ – who; *antaḥ-sukhaḥ* – happy within the self; *antaḥ-ārāmaḥ* – who enjoys within the self; *tathā* – and; *antaḥ-jyotiḥ* – vision is directed within; *eva* – certainly; *yaḥ* – who; *saḥ* – that; *yogī* – yogī; *brahma-nirvāṇam* – through realization of *brahmānanda* (the bliss of the spirit soul), emancipation from material existence; *brahma-bhūtaḥ* – situated in transcendence; *adhigacchati* – he attains.

A *yogī* who derives happiness exclusively from within the self, who delights only within the self, and whose vision is solely directed within the self, is situated in transcendence (*brahma*). He attains the bliss of that transcendence in emancipation from material existence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: For those who are untouched by the conditions of the material world, direct experience of Absolute Spirit (*brahma*) is itself pleasurable. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the words *yo 'ntaḥ*. Those who achieve bliss within their inner self take pleasure only in the self, and thus their vision is focused within.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: How the previously mentioned strong urges of lust and greed can be easily and naturally pacified is being explained here by Śrī Bhagavān. By having experience of the self, such urges can be easily controlled. *Yogīs* who experience happiness in their realization of the self, who take pleasure within the self, and whose vision is always focused on the nature of the self, take shelter of selflessly performing their prescribed duties. They attain the liberated platform (*brahma-bhūta*). They eventually become established in their own eternal form and nature. Such *yogīs* easily become indifferent to the mundane sensual activities of lust, greed

and so forth, and the joy they experience within the self is known as *brahma-nirvāṇa*, spiritual bliss. In Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's commentary on the *Gītā* (5.26), he says, "A *sannyāsī* who is free from lust and greed, who has control over the mind, and who knows *ātma-tattva*, very quickly attains full realization of *brahma-nirvāṇa*."

After deliberating on real and unreal objects, one who worships Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the results of one's work, a *niṣkāma-karma-yogī*, situates himself in *brahma*, the Reality beyond material nature, even while living in the material world. Such a state, which is free from material miseries, is called *brahma-nirvāṇa*.

VERSE 25

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ २५ ॥

labhante brahma-nirvāṇam ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ
chinna-dvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ

labhante – they achieve; *brahma-nirvāṇam* – the bliss of absolute spiritual emancipation; *ṛṣayaḥ* – persons inspired from within; *kṣīṇa* – are destroyed; *kalmaṣāḥ* – sinful qualities; *chinna-dvaidhāḥ* – one-pointed, who are without doubts; *yata-ātmānaḥ* – who have self-controlled minds; *sarva-bhūta-hite* – to the welfare of all living beings; *ratāḥ* – who are attached.

Those saintly persons who are free from sin and doubt, who control their minds, and who are attached to the welfare of all living entities, attain emancipation from material existence through realization of Absolute Spirit (*brahma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Many persons attain perfection by practice (*sādhana-siddha*). To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *labhante*.

VERSE 26

कामक्रोधविमुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ २६ ॥

***kāma-krodha-vimuktānām yatīnām yata-cetasām
abhito brahma-nirvāṇam vartate veditātmanām***

kāma-krodha – from lust and anger; *vimuktānām* – who are liberated; *yatīnām* – for the ascetics; *yata-cetasām* – for those who have controlled their minds; *abhitaḥ* – in every way; *brahma-nirvāṇam* – extinguishing material life through spiritual realization; *vartate* – takes place; *viditātmanām* – for those who are well-versed in the science of the soul.

Those renunciants whose hearts are free from lust, anger, etc., who control their minds, and who are well versed in the truth of the soul, completely extinguish material life through spiritual realization.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How long will it take for those with knowledge of the self but bereft of knowledge of Paramātmā to attain the happiness of *brahma-nirvāṇa*, the extinguishing of material life?” Anticipating this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *kāma-krodha*. For one whose mind has become stable and whose subtle body has been destroyed, it does not take long to attain *brahma-nirvāṇa* in its full perfection.

VERSES 27–28

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

*sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara-cāriṇau
yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ
vigatecchā-bhaya-krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ*

sparsān – sensual perception such as sound and touch; *kṛtvā* – having put; *bahih* – outside; *bāhyān* – external; *cakṣuḥ* – the eyes; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *antare* – between; *bhruvoḥ* – the eyebrows; *prāṇa-apānau* – the inward flowing and outward flowing life-air; *samau* –

equal; *kṛtvā* – having focused; *nāsa-abhyantara-cāriṇau* – moving within the nostrils; *yata* – are controlled; *indriya* – senses; *manaḥ* – mind; *buddhiḥ* – and intelligence; *muniḥ* – sage; *mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ* – is dedicated to attaining liberation; *vigata* – freed; *icchā-bhaya-krodhaḥ* – from desire, fear and anger; *yah* – who; *sadā* – always; *muktaḥ* – liberated; *eva* – certainly; *sah* – he.

He who is free from desire, fear and anger completely removes external sense objects, such as sound and touch, from his mind. He then fixes his vision between his eyebrows and suspends the movement of the inward and outward flowing life-air, which move through the nostrils. In this way, he balances the life-air, controls his senses, mind and intelligence, and dedicates himself to attaining liberation. Certainly, such a sage is ever liberated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this way, by performing *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offered to Īśvara, the *sādhaka* achieves a pure heart. It is then that knowledge of the self (*tvaṁ-padārtha*) appears. To gain knowledge of *tat-padārtha* (*brahma*), one has to cultivate *bhakti*. Finally one experiences *brahma* (Śrī Bhagavān) by transcendental knowledge, which is born from *bhakti*. But for one whose heart has been purified by *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* – that is, by communion with Bhagavān through selflessly offering Him the fruits of one’s work – the practice of the eightfold *yoga* process (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) is considered superior to the practice of *jñāna-yoga* for the purpose of realizing *brahma*. This is explained in the Sixth Chapter. Here Śrī Bhagavān is speaking these three verses beginning with *sparsān*, as a *sūtra* of the Sixth Chapter.

Sparsā refers to that which is perceived by the external senses – touch, form, sound, taste and smell – all of which enter the mind. One should therefore drive them out of the mind and restrain the mind from running towards them. One should fix one’s vision between the eyebrows. If a person completely closes the eyes there is the possibility that he will fall asleep, and if he keeps them completely open, there is the possibility that he will be distracted by the objects of the senses. Thus, to ensure that neither occurs, one should keep the eyes half open, and within the nostrils control the upward and downward movement of

the up-going and down-going breath, thus balancing them. Those who control their senses in this way are to be considered liberated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, the heart becomes purified only by *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* in connection with Me. After purifying the heart, one attains perfect knowledge, or *jñāna*. This is the means to attain *tat-padārtha* (the Absolute Truth). The experience of Absolute Spirit, or *brahma*, gradually develops by performing devotion to the Supreme Lord in perfect knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa-bhakti*) and by acquiring that knowledge that is beyond the three modes of material nature. I have explained this to you previously.

“Now, for one whose heart has been purified, I will explain *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* as the means to realize *brahma*, the Absolute Spirit. I am presenting statements just to give an idea of this. Please listen. The external forms of sound, touch, form, taste and smell are to be completely removed from the mind. This practice is called *pratyāhāra*. While practising control of the mind in this way, fix the eyes between the eyebrows and look at the tip of the nose. By completely closing the eyes there is the possibility of falling asleep, and by completely keeping them open, there is the possibility of being distracted by external objects. One should therefore control the eyes by keeping them half-closed in such a way that one’s vision falls between the eyebrows on to the tip of the nose. Breathing through the nostrils, one should regulate the up-going breath and the down-going breath so that the upward and downward movement is balanced. Sages aiming at liberation, or *mukti*, thus seat themselves in this way, controlling the senses, mind and intelligence, and give up desire, fear and anger with the aim of realizing *brahma*. In this way they can attain complete deliverance from material bondage. Thus, as part of the practice of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, its limb *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* can also be practised.”

VERSE 29

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ २९ ॥

***bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati***

bhoktāram – the enjoyer; *yajña-tapasām* – of sacrifices and austerities; *sarva-loka* – of all worlds; *mahā-īśvaram* – the Supreme Controller; *suhṛdam* – the friend; *sarva-bhūtānām* – of all living beings; *jñātvā* – having understood; *mām* – Me; *śāntim* – peace (through liberation); *ṛcchati* – attains.

He who knows Me to be the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Controller of all planets and the well-wishing friend of all living entities, attains liberation from bondage to material identification.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Like the *jñānī* who cultivates transcendental knowledge, such a *yogī* also achieves liberation by attaining knowledge of the Supersoul, which appears through *bhakti*. This is stated in this verse beginning with *bhoktāram*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, “I am the enjoyer of both the sacrifice performed by the fruitive worker and the austerities performed by the *jñānī*. I am the worshipable object of *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs*, I am the internal witness and I am the only Supreme Controller of all the planets. I am the well-wisher of all living entities, because I mercifully bestow instructions on *bhakti* upon them through My devotees. For this reason, know Me to be the devotees’ worshipable object also. Since I am transcendental to the material modes of material nature, it is not possible to realize Me by knowledge in the mode of goodness. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) I declared, ‘*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I can be achieved only through *bhakti*.’ Only through *nirguṇā-bhakti* can the *yogīs* realize My partial aspect, Paramātmā, as their worshipable object, and attain peace or liberation.”

Jñānīs and *karma-yogīs* attain knowledge of both the *jīvātmā* and Paramātmā by selflessly offering the fruit of their endeavour to the Supreme. In this way they attain liberation. This is the essence of this chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Fifth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *niṣkāma-karma-yogīs* also achieve liberation by attaining knowledge of the Supersoul. This knowledge appears through *bhakti*. Śrī Bhagavān is the sole enjoyer of articles offered with devotion when performing sacrifice and austerities. He, as the indwelling Supersoul, is indeed the worshipable object of the *yogīs*, the well-wisher of all living entities, and the Supreme Controller of all planets:

*tam īśvarāṇām paramaṁ maheśvaram
tam devatānām paramaṁ ca daivatam
patim patīnām paramaṁ parastād
vidāma devam bhuvaneśam iḍyam*

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.7)

We know our worshipable Lord, who is the Master of the worlds, to be Supreme amongst all controllers, the Supreme Lord of lords, and the Supreme Protector of those who can award protection. He is transcendental to impersonal *brahma*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Upon hearing the first four chapters, a doubt could arise. If one attains liberation as the result of worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruits of one’s prescribed duty, then what place does *jñāna-yoga* have, and in what form does it manifest?

“The instructions in this chapter have been spoken to remove this doubt. *Jñāna-yoga* (*sāṅkhya-yoga*) and *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* are non-different, for they share the same supreme goal, namely *bhakti*. In the initial stages of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, the performance of prescribed action (*karma*) predominates over the development of transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*), and in the final stage (*jñāna-yoga*), the development of such knowledge predominates over prescribed action.

“By the *jīva*’s constitutional nature he is a pure, conscious entity. When he desires to enjoy *māyā*, however, he becomes bound by inert matter, and as he identifies himself with matter, his constitutional position gradually becomes more covered. As long as this material body exists, material action is necessary. The only way for the conditioned soul to attain liberation is through a spiritual endeavour to revive his original constitutional state.

“During his journey within the material body, the predominance of *karma* becomes weakened to the degree that he endeavours to revive his original conscious state. *Brahma-nirvāṇa* (the bliss of absolute spiritual emancipation) automatically appears while performing spiritual practices to develop equal vision, detachment, control over mundane lust and anger, and the eradication of all doubts, and so forth. While engaged in the practice of *karma-yoga* and while maintaining one’s body, one can simultaneously engage in the performance of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, which consists of the following eight processes: *yama* (control of the senses), *niyama* (control of the mind), *āsana* (sitting postures), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (trance).

“If one attains the association of a devotee, the bliss of devotion to Śrī Bhagavān gradually manifests during the performance of such *sādhana*. This is called *mukti-pūrvikā-śānti*, everlasting peace that accompanies liberation. Here, *mukti* means ‘being situated in one’s own eternal form and nature’. At that time, the tendency to perform pure *bhajana* illuminates the glory of the constitutional nature of the living entity.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Fifth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER SIX



Dhyāna-Yoga

Yoga Through the Path of Meditation

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स सन्न्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥१॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*anāśritaḥ karma-phalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karoti yaḥ
sa sannyāsī ca yogī ca na niragnir na cākriyaḥ*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – Śrī Bhagavān said; anāśritaḥ – without expectation; karma-phalam – the fruit of his action; kāryam – that which should necessarily be done; karma – work; karoti – performs; yaḥ – who; saḥ – he; sannyāsī – in the renounced order; ca – and; yogī – one who is connected; ca – and; na – not; niragnih – one who ceases activities such as the practice of fire sacrifices; na – not; ca – and; akriyaḥ – one who performs no bodily work.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Those who perform their prescribed activities without desiring the results of their actions are actual *sannyāsīs* and *yogīs*. Those who simply cease performing fire sacrifices such as the *agni-hotra-yajña* are not *sannyāsīs*, and those who merely give up all bodily activities are not *yogīs*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This Sixth Chapter deals with the various types of *yoga* performed by *yogīs* whose minds are self-controlled. It also explains the means to control the flickering mind.

A person who is engaged in the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (the eightfold *yoga* system) should not suddenly give up *niṣkāma-karma* (selflessly performed prescribed duties). For this reason Śrī Bhagavān says, “Those who perform their scripturally prescribed duties, knowing them to be obligatory, without desiring the results, are actual *sannyāsīs* because they have renounced the fruit of their actions. Since their minds are free from desires for sense enjoyment, such persons are also called *yogīs*.” *Niragni* means that a person is not called a *sannyāsī* simply because he has abandoned all *karma* (religious duties) such as the performance of fire sacrifice (*agni-hotra-yajña*). *Akriyaḥ* means that a person is not called a *yogī* simply because he has given up all bodily activities and sits motionless with his eyes half-closed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga* was described in a condensed form in three verses at the end of the Fifth Chapter. In this Sixth Chapter, the subject of these three verses is explained in detail.

The word *agni-hotra* mentioned in the commentary is a special type of Vedic fire sacrifice, or *yajña*, performed to satisfy Agni, the presiding deity of fire. According to this procedure, at the end of a marriage ceremony, *brāhmaṇas* should perform a *yajña* by establishing a fire and chanting Vedic *mantras* prescribed for the spring season. At that time, one makes a determined vow to perform the sacrifice with a particular substance (such as ghee). After that, the sacrifice should be performed with that substance for the rest of one’s life. On the dark-moon night, one must personally perform the sacrifice with barley water. On other days, there will be no fault even if there is some variation.

After one has performed one hundred sacrifices, one must perform a sacrifice to the sun in the morning and to the fire at twilight. It is imperative to commence *daśa-paurṇamāsa-yāga* while meditating on the fire on the first full-moon day. Besides that, one has to perform three sacrifices on the full-moon day and three on the dark-moon night. Furthermore, one must perform these six sacrifices for the rest of one’s life. The Vedas give detailed accounts of the results obtained by performing this *yajña*.

VERSE 2

यं सन्न्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसन्न्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

*yam sannnyāsam iti prāhur yogam tam viddhi pāṇḍava
na hy asannyasta-saṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana*

yam – which; *sannyāsam* – renunciation of work; *iti* – that; *prāhuḥ* – they (the wise) call; *yogam* – yoga through selfless action; *tam* – that; *viddhi* – know; *pāṇḍava* – O son of Pāṇḍu (Arjuna); *na* – not; *hi* – indeed; *asannyasta-saṅkalpaḥ* – one who is unable to renounce the desire to enjoy the fruit of action; *yogī* – a yogī; *bhavati* – can become; *kaścana* – anyone.

O Arjuna, know that what the wise call cessation of action, or *karma-sannyāsa*, is the same as *yoga*, because one who is unable to give up the desire for the fruits of action and sense enjoyment can never become a *yogī*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: To renounce the fruits of action is the factual meaning of the word *sannyāsa*, and to stabilize the mind so that it is not disturbed by sense objects is the meaning of the word *yoga*. Therefore, the meaning of both *sannyāsa* and *yoga* is one. Those who are *asannyasta-saṅkalpa*, who have neither given up the desire for the fruits of their action nor the desire for sense enjoyment, can never be called *yogīs*.

VERSE 3

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

*ārurukṣor muner yogam karma kāraṇam ucyate
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate*

ārurukṣoḥ – for who is desiring to begin; *muneḥ* – for the sage; *yogam* – steadfast meditation, or *dhyāna-yoga*; *karma* – *niškāma-karma-yoga*; *kāraṇam* – the practice, or *sādhana*; *ucyate* – is said; *yoga-ārūḍhasya* –

for that person who has attained to the highest stage of *dhyāna-yoga*; *tasya* – for him (the sage); *eva* – certainly; *śamaḥ* – renunciation (of all irrelevant action); *kāraṇam* – the practice; *ucyate* – is said.

For a sage who is aspiring to ascend the path of unwavering meditation upon the Supreme Person, worshipping Him by selflessly offering Him the fruit of his activities is said to be the means. And when he achieves steadiness in that elevated stage of *yoga*, the renunciation of actions that distract his mind from meditation is said to be the means.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: One may question whether or not a person who is an *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* of the quality mentioned in the *Gītā* (6.1) must perform *niṣkāma-karma* for the rest of his life. That doubt is removed by this verse beginning with the word *ārurukṣoḥ*, which establishes a limit for *niṣkāma-karma*. *Muni* means that a person who is aspiring to become situated in *yoga*, or unwavering meditation upon the Supreme, must perform *niṣkāma-karma* because it purifies the heart. Once they have attained steadiness in meditation, they must then cease any action that may distract them. Those who desire to attain the level of *dhyāna*, or meditation, which is a stage in the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, but whose minds are not yet completely purified, should perform *niṣkāma-karma*, selflessly offering the results of their actions to the Supreme.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “*Yoga* is compared to a unique ladder. The lowest rung is compared to the life of the *jīva* caught in degraded worldliness, his consciousness absorbed in mundane matter. This *yoga* ladder consists of the steps, from that level up to the level of pure consciousness. The various rungs of the ladder have different names, but *yoga* is used with them all. This *yoga* has two divisions (for two types of *yogīs*): (1) For one who desires to practise *yoga* and who has just begun climbing the *yoga* ladder (the *yoga-ārurukṣu muni*), it is said that the only process is to selflessly offer the fruit of one’s work to the Supreme. (2) For one who has already ascended to the platform of perfection in *yoga* (*ārūḍha-yogī*), the only aim is to cease the desire for fruitive work; he aims for eternal bliss. These two gross divisions are called *karma* and

śānti.” In other words, their respective goals are performing *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and attaining eternal bliss.

VERSE 4

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसङ्कल्पसन्न्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४ ॥

*yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasv anuṣajjate
sarva-saṅkalpa-sannyāsī yogārūḍhas tadocyate*

yadā – when; *hi* – that certainly; *na* – not; *indriya-artheṣu* – to the objects of the senses; *na* – nor; *karmasu* – to actions; *anuṣajjate* – one is attached; *sarva-saṅkalpa* – of all his desires; *sannyāsī* – a renunciant; *yoga-ārūḍhaḥ* – elevated to the platform of *yoga*; *tadā* – then; *ucyate* – it is said.

When a renunciant has become free from attachment to the sense objects and to the performance of action, then he is called *yoga-ārūḍha* (elevated to the platform of *yoga*), for he has given up all desires for the fruits of his actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Only those whose hearts have become completely pure are called *yoga-ārūḍha*. In this verse beginning with *yadā hi*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the symptoms of such a person. *Indriya-artheṣu* means that they are neither attached to sense objects such as sound nor to actions that are the means of attaining those sense objects.

VERSE 5

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥

*uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānaṁ avasādayet
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanāḥ*

uddharet – one should deliver from the endless cycle of birth and death; *ātmanā* – through the unattached mind; *ātmānaṁ* – the soul; *na* – not;

ātmānam – the soul; *avasādayet* – one should degrade; *ātmā* – the mind; *eva* – indeed; *hi* – certainly; *ātmanah* – of the soul; *bandhuḥ* – the friend; *ātmā* – the mind; *eva* – indeed; *ripuḥ* – the enemy; *ātmanah* – of the soul.

A man must deliver himself from the material world through mental detachment and not allow the mind to degrade him, for the mind is simultaneously one's friend and also one's own enemy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: A soul falls into the ocean of birth and death in the material world only because of his attachment to sense objects. With great endeavour one must deliver oneself. *Ātmanā*, the mind that is detached from sense objects, delivers *ātmānam*, the self. *Na avasādayet* means that the mind that is attached to sense objects should not cause the *ātmā* to fall into the material ocean. In this way the *ātmā* (mind) is the friend and also the enemy of the self.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A mind that is free from any attachment is one's friend, and a mind that is full of attachment is one's enemy. It is said:

*mana eva manuṣyāṅām kāraṇaṁ bandha-mokṣayoḥ
bandhāya viṣayāsaṅgo muktyair nirviṣayaṁ manaḥ*

Amṛta-bindu Upaniṣad (2)

A man's mind is the sole cause of his bondage and liberation. A mind absorbed in sense objects causes bondage, and when it is detached from sense objects, it is the cause of liberation.

VERSE 6

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनैवात्मात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥६॥

*bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenaivātmātmanā jitaḥ
anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatru-vat*

bandhuḥ – the friend; *ātmā* – the mind; *ātmanah* – of the soul; *tasya* – of that; *yena* – by whom; *eva* – certainly; *ātmā* – the mind; *ātmanā* – by the soul; *jitaḥ* – has been conquered; *anātmanah* – for a person without

controlled senses; *tu* – but; *śatrutve* – in harmful activity; *varjeta* – may engage; *ātmā* – the mind; *eva* – just; *śatru-vat* – like an enemy.

For that living entity who has conquered his mind, the mind is his friend, but for he who has not conquered his senses, his mind works against him just like an enemy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Whose mind is their friend and whose mind is their enemy? To answer this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with the word *bandhuḥ*. For the soul who has conquered his mind, the mind is his friend. But for the soul who is *anātmā*, whose mind is uncontrolled, it acts harmfully like an enemy.

VERSE 7

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥७॥

jītātmanah praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ
śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ

jīta-ātmanah – for the *yogī* whose mind is controlled; *praśāntasya* – who is very peaceful (being free from attachment and aversion); *parama* – supreme; *ātmā* – soul; *samāhitaḥ* – has attained trance; *śīta-uṣṇa* – cold and heat; *sukha-duḥkheṣu* – amidst happiness and distress; *tathā* – as well as; *māna-apamānayoḥ* – honour and dishonour.

The *yogī* who is in control of his mind is free from both attachment and aversion to the dualities of heat and cold, happiness and misery, and honour and dishonour. The mind of such a *yogī* is deeply absorbed in trance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now, in these next three verses, the characteristics of one who is accomplished in *yoga* are being described. One who has conquered his mind (*jīta-ātmanah*) and who is free from attachment, envy and so forth (*praśānta*) is properly situated in trance, or *samādhi*, and is not disturbed by heat or cold, honour or dishonour.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the original verse, the word *paramātmā* does not refer to that Paramātmā who is Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller. Rather, it indicates the individual soul, the *ātmā*, or the *jīvātmā*. Here, the meaning of the word *parama* combined with *samāhitaḥ* is that a person endowed with the above symptoms is deeply absorbed in *samādhi*. Both Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa have said that here, the word *parama* indicates intensity.

VERSE 8

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥८॥
jñāna-vijñāna-tṛptātmā kūṭa-stho vijitendriyaḥ
yukta ity ucyate yogī sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ

jñāna-vijñāna – through transcendental knowledge and its realization; *tṛpta* – who is satisfied; *ātmā* – the soul; *kūṭa-sthaḥ* – situated on the summit (whose consciousness is unaffected by material transformation); *vijita-indriyaḥ* – who has conquered the senses; *yuktaḥ* – a person who has attained the pinnacle of *yoga*; *iti* – thus; *ucyate* – is said to be; *yogī* – a yogī; *sama* – looks equally; *loṣṭa-aśma-kāñcanaḥ* – on sand, stone and gold.

A person whose mind is satisfied by both knowledge (*jñāna*) and realization (*vijñāna*), whose consciousness is unaffected by material transformation, who has conquered the senses, and who looks equally upon sand, stone and gold is said to have attained the perfection of *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those whose hearts have become free from hankering and who are satisfied due to having both knowledge (*jñāna*) and direct realization of this knowledge (*vijñāna*) are *kūṭa-sthaḥ*. In other words, they are always situated in the true nature of their selves and remain detached from all mundane objects. For them, a grain of sand, gold and so forth are all the same.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Kūṭa-sthaḥ*: “*kāla-vyāpī sa kūṭa-stha eka-rūpatayā tu yah* – one who is not disturbed by his senses and eternally remains situated in his own *svarūpa* is called *kūṭa-sthaḥ*.”

VERSE 9

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥९॥

suhṛn-mitrāry-udāsīna-madhyastha-dveṣya-bandhuṣu
sādhuṣv api ca pāpeṣu sama-buddhir viśiṣyate

suhṛt – towards well-wishers; *mitra* – friends; *ari* – enemies; *udāsīna* – neutral persons; *madhya-stha* – arbitrators; *dveṣya* – the envious; *bandhuṣu* – relatives; *sādhuṣu* – saints; *api ca* – and also; *pāpeṣu* – sinful persons; *sama-buddhiḥ* – one with impartial intelligence; *viśiṣyate* – is most advanced.

One who looks upon well-wishers, friends, enemies, the neutral, arbitrators, envious, relatives, saintly persons and sinners with equal vision is most exalted.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Suhṛt* means ‘one who is a well-wisher by nature’. *Mitra* means ‘one who performs welfare work out of affection’. *Ari* refers to one who is violent or a killer. *Udāsīna* means ‘one who is indifferent to quarrelling parties’. *Madhya-stha* means ‘one who is an arbitrator for opposing parties’. *Dveṣya* means ‘one who is envious and acts harmfully’. *Bandhu* means ‘a relative’, *sādhu* means ‘a saintly person’ and *pāpī* means ‘a sinful, irreligious person’.

One who regards all of them with an equal mind, seeing them all alike, is considered to be a most distinguished and excellent person. Such a person is superior to one who looks upon a grain of sand, stone and gold equally.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, a person who looks equally upon a grain of sand, stone, gold and so forth was called a *yogī*. But among persons who are adept at *yoga*

(*yoga-ārūḍha*), those who see with equal vision a well-wisher, a friend, an enemy, a neutral person, an arbitrator, an envious person, a relative, a saint and a sinner are even more highly situated than those who see inert matter equally.

VERSE 10

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १० ॥

yogī yuñjīta satatam ātmānam rahasi sthitaḥ
ekākī yata-cittātmā nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ

yogī – a yogī; *yuñjīta* – should absorb in trance, or *samādhi*; *satatam* – always; *ātmānam* – the mind; *rahasi* – in a solitary place; *sthitaḥ* – situated; *ekākī* – living alone; *yata-citta-ātmā* – controlling his mind and body; *nirāśīḥ* – free from desire; *aparigrahaḥ* – not accepting sense objects.

Being free from desire, the *yogī*, while residing alone in a solitary place, controlling his mind and body and rejecting sense objects, absorbs his mind in trance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now, from this verse beginning with *yogī yuñjīta* up to the verse ending with *sa yogī paramo mataḥ* (*Gītā* 6.32), Śrī Bhagavān explains the process of meditation, or *dhyāna-yoga*, along with its limbs. A *yogī*'s mind should be fixed in trance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After explaining the symptoms of one who is adept in *yoga* (*yoga-ārūḍha*), Bhagavān gives instruction on the practice of *yoga*. A practitioner of *yoga* should withdraw his mind from the objects of sense enjoyment and practise *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, offering the results of his actions to Bhagavān. In this way, he should try to fix his mind in *samādhi*, meditating deeply on Śrī Bhagavān. He should perform his *sādhana* without any material desires, and with staunch renunciation, he should reside in a solitary place, control his mind and refrain from all activities that are unfavourable to *yoga*.

VERSES 11-12

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
 नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चेलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥
 तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
 उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२ ॥

*śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiram āsanam ātmanah
 nātyucchritam nātinīcam cailājina-kuśottaram
 tatraikāgram manah kṛtvā yata-cittendriya-kriyah
 upaviśyāsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye*

śucau deśe – in a clean place; *pratiṣṭhāpya* – establishing; *sthiram* – steadfast; *āsanam* – seat; *ātmanah* – his; *na ati-ucchritam* – neither too high; *na ati-nīcam* – nor too low; *caila* – and a cloth; *ajina* – a deerskin; *kuśa* – a mat of *kuśa* grass; *uttaram* – in sequence; *tatra* – there; *eka-agram* – one-pointedly; *manah* – his mind; *kṛtvā* – having fixed; *yata* – controlling; *citta* – of his mind; *indriya* – and senses; *kriyah* – the activities; *upaviśya* – sitting; *āsane* – on the seat; *yuñjyād yogam* – he should practise *yoga*; *ātma-viśuddhaye* – for the purification of his mind.

In a sanctified place, one should make a secure sitting place by placing *kuśa* grass, deerskin and then cloth on the ground. It should be neither too high nor too low. Sitting on that, one should practise *yoga* to purify the mind with one-pointed concentration, and control all of his thoughts and activities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Pratiṣṭhāpya* means ‘after establishing’. *Cailājina-kuśottaram* indicates that one should put deerskin on a mat made from *kuśa* and on top of that a seat made of cloth. *Ātmā* means that in order to obtain the capacity to see *brahma* directly, the *yogī*, becoming free from distractions so as to achieve mental purity and extreme subtlety, should concentrate his intelligence on a single point. It is said in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.3.12) “*dṛśyate tv agryayā buddhyā* – one with single-pointed intelligence can see *brahma*.”

VERSES 13-14

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ १३ ॥

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ॥ १४ ॥

*samaṁ kāya-śiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann acalam sthiraḥ
sampreksya nāsikāgram svaṁ diśaś cānavalokayan
praśāntātmā vigata-bhīr brahmacāri-vrate sthitaḥ
manaḥ saṁyamya mac-citto yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ*

samaṁ – straight; *kāya* – his body; *śiraḥ* – head; *grīvam* – and neck; *dhārayan* – holding; *acalam* – unmoving; *sthiraḥ* – steadfast; *sampreksya* – gazing; *nāsika-agram svaṁ* – at the tip of his nose; *diśaḥ* – in the directions; *ca* – and; *anavalokayan* – not glancing; *praśānta-ātmā* – filled with peace; *vigata-bhīḥ* – free from fear; *brahmacāri-vrate* – in a vow of celibacy; *sthitaḥ* – fixed; *manaḥ* – the mind; *saṁyamya* – controlling; *mat-cittaḥ* – thinking of Me; *yuktaḥ* – engaged in; *āsīta* – should sit; *mat-paraḥ* – engrossed in Me.

Keeping one's body, neck and head erect and steady, one should fix one's vision solely on the tip of the nose, not looking elsewhere. Thus, observing strict celibacy, being fearless, peaceful and controlling the mind, one should practise *yoga* by meditating on Me, with one-pointed attention, remaining always devoted to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The middle part of the body is called *kāya*, the torso. *Samam* means 'not crooked', or in other words, 'straight', and *acalam* means 'not moving', or 'steady'. "Keeping the torso straight and steady and restraining the mind from sense objects, one should become dedicated to My *bhakti*, while meditating on My beautiful four-handed Viṣṇu form."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: If the sitting posture is firm and comfortable, it helps in one's spiritual practice. There are sixty-four types of postures such as *svastika*, *mayūra*, *garuḍa* and *padma*.

Patañjali has also said, “*sthira-sukham āsanam* – the position, or *āsana*, should be firm and comfortable.” In *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (2.8) the process of *āsana* has been explained: “Keeping the torso, head and neck in a straight line and controlling all the senses, one should practise *yoga* by absorbing one’s mind in meditating on the Supreme Spirit situated in the heart. Such learned *sādhakas* cross over the terrible ocean of lust and anger in the material world by the boat of Absolute Transcendence, *brahma*.”

One may doubt the need to adopt an *āsana* (posture) for the gross body while remembering Bhagavān within the mind. In this regard, *Vedānta-sūtra* (4.1.7) says, “*āsinaḥ sambhavāt* – one should remember Śrī Hari while sitting in a firm posture, or *āsana*.” Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa explains in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* named *Govinda-bhāṣya*, “It is not possible to concentrate the *citta* (thoughts) without a proper posture, or *āsana*. One’s thoughts are distracted while walking, moving, standing and sleeping, making it impossible to make the heart one-pointed.”

This is also cited in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from 3.28.8 (*śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya*) to 3.28.36 (*hetutvam apy asati*), and also 11.14.32 (*sama āsana āsinaḥ*). These verses are a great aid in helping one understand this topic in more detail.

Also, in the scriptures that delineate the process of *yoga*, it is said “*antar-lakṣyo ’bahir-dṛṣṭiḥ sthira-cittaḥ susaṅgataḥ* – one’s outer perception should be directed within, and one’s mind should be stable due to auspicious association.”

VERSE 15

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ १५ ॥

*yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī niyata-mānasaḥ
śāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṁ mat-saṁsthām adhi-gacchati*

yuñjan – engaging in *yoga*; *evaṁ* – thus according to the previously mentioned process; *sadā* – always; *ātmānam* – the mind; *yogī* – the *yogī*; *niyata-mānasaḥ* – of controlled mind; *śāntim* – peace; *nirvāṇa-*

paramām – complete cessation of material existence; *mat-samsthām* – My form of *nirviśeṣa-brahma*; *adhigacchati* – attains.

Thus, constantly keeping the mind absorbed in Me through *yoga* by following this process, a *yogī* whose mind is controlled can become situated in My splendour and attain peace in the form of *nirvāṇa* (the complete cessation of material existence).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “*Yogīs* whose minds are beyond thoughts of sense objects and who are self-controlled absorb their minds in Me through the practice of *dhyāna-yoga* and attain *nirvāṇa*. Thus becoming firmly situated in My splendour – *nirviśeṣa-brahma* (undifferentiated spirit) – they attain peace and complete emancipation from bondage to the material world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the result of practising *dhyāna-yoga*. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8) states, “*tam eva viditvāti mṛtyumeti* – by the practice of *yoga*, having attained knowledge of Bhagavān (in His impersonal feature), he crosses beyond the cycle of birth and death in the form of material existence.” In this way, the *yogī* attains *nirviśeṣa-brahma* (the featureless Absolute).

VERSE 16

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ १६ ॥

nātyaśnatas tu yogo 'sti na caikāntam anaśnataḥ
na cāti-svapna-śīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna

na – not; *ati-aśnataḥ* – for one who eats excessively; *tu* – however; *yogaḥ* – union with the Paramātmā; *asti* – is; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *eka-antam anaśnataḥ* – for one who completely abstains from eating; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *ati-svapna-śīlasya* – by one who sleeps excessively; *jāgrataḥ* – by one who does not sleep enough; *na* – nor; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

O Arjuna, *yoga* cannot be perfected by one who abstains from eating or who eats excessively, nor by one who sleeps too much or who sleeps too little.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In two verses, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the symptoms of a person who has become steadfast in the practice of *yoga*. *Atyaśnatah* means 'one who eats too much'. It is said in *yoga-śāstra*:

*pūryed āśanenārdham ṛṭṭiyam udakena tu
vāyoḥ sañcaraṇārtham tu caturtham avaśeṣayet*

One should half-fill the belly with food and one-fourth with water, leaving one-fourth empty for the movement of air.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: To attain perfection in *sādhana*, a *yogī* should not practise *yoga* when he is hungry or tired, or when his mind is disturbed. A person should not practise *yoga* when he is too cold, too hot or in a hurry, because in doing so, he will not attain perfection. While chanting *hari-nāma* and following the various limbs of *bhakti*, and specifically while remembering Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, one should carefully observe the above principles. In order to keep the mind concentrated, the *sādhaka* should spend some time chanting the holy names of the Lord in a solitary place and with one-pointed attention. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given instructions like this in *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*.

VERSE 17

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ १७ ॥

*yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā*

yukta – appropriate; *āhāra* – eating; *vihārasya* – for one whose recreation; *yukta* – appropriate; *ceṣṭasya* – whose movements; *karmasu* – in activities; *yukta* – appropriate; *svapna* – and sleeping; *avabodhasya* – whose waking; *yogaḥ* – the process of linking with the Supreme Lord; *bhavati* – becomes; *duḥkha-hā* – a slayer of material miseries.

For a person who is moderate in eating and recreation, balanced in work and regulated in sleeping and wakefulness, his practice of *yoga* destroys all material miseries.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: A person's worldly and transcendental activities will lead to success if he is regulated in eating and recreation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: If a person is not moderate in eating and recreation, he faces various miseries that become an obstacle in his practice (*sādhana*). Similarly, if the mind is flickering and agitated because of various anxieties, it is also not possible for him to attain perfection in his practice (*sādhana*). Therefore, in a balanced manner, the practitioner should eat food that is easily digestible and nourishing. It is imperative for the practitioner of *bhakti* to follow the instructions given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, wherein it is said that only a person who controls the urges of the mind, anger, tongue and genitals can perform *sādhana* properly. Additionally, one should always keep a distance from the six unfavourable activities: over-eating, over-endeavouring for mundane things, talking unnecessarily, having undue attachment to or disregard for rules and regulations, taking bad association and maintaining a desire to follow a false philosophy.

In this verse, the words *yukta-svapnāvabodhasya* mean 'regulated sleep and regulated wakefulness'.

VERSE 18

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ १८ ॥

yadā viniyatam cittam ātmany evāvatiṣṭhate
niṣpṛhaḥ sarva-kāmebhyo yukta ity ucyate tadā

yadā – when; *viniyatam* – is fully controlled; *cittam* – the mind; *ātmani* – in the soul; *eva* – certainly; *avatiṣṭhate* – and stays steadily; *niṣpṛhaḥ* – free from cravings; *sarva-kāmebhyah* – for all sense enjoyment; *yuktaḥ iti* – thus connected in *yoga*; *ucyate* – he is said; *tadā* – then.

When the mind becomes completely controlled and firmly fixed on the self alone, free from the craving for all sense enjoyment, at that time, one is said to be connected in *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “When is one’s *yoga* complete?” In reply to this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *yadā*. “One has attained perfection in *yoga* when he can situate the controlled mind unwaveringly in the self (*ātmā*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: The *yogī* is said to have attained perfection in *yoga* when during his *yoga* practice, his heart becomes steady, free from desires for sense enjoyment and situated within his self alone.

VERSE 19

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
 योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ १९ ॥
yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate soṣamā smṛtā
yogino yata-cittasya yuñjato yogam ātmanah

yathā – as; *dīpaḥ* – a lamp; *nivāta-sthaḥ* – situated in a windless place; *na ṅgate* – does not flicker; *sā* – that; *upamā* – analogy; *smṛtā* – considered; *yoginah* – of a *yogī*; *yata-cittasya* – whose mind is controlled; *yuñjataḥ yogam* – while practising communion; *ātmanah* – in connection with the self.

A lamp in a windless place does not flicker. The *yogī* who restrains his mind through communion with the self should be always aware of this metaphor.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: A lamp does not flicker in a place where there is no breeze. The mind of an accomplished *yogī* is likened to such a lamp.

VERSES 20–25

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
 यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥ २० ॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
 वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१ ॥
 यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
 यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२ ॥
 तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
 स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३ ॥
 सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
 मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४ ॥
 शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
 आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५ ॥

yatroparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā
yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyann ātmani tuśyati
sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam
vetti yatra na caivāyam sthitaś calati tattvataḥ
yam labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nādhikam tataḥ
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate
taṁ vidyād duḥkha-samyoga-viyogaṁ yoga-samjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā
saṅkalpa-prabhavān kāmāns tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ
manasaivendriya-grāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ
śanaiḥ śanair uparamed buddhyā dhṛti-grḥītayā
ātma-saṁstham manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet

yatra – when; *uparamate* – becomes detached from material enjoyment; *cittam* – the mind; *niruddham* – being controlled; *yoga-sevayā* – through the practice of *yoga*; *yatra* – when; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *ātmanā* – through the mind; *ātmānam* – the soul; *paśyan* – incessantly beholding; *ātmani* – in the soul; *tuśyati* – one becomes satisfied; *sukham* – happiness; *ātyantikam* – limitless (and eternal); *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *buddhi-grāhyam* – perceived through the intelligence; *atīndriyam* – transcendental to the senses; *vetti* – one understands; *yatra* – in such a stage; *na* – never; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *ayam* – this (*yogī*); *sthitaḥ* – being so situated;

calati – falls; *tattvataḥ* – from his *svarūpa*; *yam* – which; *labdhvā* – having obtained; *ca* – and; *aparam* – other; *lābham* – gain; *manyate* – he considers; *na* – no; *adhikam* – greater; *tataḥ* – than that; *yasmin* – in which; *sthitaḥ* – being situated; *na* – not; *duḥkhena* – suffering; *guruṇā* – by the greatest (terrible); *api* – even; *vicālyate* – he is overcome, or deviated; *tam* – that; *vidyāt* – one should understand; *duḥkha-sāmyoga* – from association with suffering; *viyogam* – which dissociates one; *yoga-samjñitam* – in the name of *yoga*; *saḥ* – that; *niścayena* – with determination (according to the words of *sādhu* and *sāstra*); *yoktavyaḥ* – should be practised; *yogaḥ* – *yoga*; *anirviṇṇa-cetasā* – and by undeviating consciousness; *saṅkalpa-prabhavān* – born of desire; *kāmān* – desires; *tyaktvā* – having abandoned; *sarvān* – all; *aśeṣataḥ* – completely; *manasā* – through the mind; *eva* – certainly; *indriya-grāmam* – the group of senses; *vinīyamya* – regulating; *samantataḥ* – on all sides; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ* – very gradually; *uparamet* – one should detach; *buddhyā* – through intelligence; *dṛṭi-grṛhitayā* – achieved through conviction; *ātma-saṁstham* – situated in the *ātma*; *manaḥ* – the mind; *kṛtvā* – having fixed (the mind); *na kiñcit* – of nothing else; *api* – at all; *cintayet* – one should think.

In that state of *yoga* called *samādhi*, the *yogī*'s mind is controlled by the practice of *yoga*. He becomes detached from the sense objects and is satisfied within as he gradually perceives the self through the medium of the purified mind. In that state, the *yogī* experiences eternal bliss through his pure intelligence, which is transcendental to the realm of the senses. Being thus established, he never deviates from his intrinsic form, and upon attaining that bliss of the self, he considers there to be no greater acquisition. When situated on that platform, he does not become perturbed even by the greatest of miseries. Know that state to be devoid of any contact with the duality of mundane happiness and misery. This *yoga* should be performed with full patience of mind, having completely given up all whimsical desires and, with the mind controlling the senses in all directions, one should follow with determination the instructions of the scriptures and the saintly personalities. One should make his intelligence resolute and determined and gradually become detached by establishing the mind in the self and by not thinking of anything else.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *yoga* in the verse *nātyaśnatas tu yogo 'sti* (*Gītā* 6.16) and in other verses means *samādhi*. This *samādhi* is of two types, namely *samprajñāta* – in which one is conscious of the difference between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower, and *asamprajñāta* – in which no such difference is perceived. *Samprajñāta* has various divisions such as logical argument (*savitarka*) and philosophical research (*savicāra*). What is spontaneous, or *asamprajñāta-samādhi-yoga*? To answer this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking three-and-a-half verses beginning here with the word *yatroparamate*.

When one attains *samādhi*, the heart, or mind (*citta*), becomes fully detached from sense objects, having no contact with them because one has achieved self-restraint (*niruddha*). This is confirmed in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*: “*yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ* – when the tendency of the mind and heart (*citta-vṛtti*) is fully restrained from sense enjoyment and absorbed in the blissful realization of the self and Paramātmā, it is called *yoga*.”

The qualified *yogī* realizes Paramātmā by his purified mind, and he remains satisfied with that alone. This is his blissful state, *samādhi*, which is attained by an intellect that has become qualified to experience the self and Paramātmā. That is because that state is beyond the senses and beyond the happiness attained by the contact of the senses with the sense objects. Wherever this *yogī* lives, he does not deviate from the nature of his soul. Therefore, after attaining this blissful state, he considers the pursuit of anything else to be insignificant. Even if he has contact with misery, he does not experience it. This is *yoga*, and only this *yoga*, can be called *samādhi*. A *yogī* should not lament, “After so long I still have not attained perfection, so for what purpose did I undergo all this pain?” Rather, within his mind, he should maintain firm patience. “Whether perfection comes in this life or in the next, I will continue to endeavour. Why should I become impatient?”

In this regard, Śrī Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkarācārya's *parama-gurudeva*, has given the example of vowing to dry up the ocean by taking out a drop at a time with the tip of a piece of *kuśa* grass. Similarly, by untiring, determined endeavour, a person can control the mind.

There is a story to exemplify this. Once a bird laid her eggs on the shore of an ocean, but the waves carried the eggs away. The bird resolved to dry up the ocean, and with her beak she began to remove water, drop by drop. Other birds came to convince her that her endeavour was futile, but she was not deterred. By chance, Śrī Nārada came to that place and he also tried to convince the bird to stop, but the bird took a vow in his presence: “I will not rest until I dry up the ocean, whether it is in this life or in the next.” Merciful Nārada then sent Garuḍa to help her. When Garuḍa heard that the ocean had carried away the eggs of someone in his own caste, he began to dry up the ocean by fanning it with his wings. The terrified ocean immediately returned the eggs to the bird.

Similarly, it is certain that when a person begins the process of *yoga*, *jñāna* or *bhakti* with faith in such scriptural statements, Śrī Bhagavān will definitely bless his enthusiastic endeavour.

In the two verses beginning with the word *sankalpa*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the initial and ultimate activities of a person engaged in such *yoga*. Abandoning all material desires (*Gītā* 6.24) is the initial act, and not worrying about anything at all, as spoken in the *Gītā* (6.25), is the final act.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Words cannot describe the happiness that manifests in the *yogī*'s pure heart when he attains perfection in *yoga*, and his heart becomes cleansed by *samādhi*. This can only be realized when one's mind is purified.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “In this way, by the practice of *yoga*, the mind gradually becomes detached from sense enjoyment and free from being controlled by mundane objects. At that time, the stage of *samādhi* manifests. In that state, the mind becomes qualified to realize and experience Paramātmā, thus it realizes the happiness born from that union. Patañjali Muni's philosophical literature is the only bona fide literature on *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Because commentators do not understand its factual meaning, they say that, according to those who propound Vedānta, the blissful conscious state of the self is actual liberation. This is illogical because if one experiences bliss in the *kaivalya* stage of impersonal monism, there is duality: the experience

itself and the person experiencing it. Therefore *kaivalya* (oneness) is not possible at all. But these commentators do not understand that Patañjali Muni never stated this. In his concluding verse he has said:

*puruṣārtha-śūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ
kaivalyaṁ svarūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti*

Yoga-sūtra (3.34)

The function of the real self (*cit-dharma*) awakens when one is free from the four goals of human life – religiosity (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) – and when the modes of material nature do not cause any worldly disturbance. This state is called *kaivalya* (oneness). In this state one becomes situated in one's own *svarūpa*. It is then called *citi-śakti*.

“If we deeply deliberate on this, it becomes clear that Patañjali Muni does not accept that the functions of the self are annihilated in its ultimate state; rather, he accepts that at that stage no transformation or perversion of its actual function takes place. *Citi-śakti* means ‘spiritual nature’. When there are no perverse transformations in the proper functioning of the self, then the true nature of the self awakens. When that state of the self is in contact with the material energy, it is called *ātma-guṇa-vikāra*, the transformation of the constitutional function of one's self due to contact with material nature. If these perverse transformations are removed, then bliss, which is an intrinsic characteristic of the *ātmā*, will awaken. This is the opinion of Patañjali.

“*Ānanda* awakens when one is free from any perversion caused by the material modes of nature, and it is blissful in nature. It is the supreme goal of *yoga*. Later, it will be explained that this and nothing else is called *bhakti*.

“*Samādhi* is of two types: *samprajñāta* (where one is conscious of the difference between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower) and *asamprajñāta* (where this knowledge is absent). *Samprajñāta-samādhi* has many divisions such as *savitarka* (argument) and *savicarana* (philosophical research). But *asamprajñāta-samādhi* is of one type only. In the state of *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, one attains eternal bliss, which is devoid of any contact of the senses with their sense objects through the intelligence, which has become qualified

to experience the bliss of the true self. The mind of the *yogī* does not deviate from this state of realizing eternal bliss within the self. Without attaining this state, the *jīva* can never achieve eternal auspiciousness merely by the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. This is because if the *yogī* is deprived of this blissful state, then the secondary results of this practice in the form of mystic powers and so on attract his mind, and he will deviate from his topmost objective: the blissful state of *samādhi*. Due to such obstacles, one fears many inauspicious occurrences in the practice of this *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, such as degradation and deviation. In *bhakti-yoga*, however, there is no such danger. This will be explained later on.

“The *yogī* does not consider any other bliss to be superior to the bliss achieved in *samādhi*. In other words, while maintaining his life, he experiences temporary happiness through the senses’ contact with their sense objects, but he considers this to be completely insignificant. Even at the time of death, while tolerating the extreme pain of an accident or bodily miseries, he enjoys the bliss of *samādhi*, which is the only object of his search. Being unmoved by all these pains, he still does not give up his supremely blissful state. He understands that these miseries will not stay for long; they will disappear soon enough. If there is a delay or any obstacle in achieving the result of *yoga*, he does not become frustrated and give up his practice. With great endeavour, he continues his *yoga* practice until he attains the result.

“The first duty of one on the path of *yoga* is to follow *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and so on and to completely abandon desires that are born from an attraction to attaining mystic *siddhis*. In addition, with the help of the purified mind, the *yogī* should control his senses. He should gradually learn renunciation with intelligence acquired from following the limb of *yoga* called *dhāraṇā* (concentration of the mind). This renunciation is called *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses from the sense objects). He should achieve *ātma-samādhi* (fixed concentration on the self) by completely controlling his mind through the processes of *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā* and *pratyāhāra*. In the final state, his mind should be devoid of any mundane thoughts, and while wondering how to maintain his body, he should not become attached to it. This is the ultimate duty of the *yogī*.”

VERSE 26

यतो यतो निश्चलति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ २६ ॥

yato yato niścalati manaś cañcalam asthiram
tatas tato niyamya itad ātmany eva vaśam nayet

yataḥ yataḥ – to whichever; *niścalati* – wanders (to the objects of sense enjoyment); *manaḥ* – mind; *cañcalam* – the restless; *asthiram* – unsteady; *tataḥ tataḥ* – from that; *niyamya* – regulating; *etat* – this; *ātmani* – within the soul; *eva* – certainly; *vaśam* – controlled (mind); *nayet* – one should lead.

From whichever direction the restless and unsteady mind wanders to its various sense objects, it should be restrained and brought back firmly within the self alone.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: If, due to bad past impressions accumulated from previous births, the mind of the *yogī* becomes unsteady by contact with the material mode of passion, or *rajo-guṇa*, then he should again practise *yoga*. Śrī Bhagavān is explaining this by speaking the verse beginning with the words *yato yataḥ*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: When the mind of the practitioner becomes restless and wanders toward sense objects, he should immediately restrain it and fix it in the self alone.

VERSE 27

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ २७ ॥

praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ yoginaṁ sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam

praśānta-manasaṁ – great peace of mind; *hi* – certainly; *enam yoginam* – that *yogī*; *sukham* – bliss (in the form of self-realization); *uttamam* – supreme; *upaiti* – he achieves; *śānta-rajasaṁ* – devoid of the material mode of passion; *brahma-bhūtam* – realization of *brahma*; *akalmaṣam* – free from attachment and aversion.

Such a peaceful *yogī*, who sees everything in connection with the Supreme and who is free from dualities such as attachment, aversion and the mode of passion, attains supreme bliss in the form of self-realization.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After overcoming all impediments by practice, a *yogī* attains the bliss of *samādhi* as previously described.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The bliss of *samādhi* itself manifests for the *yogī*.

VERSE 28

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ २८ ॥

yuñjann evaṁ sadātmanam yogī vigata-kalmaṣaḥ
sukhena brahma-saṁsparśam atyantam sukham aśnute

yuñjan – continuously engaging in *yoga* with realization; *evaṁ* – thus; *sadā* – always; *ātmanam* – the mind; *yogī* – the transcendentalist; *vigata-kalmaṣaḥ* – being freed from sins; *sukhena* – easily; *brahma-saṁsparśam* – in the form of full realization of *brahma*; *atyantam* – supreme; *sukham* – bliss; *aśnute* – attains.

In this way, by continuous practice, a sinless *yogī* gradually makes the self steady in *yoga* and easily attains supreme bliss in the form of *brahma* realization, becoming liberated from material existence even while in the present body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: At that time, such *yogīs* become perfect. The words *sukham aśnute* mean that they become liberated in this life (*jīvan-mukta*).

VERSE 29

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ २९ ॥

*sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
īkṣate yoga-yuktātmā sarvatra sama-darśanaḥ*

sarva-bhūta – in all living beings; *stham* – situated; *ātmānam* – Supersoul; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all living beings; *ca* – and; *ātmani* – in the Supersoul; *īkṣate* – sees; *yoga-yukta-ātmā* – a person connected in *yoga*; *sarvatra* – everywhere; *sama-darśanaḥ* – equal vision.

He who is absorbed in *yoga* perceives all beings with equal vision, sees the Self in all beings, and sees all beings situated in the Self.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with the words *sarva-bhūta-stham ātmānam*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the characteristics of a person who has realized *brahma* and who has become liberated in this life. He directly experiences the presence of the Supersoul in all living entities, understanding that He is the substratum of all living entities. The words *yoga-yuktātmā* refer to a person who realizes the Supreme Lord in all beings, both moving and non-moving, due to his mind being absorbed in *brahma*. In other words, he experiences *brahma* everywhere.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Arjuna is asking, ‘What type of bliss comes from contact with *brahma*?’ Śrī Bhagavān anticipates this question and explains briefly that the *yogī* who has attained *samādhi* behaves in two ways: (1) according to his *bhāva* (mood) and (2) according to his activity. His *bhāva* is such that he sees Paramātmā in all *jīvas* and all *jīvas* in Paramātmā. His activities reflect such equal vision everywhere. In the next two verses, this *bhāva* is explained, and in the verse after that, those actions are explained.”

VERSE 30

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥३०॥

*yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāham na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati*

yaḥ – who; *mām* – Me; *paśyati* – sees; *sarvatra* – everywhere (in all living entities); *sarvam* – everything; *ca* – and; *mayi* – in Me; *paśyati* – sees; *tasya* – for him; *aham* – I; *na praṇaśyāmi* – am never out of his sight; *saḥ* – he; *ca* – and; *me* – to Me; *na praṇaśyati* – he is never out of My sight.

For a person who sees Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me, I am never out of his vision and he is never out Mine.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with the words *yo mām*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the result of the *yogī*'s direct experience. “For him, I, *brahma*, am never out of sight, because for such a *yogī*, direct experience of Me becomes eternal. The *yogī* who worships Me never falls down.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is never out of sight for *sādhakas* who have direct experience of Him, and such *sādhakas* are also never out of His vision. Due to their constant connection with each other, the worshipper never falls.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I indeed belong to those who see Me everywhere and who see all entities in Me. When My devotee surpasses the stage of *śānta-rati* (neutral attachment), a special type of loving relationship arises between us, in which we both feel, ‘I am his and he is Mine.’ After this relationship has developed, I never bestow upon him the complete destruction of dry impersonal liberation. He can no longer become lost because he has become My servant and has attained the eternal function of his self.”

VERSE 31

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१ ॥

sarva-bhūta-sthitam yo mām bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi sa yogī mayi vartate

sarva-bhūta-sthitam – as I am situated in all beings; *yaḥ* – who; *mām* – Me; *bhajati* – worships; *ekatvam* – [of the intelligence] in unity; *āsthitaḥ* – taking

shelter; *sarvathā* – in all circumstances; *vartamānaḥ* – remains; *api* – even; *sah* – that; *yogī* – transcendentalist; *mayi* – in Me; *vartate* – remains.

That *yogī* who worships Me, in whom all beings take shelter, with non-dual intelligence – being free from the comprehension of dualities, both during the stage of practice (*sādhana*) and the stage of perfection (*siddha*) – dwells exclusively in Me in all circumstances.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Even before he has directly realized Me, the *yogī* who worships Me as the all-pervading Supersoul is not compelled to follow all the rules and regulations of *sādhana*. Paramātmā is the cause of everything and is the Supreme Absolute Reality without a second. He who takes shelter of this realization and engages in *bhajana* of Me by hearing about Me, remembering Me and so on is certainly situated in Me in all respects and under all conditions. He is not in the material world, whether he performs action as prescribed in the scriptures or not.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The various living entities have different types of bodies, which are classified as moving and non-moving. The living entities within these bodies are also individual. Consequently, there are unlimited living entities. In *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) it is said:

*bālāgra-sata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānanyāya kalpate*

Although the living entity is situated in the inert body, he is a subtle and non-material reality. One may divide the tip of a hair into one hundred parts and further divide one of those parts into another hundred, yet the living entity is even smaller and more subtle than that.

The *jīva*, being extremely subtle, is a non-material entity and is capable of acquiring the nature of *ānanyā*. *Anta* means ‘death’, and freedom from death is called *ānanyā*, or ‘the state of liberation’. Paramātmā, although one, dwells within the hearts of the unlimited *jīvas* as a witness. This is also stated in the *Smṛtis*:

*eka eva paro viṣṇuḥ sarva-vyāpī na saṁśayaḥ
aiśvaryaḍ rūpam ekaṁ ca sūrya-vat bahudhēyate*

The all-pervading Śrī Viṣṇu is one, and by the influence of His opulence (*aiśvarya*) He appears in various forms, just as the one sun appears to be in many places at the same time.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “During the *yogī*’s stage of practice, it is recommended that he meditate on the four-handed form of Śrī Viṣṇu (Īśvara). This meditation culminates in realization of My *sac-cid-ānanda* form of Śyāmasundara in a state of uninterrupted trance. One becomes free from the misconception of perceived dualities between Me and the Paramātmā, and the *yogī* becomes intently focused upon Me (Śyāmasundara) in the perfected stage. The *yogīs* who worship Me, who am all-pervading, perform *bhakti* to Me by the processes of hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*). They always dwell in Me even when performing prescribed duties in the stage of *karma*, in performing *jñāna* in the period of deliberation (*jñāna*) and in *samādhi* in the period of *yoga*.” This means they attain the liberation of always being situated near Kṛṣṇa (*sāmīpya-mokṣa*). Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra, which gives instructions on *yoga*, states:

*dik-kālādy-anavacchinne kṛṣṇe ceto vidhāya ca
tan-mayo bhavati kṣipraṁ jīvo brahmaṇi yojayet*

When the living entity fixes his mind on the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond the bounds of material time and space, and becomes absorbed in Him, he experiences the ecstatic bliss of transcendental association with Him.

“Therefore, devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-bhakti*) is certainly the supreme state of *yoga-samādhi*.”

VERSE 32

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥३२॥

*ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo 'rjuna
sukhaṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ*

ātma-upamyena – similar to himself; *sarvatra* – in all beings; *samam* – equally; *paśyati* – sees; *yaḥ* – who; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *sukham* – in happiness; *vā* – or; *yadi vā* – whether; *duḥkham* – in distress; *saḥ* – that; *yogī* – *yogī*, or transcendentalist; *paramaḥ* – the best; *mataḥ* – is considered (by Me).

O Arjuna, he who, through self-realization, sees all living entities to be like himself and who considers their pleasure and pain to be his own is the best *yogī*. That is My opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It has been said that in the stage of practice, *yogīs* are equally disposed towards all beings. Here, this verse beginning with *ātmaupamyena* specifically describes the primary characteristic of their equanimity. Those equipoised *yogīs* appreciate that just as they themselves like happiness and dislike pain, others similarly experience happiness and pain. They therefore see everything equally and are the ever well-wishers of everyone. “Such *yogīs* are the topmost. This is My opinion.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Even during the stage of practice, *yogīs* are endowed with equanimity. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am explaining how a *yogī* behaves. Please listen. Only he who has equal vision towards everyone is considered the topmost *yogī*. The word *sama-dṛṣṭi* (equal vision) means that in his dealings with others, the *yogī* sees all living entities to be like him and considers the happiness and pain of other living entities as his own. Therefore, he is always the well-wisher of all living entities, and he acts accordingly for their eternal benefit. This is called *sama-darśana*.”

VERSE 33

अर्जुन उवाच—

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥३३॥

arjuna uvāca –

*yo 'yam yogas tvayā proktaḥ sām्यena madhusūdana
etasyāham na paśyāmi cañcalatvāt sthitim sthirām*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *yaḥ* – which; *ayam yogaḥ* – this process of yoga; *tvayā* – by You; *proktaḥ* – was spoken; *sāmyena* – by (seeing) equally (in all circumstances); *madhusūdana* – O Madhusūdana; *etasya* – of that (process); *aham* – I; *na paśyāmi* – am unable to understand; *cañcalatvāt* – on account of the flickering nature (of the mind); *sthitim* – situation; *sthirām* – clear.

Arjuna said: O Madhusūdana, in the yoga You have just described, which is based on equanimity towards everyone, everywhere, I cannot see any way to steady the mind due to its restless nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Thinking that the equipoised symptoms described by Śrī Bhagavān are difficult to attain, Arjuna speaks this verse beginning with the words *yo 'yam*. “This yoga depends on being equipoised in all situations, and I do not see how one can achieve success in it, because its practice cannot always be maintained. The nature of the mind is to flicker, so one can only practise this yoga for two or three days. Additionally, You have explained equanimity by saying that one should see the happiness and misery of all people in the world as one’s own. This vision may be possible toward those who are one’s relatives or those who are neutral, but such an attitude is impossible to maintain towards one’s enemies or those who are envious and critical. It is impossible for me to see with completely equal vision the happiness and pain of me, Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana. Although by proper deliberation, one can have equal vision of the *jīvātmā*, Paramātmā, one’s life-air and senses, one’s enemies and all embodied *jīvas*, this vision is difficult to maintain for more than two or three days, because the very powerful and flickering mind cannot be restrained merely by discrimination. Rather, it is seen that a mind that is attached to sense enjoyment will ultimately overpower one’s discrimination.”

VERSE 34

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ३४ ॥

cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasyāhaṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva suduṣkaram

cañcalam – restless; *hi* – because; *manaḥ* – the mind; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *pramāthi* – agitating (the intelligence, body and senses); *balavat* – powerful; *dr̥ḍham* – obstinate; *tasya* – of it; *aham* – I; *nigraham* – subjugation; *manye* – think; *vāyoḥ* – of the wind; *iva* – like; *suduṣkaram* – very hard to do.

O Kṛṣṇa, because the mind is by nature restless, powerful, obstinate and capable of completely overpowering the intelligence, body and senses, it seems as difficult to control as the wind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.3.3), it is said, “*ātmānam rathinam viddhi śarīraṁ ratham eva ca* – know the soul to be the passenger and the body to be the chariot.”

It is said in the Śrutis that learned persons compare the body to a chariot, the senses to furious horses, the mind to the controller of the senses (the reins), the sense objects (sound, form, taste, touch and smell) to the pathways, and the intelligence to the driver. It is understood from this statement that the intelligence controls the mind, but Arjuna refutes this by saying that the powerful mind can even overpower the intelligence. One may question how that can be. He replies, “Just as a powerful disease may not be affected by the medicine that has the potency to cure it, similarly the mind, which is very powerful by nature, does not always accept intelligence endowed with discrimination.” Moreover, he says that the mind is very obstinate. Just as a small needle cannot possibly pierce iron, similarly, it is not possible for even subtle intelligence to pierce the mind. The mind is like the wind. Just as it is difficult to control the mighty wind blowing in the sky, it is difficult to control the mind by the process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, through breath restraint.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A story from the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* illustrates how the process of serving Bhagavān can simply and naturally control the most powerful and flickering mind.

Once there was a wealthy *brāhmaṇa* who lived with his son and family members in the land of Avanti. Although he was rich, he was extremely miserly, and he would not spend even a penny for the pleasure of his family or community; rather, he was always engaged in

accumulating wealth. When his children grew up, they became very perturbed by his behaviour, and his neighbours, family members and others in the community also became opposed to him. Because he did not pay his taxes, even the royal servants opposed him. One day, due to ill fortune, his house burned down, and his family and community members rejected him.

However, due to some good impressions from previous births and the influence of the association of saintly persons, he accepted the dress of one in the renounced order, a *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsī*. On the instruction of his bona fide spiritual master, he engaged in devotion to the Supreme Lord and began to see with equal vision friends and enemies, happiness and misery, good and bad, and himself and others. He remained satisfied even when the people from his own village mistreated him while he was begging. They would call him an impostor and a cheater, and they would throw stool and urine into his begging bowl instead of foodstuffs. Yet with an undisturbed mind, he always meditated on Bhagavān, and finally he attained eternal service to Bhagavān Mukunda.

VERSE 35

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ३५ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca -

*asamśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāsena tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *asamśayam* – without doubt; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed Arjuna; *manaḥ* – the mind; *durnigraham* – is hard to control; *calam* – unsteady; *abhyāsena* – by practice; *tu* – but; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *vairāgyeṇa* – by renunciation; *ca* – and; *grhyate* – it can be controlled.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O mighty-armed son of Kuntī, undoubtedly the mind is restless and most difficult to control, but by constant practice and renunciation, it can be checked.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: By speaking this verse beginning with the word *asamśayam*, Śrī Bhagavān accepts Arjuna's statement and allays his doubt. "What you have said is true. Still, even a chronic disease can certainly be cured if one regularly takes medicine according to the prescription of an expert physician, even though the cure may take some time. In the same way, the uncontrollable mind can be subdued by the regular practice of *yoga* in accordance with the instructions of a bona fide *guru*, by constantly cultivating meditation on Parameśvara (*dhyāna-yoga*) and by renunciation."

This is also stated in *Pātañjala-sūtra* (12): "*abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyām tan-nirodhaḥ* – by constant practice and true renunciation the tendencies of the mind and heart (*citta*) can be controlled."

"O Mahā-bāho (mighty-armed one), you have not only defeated many great heroes in battle, but you have also pleased Lord Śiva, who carries the trident. But what is the use of all this? O crest jewel of all great heroes, your name, Mahā-bāhuḥ, will only be appropriate if you can conquer the greatest hero, the mind, with the weapon of *yoga*. O son of Kuntī, have no fear in this regard. You are the son of My father's sister, and therefore, it is My duty to help you."

VERSE 36

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६ ॥

asamīyatātmanā yogo duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ
vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyo 'vāptum upāyataḥ

asamīyata-ātmanā – by one whose mind is uncontrolled; *yogaḥ* – connection with the Supreme Lord; *duṣprāpaḥ* – is difficult to achieve; *iti* – that; *me* – My; *matiḥ* – opinion; *vaśya-ātmanā* – by one whose mind is disciplined; *tu* – however; *yatatā* – and who strives; *śakyaḥ* – achievable; *avāptum* – to obtain; *upāyataḥ* – the (above-mentioned) means.

It is very difficult for one whose mind is not controlled to achieve self-realization through this *yoga* system. However, a person who has brought his mind under control and who strives by the proper

means of constant practice and renunciation can attain perfection in *yoga*. This is My opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is giving instruction on the subject of *yoga*. One who has not controlled his mind by constant practice (*abhyāsa*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*) does not become perfect in *yoga*. However, if one regulates his mind by practice and renunciation and constantly engages in *sādhana* over a prolonged period of time, he can attain *yoga* or *samādhi*, which is characterized by a controlled mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “One who does not endeavour to control his mind by renunciation (*vairāgya*) and constant practice (*abhyāsa*) can never become perfect in the previously mentioned system of *yoga*. However, he who endeavours to control the mind by adopting the proper means can definitely attain perfection in *yoga*. When I say, ‘by the proper means’, I imply that he who tries to concentrate his mind by performing *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and who practises meditating on Me, which is a limb of this *yoga* system, simultaneously accepting with detachment the sense objects required for his maintenance, gradually attains perfection in *yoga*.”

VERSE 37

अर्जुन उवाच—

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ ३७ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

ayatih śraddhayopeto yogāc calita-mānasah

aprāpya yoga-samsiddhim kām gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *ayatih* – a person with an uncontrolled mind; *śraddhayā* – with faith; *upetaḥ* – engaged (in *yoga*); *yogāt* – from the practice of *yoga*; *calita-mānasah* – upon the mind becoming deviated; *aprāpya* – without attaining; *yoga-samsiddhim* – complete perfection in

yoga; *kām* – to which?; *gatim* – destination; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *gacchati* – does he go.

Arjuna asked: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the destination of one who begins the *yoga* process with faith but later, due to an uncontrolled mind, falls from the path of *yoga* practice and thus fails to attain perfection?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna raises the question, “You said that through disciplined practice and renunciation, those who are persistent attain perfection in *yoga*, but what is the destination of one in whom these three things – namely discipline, renunciation and perseverance – are absent?”

He who is faithful because of theistic intelligence based on *yoga* scriptures practises *yoga* without hypocrisy. However, due to a lack of proper practice and detachment, his mind may deviate from *yoga* and become absorbed in sense objects. He does not fully perfect his *yoga*, but he does make some progress. What is the destination of such a *yogī*, who has gone beyond the stage of desiring to practise *yoga* (*yoga-āruṛukṣu*) and has situated himself on the first step of *yoga*?

VERSE 38

कच्चिनोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

kaccin nobhaya-vibhraṣṭaś chinnābhram iva naśyati
apraṭiṣṭho mahā-bāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi

kaccit – whether?; *na ubhaya-vibhraṣṭaḥ* – unsuccessful in both (*karma* and *yoga*); *chinna-abhram* – a riven cloud; *iva* – like; *naśyati* – he perishes; *apraṭiṣṭhaḥ* – without shelter; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa; *vimūḍhaḥ* – utterly baffled; *brahmaṇaḥ* – of spiritual realization; *pathi* – on the path.

O mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa, if a person falls from the processes of both *karma* and *yoga* and becomes deviated from the path of

attaining spiritual realization, does he not perish like a riven cloud, with no shelter anywhere?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Arjuna is raising a question: “What happens to a person who has deviated from the paths of *karma* and *yoga*?” In other words, “What happens to a person who has given up the path of *karma* and has also not attained perfection in the path of *yoga*? Does that *yogī* not face the same fate as a riven cloud, which has separated from a cloud mass and which dissolves into thin air, because it remains separate from other clouds? When a *yogī* begins the path of *yoga*, he has the desire to give up sense enjoyment, but at the same time, because his detachment is not complete, the desire to enjoy his senses remains within him. This is a very difficult situation. Since he has abandoned the path of *karma*, which is the means to enter the heavenly planets, the next world is lost, and by not attaining perfection in *yoga*, which is the means for liberation, he also fails to achieve that. From this it appears that he has lost both worlds. That is why I am asking You whether a person who has deviated from the practice of attaining spiritual realization becomes bereft of all shelter. Is he lost or not?”

VERSE 39

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

etan me saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ
tvad-anyaḥ saṁśayasyāsyā chettā na hy upapadyate

etat – this; *me saṁśayam* – my doubt; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *chettum* – to dispel; *arhasi* – You are able; *aśeṣataḥ* – completely; *tvad-anyaḥ* – other than Yourself; *saṁśayasya asya* – of this doubt; *chettā* – a remover; *na* – not; *hi* – certainly; *upapadyate* – to be found.

O Kṛṣṇa, this is my doubt and You are most capable of dispelling it completely. Other than You, no one else can possibly remove this doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In this verse, Arjuna says, “O Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Controller of all controllers, the Supreme Cause of all causes, and You are omniscient. No demigod or saint is omniscient and all-powerful like You. Therefore, other than You, there is nobody who can dispel my doubt.”

VERSE 40

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥४०॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate

na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścīd durgatim tāta gacchati

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Personality of Godhead said; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā (Arjuna); *na* – neither; *eva* – certainly; *iha* – in this world; *na* – nor; *amutra* – in the next; *vināśaḥ* – destruction; *tasya* – for that person; *vidyate* – there is; *na* – not; *hi* – because; *kalyāṇa-kṛt* – one who performs auspicious acts; *kaścīd* – someone; *durgatim* – to an unfavourable destination; *tāta* – dear one, son; *gacchati* – goes.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, such an unsuccessful *yogī* does not perish either in this world or the next because, My dear friend, a person who is engaged in auspicious acts never attains an unfavourable destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this world as well as in the next, such an unsuccessful *yogī* engages in *yoga*, which leads to auspiciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In this verse, by addressing Arjuna as Pārtha, Śrī Bhagavān is instructing him in a very loving manner, considering him very dear. By using the word *tāta*, which literally means ‘son’, He demonstrates His affection for Arjuna. A father expands himself in the form of his son, and therefore the son is called *tat*. When the suffix *ana* is applied to the original word *tat*, it

becomes *tāta*. Śrī gurudeva also affectionately calls his disciple, who is like his son, *tāta*. Here, Śrī Bhagavān says that those who engage in *yoga* with faith never arrive at a degraded destination.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Pārtha, one who engages in the practice of *yoga* never meets destruction, either now or in the future. The performer of that *yoga*, which leads to eternal good, can never be subject to an evil fate. Basically, all of humanity is divided into two categories: righteous (regulated) and unrighteous (unregulated). The behaviour of unregulated people is always like that of animals, whether they are cultured or uncultured, dull or intelligent, weak or strong. There is no possibility of any good coming from their activities.

“The righteous (regulated) can be divided into three categories: *karmī*, *jñānī* and *bhakta*. *Karmīs* are further divided into two divisions: *sakāma-karmī* and *niṣkāma-karmī*. The *sakāma-karmīs* hanker for petty kinds of happiness, or temporary pleasures. Although they attain heavenly planets and worldly progress, all their pleasure is temporary. Therefore, that which is called *kalyāṇa* (auspiciousness for the *jīvas*) is unknown to them. The state of auspiciousness for the *jīvas* is to become free from the grip of worldliness and to attain eternal bliss. Therefore, any process that does not lead to this eternal bliss is futile. Only when the purpose of achieving this eternal happiness is combined with *karma-kāṇḍa* activities can such activities be called *karma-yoga*. First, the heart is purified by such *karma-yoga*, and then one attains *jñāna*. After that, one engages in *dhyāna-yoga* (meditation) and then finally the zenith of all processes, the path of *bhakti-yoga*, is attained. Otherwise, the purport of ‘*yoga*’ is ‘among such *yogīs*, those who worship Me with *bhakti* are My devotees and are the best of *sādhakas*.’

“However, no matter how much austerity one may perform, one’s goal is only sense pleasure and nothing else. The demons, after achieving the results of their austerities, simply enjoy their senses. On the other hand, when that person performs his prescribed duties beyond the boundaries of the desire for sense enjoyment, he enters *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, which aims at the eternal good of the *jīva*. A *dhyāna-yogī* or a *jñāna-yogī* who is firmly situated on the path of

niṣkāma-karma-yoga, or worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruits of his work, often naturally performs actions for the eternal good of all beings.

“In every respect an *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* surpasses whatever results a *jīva* attains by performing his prescribed duty with a desire for the fruits.”

VERSE 41

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
 शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥
prāpya puṇya-kṛtām lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate

prāpya – having attained; *puṇya-kṛtām* – of the pious; *lokān* – the planets; *uṣitvā* – after dwelling; *śāśvatīḥ* – for a very long time; *samāḥ* – years; *śucīnām* – of the pure (*brāhmaṇas*); *śrīmatām* – of the wealthy; *gehe* – in the home; *yoga-bhraṣṭaḥ* – one deviated from the path of *yoga*; *abhijāyate* – he takes birth.

A person who deviates from the path of *yoga* after practising it for only a short time attains the planets of the pious, and after enjoying there for many years, he takes birth in a virtuous and wealthy family.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: What is the destination of persons who deviate from the path of *yoga*? In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān says that they reside on the planets that are attained by pious persons who perform *yajñas* such as the *aśvamedha-yajña*. Since both enjoyment and liberation are the results of *yoga*, the *yogīs* who have not yet matured in their practice and who have fallen because of a desire to enjoy only attain enjoyment. On the other hand, since it is impossible for matured *yogīs* to desire enjoyment, they certainly attain liberation. If, by the will of providence, a mature *yogī* does develop a desire to enjoy, he also can attain enjoyment like Kardama and Saubhari Ṛṣis.

The word *śuci* means ‘those who are of good character and conduct’, and *śrī* means ‘wealthy business people or royalty’. A fallen *yogī* takes

birth only in the houses of such families after residing in the heavenly realm (Svarga) and other higher planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *yogīs* who have fallen from the path of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* can be divided into two categories. In the first category are those who have fallen after following the process of *yoga* for a short time. According to the verse *nehābhikrama-nāśo 'sti* (*Gītā* 2.40), such *yogīs* do not attain lower destinations; rather, they enjoy happiness on the higher planets attained by pious persons who perform *yajñas* such as the *aśvamedha-yajña*. They then take birth in the homes of qualified *brāhmaṇas* or rich men who are engaged in religious activities. Both of these situations are favourable for their continued practice of *yoga*.

In the second category are those who have practised *yoga* for a long time and whose practice has almost matured. By the will of providence, however, they have developed a desire to enjoy sense gratification in this life. In their next life some of them achieve their desired enjoyment and finally, becoming indifferent to that, they complete the process of *yoga*. Examples of this are Kardama Ṛṣi (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.23) and Saubhari Ṛṣi.

Kardama Ṛṣi was a *yogī* of high calibre. On the order and inspiration of his father Brahmā, he unwillingly married Devahūtī and enjoyed conjugal pleasure superior to that of the Prajāpatis, the progenitors of all living entities. Kapiladeva, an incarnation of Bhagavān, appeared as Kardama Ṛṣi's son. After renouncing all material enjoyment and sense pleasure, Kardama Ṛṣi again engaged in the worship of Bhagavān. The life history of Saubhari Ṛṣi has been related in the *Sārārtha-varṣinī Prakāśikā-vṛtti* of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.65).

VERSE 42

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२ ॥

*athavā yoginām eva kule bhavati dhīmatām
etad dhi durlabhataram loka janma yad īdṛśam*

athavā – or else; *yoginām* – transcendentalists; *eva* – certainly; *kule* – in a family; *bhavati* – he becomes (takes birth); *dhīmatām* – of wise; *etat* – this; *hi* – certainly; *durlabhataram* – is very difficult to obtain; *loke* – in this world; *janma* – birth; *yat* – which; *īdṛśam* – like this.

A person who deviates after practising *yoga* for a long time takes his birth in the home of *yogīs* who are endowed with great wisdom. Such a birth is undoubtedly very rare in this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān has explained the destination of a *yogī* who falls after practising for a short while. Now, in this verse beginning with *athavā*, He explains the destination of a *yogī* who falls after practising for a long time. *Yogīs* such as Nimi Mahārāja are in this category.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Some *yogīs* from the second category who deviate from their practice take birth in a dynasty of *yogīs* who are steadfast in *tattva-jñāna*. They then complete their progress on the path of *yoga*. Such a birth is certainly very rare. Nimi Mahārāja is given as an example of such a *yogī* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.13.1–10).

VERSE 43

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदैहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥४३॥

tatra taṁ buddhi-samyogaṁ labhate paurva-daihikam
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau kuru-nandana

tatra – then; *taṁ* – that; *buddhi-samyogaṁ* – connection through his intelligence (awarded by Paramātmā); *labhate* – he obtains; *paurva-daihikam* – of his previous life; *yatate* – he endeavours; *ca* – and; *tataḥ* – then; *bhūyaḥ* – further; *saṁsiddhau* – for the attainment of complete perfection; *kuru-nandana* – O descendant of Kuru Mahārāja.

O son of the Kurus, that unsuccessful *yogī*, through his connection with the Supersoul, regains the divine consciousness

of his previous birth, and thereafter he again endeavours to attain complete perfection in *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In both types of birth, the fallen *yogīs* attain the divine intellect of their previous birth. That intellect is fixed in Paramātmā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: In both of these births, due to impressions on the mind resulting from *yoga* practice in their previous birth, the fallen *yogī* attains intelligence which is fixed in religious principles and also knowledge related to Paramātmā. After attaining purity of heart in a natural way, he seriously begins to endeavour for perfection in *yoga*, like one who has awoken from sleep. Now he cannot be checked by any obstacle. That is why such a *yogī* neither attains a degraded destination nor becomes lost.

VERSE 44

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥४४॥

pūrvābhyāseṇa tenaiva hriyate hy avaśo 'pi saḥ
jijñāsuraḥ api yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate

pūrvā – of his previous life; *abhyāseṇa* – due to the practice; *tena* – by that; *eva* – certainly; *hriyate* – is attracted; *hi* – indeed; *avaśaḥ api* – even though some obstacle is present; *saḥ* – he; *jijñāsuraḥ* – an inquisitive person; *api* – even though just; *yogasya* – concerning the practice of *yoga*; *śabda-brahma* – the fruitive portions of Vedic study; *ativartate* – he transcends.

By virtue of his previous practice, despite the presence of various impediments, he becomes forcefully attracted to the path of liberation. And even after a little enquiry about the practice of *yoga*, he surpasses the path of fruitive action (*sakāma-karma*) described in the Vedas.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *hriyate* means ‘attracted’. Being attracted to *yoga* he becomes inquisitive. He then surpasses the path

of *sakāma-karma*, which is described in the Vedas, while remaining situated on the path of *yoga*.

VERSE 45

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥४५॥

prayatnād yatmānas tu yogī saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ
aneka-janma-samsiddhas tato yāti parāṁ gatim

prayatnāt – with great effort; *yatmānaḥ* – endeavouring; *tu* – however; *yogī* – that *yogī*, or transcendentalist; *saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ* – freed from all sins; *aneka-janma* – after many births; *samsiddhaḥ* – becomes completely perfect; *tataḥ* – then; *yāti* – enters; *parāṁ gatim* – the supreme destination.

However, that *yogī* who endeavours with great effort becomes freed from all sins after many births and ultimately becomes perfect. Thus he attains the supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to the *Gītā* (6.37), one falls from the path of *yoga* because he is negligent in his endeavour. Such a fallen *yogī* attains the path of *yoga* in his next life, but he does not attain perfection. He will attain perfection in as many lives as it takes him to mature. He who never weakens in his endeavour does not fall from the path. Rather, after many births, he becomes mature in *yoga* and attains perfection. Kardama Muni has also said:

draṣṭuṁ yatante yatayaḥ śūnyāgāreṣu yat-padam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.24.28)

Even the renounced sages who in a solitary place endeavour to have *darśana* of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot attain perfection in one lifetime.

It is for this reason that Bhagavān speaks this verse, *prayatnād yatamānas tu*, which means ‘endeavouring harder than before’. The word *tu* shows a difference between these persons and those previously mentioned, who fall from *yoga*. *Saṁśuddha-kilbiṣaḥ*

indicates that even a person whose impurities have been completely removed cannot attain complete perfection or liberation in one life.

VERSE 46

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ४६ ॥

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

tapasvibhyaḥ – than the ascetics; *adhikaḥ* – greater; *yogī* – the *paramātma-yogī*; *jñānibhyaḥ* – than the impersonalists, or *brahmavādīs*; *api* – even; *mataḥ* – is considered; *adhikaḥ* – greater; *karmibhyaḥ* – than the fruitive workers; *ca* – and; *adhikaḥ* – greater; *yogī* – the *yogī*; *tasmāt* – therefore; *yogī* – a *yogī*; *bhava* – be; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

The *yogī*, who worships *Paramātmā*, is considered superior to the ascetic, superior to the worshipper of the impersonal aspect of the Supreme, and superior to the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a *yogī*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Among *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, which is superior?” In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān says that a *jñānī* (one who worships *brahma*) is superior to a *tapasvī* (ascetic), or one who is devoted to performing severe austerities such as *cāndrāyaṇa-vrata*. And superior to a *jñānī* is a *yogī*, a worshipper of *Paramātmā*. “This is My opinion.”

If a *yogī* is superior to a *jñānī*, what can be said about his superiority to a fruitive worker (*karmī*)?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is a general conception that a fruitive worker (*karmī*), one who cultivates knowledge (a *jñānī*), an ascetic (a *tapasvī*), one who follows the eightfold *yoga* process (a *yogī*) and devotee of the Supreme Lord (a *bhakta*) are all equal. In this present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is giving His firm opinion that they are not equal; rather, there is a gradation of superiority. A *niṣkāma-*

karma-yogī is superior to one who performs severe austerities to fulfil his material desires, and a *jñānī* is superior to a *niṣkāma-karma-yogī*. An *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* is superior to a *jñānī*, and a *bhakti-yogī* is superior to all, as is described in the next verse.

VERSE 47

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥४७॥

yoginām api sarveṣām mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

yoginām – of the *yogīs*; *api* – however; *sarveṣām* – amongst all; *mad-gatena* – by attaching himself to Me; *antar-ātmanā* – through his mind; *śraddhāvān* – one endowed with faith; *bhajate* – worships; *yaḥ* – who; *mām* – Me; *saḥ* – he; *me* – My; *yuktatamaḥ* – the best *yogī*; *mataḥ* – opinion.

However, he who constantly performs *bhajana* of Me with full faith, his mind incessantly attached to Me, is in My opinion the topmost of all *yogīs*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Is there no one who is superior to the *yogī*?” Śrī Bhagavān responds to this with, “Do not say that,” and speaks this verse beginning with *yoginām*. The word *yoginām* is in the sixth case [in Sanskrit grammar], but actually it is to be understood in the fifth case. In the previous verse the words *tapasvibhyo jñānibhyo dhikah* are in the fifth case. Similarly, it should also be understood here to mean *yogibhyaḥ*, the *bhakta* is even superior to the *yogī*. “My devotee is not superior to only one type of *yogī*, but to all types, whether they are situated in *yogārūḍha*, the highest platform of *yoga*, in *samprajñāta-samādhi* (in which one is conscious of the difference between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower), or in *asamprajñāta-samādhi* (in which no such difference is perceived).”

The import of the word *yoga* is that it is the means to *karma*, *jñāna*, *tapa*, *bhakti* and so on. “Among such *yogīs*, those who worship Me with devotion are My devotees and are the best of all types of practitioners.”

One who selflessly offers the fruit of one's work to Bhagavān (a *karmī*), one who performs severe austerities (a *tapasvī*) and one who is engaged in the cultivation of knowledge (a *jñānī*) are also accepted as *yogīs*, but one who practises the eightfold *yoga* process (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*) is superior to them. "However one who engages in devotion to the Supreme Lord (a *bhakti-yogī*), who is engaged in hearing and chanting about Me, is topmost." As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states (6.14.5):

*muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune*

O great sage, among millions of liberated and perfect souls, a peaceful person who is devoted to Śrī Nārāyaṇa is most rare.

In the next eight chapters, *bhakti-yoga*, the *yoga* of devotion to the Supreme Lord, will be delineated. This verse, which is a *sūtra*, or aphorism, of those chapters, is like an ornament adorning the necks of the devotees. The First Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the crest jewel of all scriptures, gives an outline of the text. The First, Second, Third and Fourth Chapters explain *niṣkāma-karma*. The Fifth Chapter describes *jñāna* and the Sixth Chapter describes *yoga*. Primarily, however, these six chapters describe *karma* (prescribed duty).

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Sixth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: At the end of this chapter Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has categorically stated that a *bhakti-yogī* is superior to all other *yogīs*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives a special explanation of this verse, as follows:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says "Amongst all types of *yogīs*, one who practises *bhakti-yoga* is superior; one who performs worship of Me with faith is the best of *yogīs*. Amongst righteous, regulated human beings, the *niṣkāma-karmī*, the *jñānī*, the *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* and the practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* are all *yogīs*, whereas the *sakāma-karmī* is not. In fact, *yoga* is one, not two. *Yoga* is a progressive path on which there are various steps.

Taking shelter of this path, the *jīva* situates himself on the path of transcendental realization.

“Worshipping Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the results of one’s prescribed duty (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*) is the first step. When the cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna*) and detachment (*vairāgya*) are added, it becomes *jñāna-yoga*, which is the second step. When meditation on the Supreme Lord (Īśvara) is added to *jñāna-yoga*, it becomes *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, the third step. And when affection for Bhagavān is added to *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, it becomes *bhakti-yoga*, the fourth step. All these steps combined constitute the one staircase called *yoga*. In order to clearly explain this *yoga*, all other types of *yoga*, which are only partial, have been delineated.

“One who desires eternal auspiciousness takes exclusive shelter of *yoga*. He progresses gradually on this ladder, first becoming steady on the step he is on, then rising to the next step. When one stops at a particular step, having established himself in that type of *yoga* only, he is known by the name of that particular *yoga*. Thus one person is known as a *karma-yogī*, one as a *jñāna-yogī*, one as an *aṣṭāṅga-yogī* and another as a *bhakti-yogī*.

“Therefore, O Pārtha, one whose supreme objective is to perform *bhakti* to Me only is topmost among all *yogīs*. You should become that type of *yogī*, namely, a *bhakti-yogī*.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Sixth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Vijñāna-Yoga

Yoga Through Realization of
Transcendental Knowledge

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥१॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

mayi āsakta-manāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan mad-āśrayaḥ

asamśayaṁ samagraṁ mām yathā jñāsyasi tac chṛṇu

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the Supreme Lord said; *mayi* – to Me; *āsakta-manāḥ* – with mind attached; *pārtha* – O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā; *yogam* – bhakti-yoga; *yuñjan* – by practising; *mad-āśrayaḥ* – taking shelter of Me; *asamśayaṁ* – free from doubt; *samagram* – completely; *mām* – Me; *yathā* – how; *jñāsyasi* – you shall know; *tac* – that; *śṛṇu* – just hear.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, now hear how you will know Me in full by practising bhakti-yoga with your mind attached to Me, taking full shelter of Me alone and being free from all doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ:

kadā sadānanda-bhuvo mahāprabhoḥ

kṛpāmṛtābdheścaraṇau asrayāmahe

yathā yathā projhitamukti tatpathā

bhaktyadhvanā premasudhā-mayāmahe

When will I attain the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the shelter of eternal bliss and an ocean of mercy? Having given up the processes of material enjoyment and liberation and taking shelter of the path of *bhakti*, when will I become qualified to taste the nectar of *prema*?

This Seventh Chapter describes the various opulences of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme object of worship. It also describes the four types of persons who worship Him and the four types of persons who do not.

The first six chapters describe the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*, both of which result in liberation (*mokṣa*) and which initially depend on selflessly offering the results of one's prescribed duties to Bhagavān, to purify the heart.

Now, the next set of six chapters describes various types of *bhakti-yoga*, beginning with *bhakti* mixed with *karma*, *jñāna* and so on. There is also a description of destinations (types of liberations) attained by the practitioners of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* and *sakāma-karma*, such as *sālokya* – achieving the same planet as the Lord. Most prominently, there is a description of the process of *bhakti-yoga*, which is independent of *karma*, *jñāna*, etc., and which grants that particular liberation in which one becomes a loving associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32):

yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna vairāgyataś ca yat

Simply by practising *bhakti-yoga*, My devotee easily attains in full whatever auspicious results can be achieved by performing *karma* (prescribed duties), *tapasya* (austerities) and *jñāna*, or by developing detachment and renunciation, practising *yoga*, giving in charity and performing other auspicious activities.

Even if one does desire the destination of residing in the heavenly planets, achieving *mokṣa* (liberation) or attaining Vaikuṅṭha, one can attain them easily by *bhakti-yoga*. It is clear from these statements that *bhakti* is supremely independent. *Bhakti* is quite capable of granting the fruits of those processes even if one does not separately perform them. *Bhakti-yoga* is easy to perform but difficult to attain.

It is said in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8), “*tam eva viditvā atimṛtyum eti* – one can transcend death when one attains knowledge of Him (Parameśvara), through *jñāna*.” This statement may cause one to doubt whether one can attain liberation merely by *bhakti*, without having *jñāna*. In response Śrī Bhagavān says, “Do not raise such an objection.” *Tam eva*, one can only transcend death by knowing Paramātmā (*tat-padārtha*), in other words, by directly realizing Him. One cannot attain freedom from death merely by knowing the living entity (*tvaṁ-padārtha*), material nature (*prakṛti*) or any other entity. This is the import of this statement from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*.

The only way to taste sugar candy is with the tongue; it cannot be tasted with the eyes or ears. Similarly, *bhakti* is the only way to realize Parabrahma. *Brahma*, or transcendence, is beyond the material modes, so it is only possible to attain transcendence with the help of *bhakti*, since *bhakti* is also beyond the material modes. Knowledge of the self, which is free from identification with the body and so forth, is in the mode of goodness, so it cannot enable one to attain *brahma*.

“*Bhaktyāham ekayā grahyaḥ* – I am attained only by one-pointed *bhakti*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21). “*Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti* – only by *bhakti* can the *jīva* specifically know My *svarūpa* and transcendental nature” (*Gītā* 18.55).

Śrī Bhagavān says, “I will establish My personal specific nature and attributes by these two statements.”

Jñāna and *yoga* are well known as the means to attain *mukti*, but they can only fulfil this function by the influence of *guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* mixed with the material modes of nature. When they are bereft of devotion, *jñāna* and *yoga* are incapable of giving that result.

There are scriptural statements that establish that *jñāna* and *yoga* are ineffective without *bhakti*. Moreover, in the above statement from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the word *eva*, or ‘only’, has been used before the word *viditvā*, or ‘knowing’. In other words, it is not a fact that liberation is attained by knowledge (*jñāna*) alone. This implies that it is possible to attain liberation, or *mokṣa*, by knowing Paramātmā, and sometimes it is possible even without knowing Him. Liberation is attained by knowledge of Paramātmā, which is beyond the modes and which is generated from *bhakti*, and sometimes liberation can be attained solely

by *bhakti*, even without knowledge of Paramātmā. This meaning is also conveyed by the statement from the Upaniṣads previously quoted.

A jaundiced tongue cannot taste the sweetness of sugar candy, but if one continues to take it, one's disease will be cured, and the taste of sugar candy will be relished again. There is no doubt about it. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.59) Śrī Uddhava says, "Nectar always grants immortality, even if one tastes it without knowledge." Similarly, a person may be ignorant of his *svarūpa*, but if he constantly performs *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he is granted his desired result. It is also said of Śrī Nārāyaṇa in the *Mokṣa-dharma*, "A person who has taken shelter of Śrī Nārāyaṇa need not perform the *sādhana* by which one attains the four goals of life: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. Indeed, he attains these goals, even without practising those *sādhanas*."

It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–33), "Whatever is achieved by following one's prescribed duty and performing austerities, My devotees attain easily by *bhakti-yoga*." Moreover, it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.16.44), "Simply by hearing Your holy name once, even a low born *caṇḍāla* (who eats the flesh of dogs) is liberated from the material world." These statements establish that one can only attain liberation by practising *bhakti*. Furthermore: "Of all *yogīs*, the best is he who performs *bhajana* with great faith in his heart" (*Gītā* 6.47). By this statement, Śrī Bhagavān also indicates a special characteristic of His worshippers, whose minds are fixed in Him and who have faith in His devotees. One may raise the question, "What type of devotee is eligible to have both knowledge (*jñāna*) and realization (*vijñāna*) of Śrī Bhagavān?" This verse beginning with *mayy āsakti* and also the next verse, are spoken in response to this question.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42) states, "When a person takes food, he experiences satisfaction, nourishment and the removal of hunger, all at the same time. Similarly, one who performs *bhajana* of Śrī Bhagavān simultaneously achieves devotion, realization of Bhagavān and detachment from this world."

"It is noteworthy that one who eats only one mouthful of food experiences neither satisfaction nor nourishment. Satisfaction and nourishment are experienced only by one who eats a full meal. In the same way, although one in the initial stages of *bhajana* has some

realization of Me, only one who has become situated on the platform of deep attachment, or *āsakti*, and whose mind is attached to My Śyāmasundara form, which is adorned with yellow dress, realizes Me in reality. You can know Me only in this way.

“Please hear how one can realize Me directly and what type of *yoga* grants this. One can become My exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhakta*) even without the help of *jñāna*, *karma*, etc., by gradually becoming united with Me, and eventually taking complete shelter of Me.”

In this verse, the word *asamśayam* indicates a doubt about the possibility of attaining *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, and *samagram* indicates that the realization of that *svarūpa* is incomplete. This will be stated later, in the *Gītā* (12.5):

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

Those who fix their mind on the impersonal *nirguṇa-brahma* have to undergo great miseries. It may be difficult for an embodied living entity to attain that unmanifest nature.

In other words, there is a doubt as to whether one can attain the impersonal *nirviśeṣa-brahma-svarūpa*. In the present verse, however, Śrī Bhagavān is declaring, “This doubt does not exist in regard to *bhakti-yoga* to Me, because My devotees always realize Me, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who am *parabrahma-tattva*, the Supreme Absolute Truth. Moreover, *brahma*, the worshipable object of the *jñānīs*, is only My glorious effulgence. In My Matsya *avatāra*, I said to King Satyavrata, ‘By following My instructions, you will also come to know My glories, which are manifested in your heart by *śabda-brahma*, the sound representation of Parabrahma’ (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.24.38). And in the *Gītā* (14.27) I have said: ‘I am the shelter, or basis, of *nirviśeṣa-brahma*.’ Therefore, knowledge of My *nirviśeṣa-svarūpa* is not complete. Compared to knowledge of My Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śyāmasundara form, it is only partial.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Pārtha, in the first six chapters, I explained *jñāna* and *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. These are paths to attain liberation, and they require the help of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* to purify the heart. In the

second set of six chapters, I am explaining *bhakti-yoga*. Please listen. With your mind steadfast in attachment to Me, having taken complete shelter of Me by practising *bhakti-yoga*, you will attain thorough knowledge of Me. There is no doubt about this.

“Knowledge of *nirviśeṣa-brahma* is incomplete because it denies knowledge of the qualities of the personal feature of the Absolute (*saviśeṣa-jñāna*). One attains the featureless *nirviśeṣa* conception by negating material variety. My *nirviśeṣa-brahma* nature manifests as the object of this featureless conception, which is not beyond the modes of material nature. This is because it merely transcends physical and mental knowledge and is therefore limited to knowledge in the mode of goodness. *Bhakti* is a special function that is transcendental to the modes of nature. My form is also *nirguṇa* – beyond material nature – and can only be seen by a living entity whose eyes are *nirguṇa*, having been uncovered by the process of *nirguṇā-bhakti*.”

VERSE 2

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज् ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

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

jñānam – knowledge; *te* – to you; *aham* – I; *sa-vijñānam* – together with realization of that knowledge; *idam* – this; *vakṣyāmi* – shall explain; *aśeṣataḥ* – in full; *yaj* – which; *jñātvā* – having understood; *na* – nothing; *iha* – in this material world; *bhūyah* – further; *anyat* – else; *jñātavyam* – to be known; *avaśiṣyate* – will remain.

I shall speak this knowledge to you in full, which is enriched with realization. When you understand this, there will remain nothing further in this world to be known.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Before the stage of deep attachment (*āsakti*) in the *bhakti* process, knowledge of Me is full of awe and reverence, but upon attaining *āsakti*, one awakens to My sweetness (*mādhurya*).

Please hear of both. Once one understands them, nothing else will remain to be known. Knowledge of My *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, as well as realization of it, is included within this.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: When one performs devotional service that is beyond the modes of nature, he realizes the complete *svarūpa* of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss and who is the basis of all transcendental opulence (*aiśvarya*) and sweetness (*mādhurya*). In a state of *samādhi*, Śrī Vyāsa attained complete realization of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa*, only through *bhakti-yoga*. “*Apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam* – and thus he saw the complete Personality of Godhead” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4). It should be understood that both *brahma-jñāna* and *paramātmajñāna*, as well as the sweetness of Bhagavān (*vijñāna*), are realized in this vision of Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa*. Therefore, when one has attained knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān, nothing else remains to be known.

The synonym for *nirguṇā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* that is beyond the modes of nature, is *prema-bhakti*. To attain *prema-bhakti*, one must pass through nine stages: (1) *śraddhā* – faith, (2) *sādhusāṅga* – association of exalted devotees, (3) *bhajana-kriyā* – adoption of the processes of devotion, (4) *anartha-nivṛtti* – cessation of unwanted desires, (5) *niṣṭhā* – steadiness, (6) *ruci* – taste, (7) *āsakti* – deep attachment [these seven stages comprise *sādhana-bhakti*], (8) *bhāva* – preliminary stage of pure love, or *prema*, and (9) the appearance of *prema*. Before the practising devotee achieves the stage of *āsakti*, knowledge of Bhagavān is filled with an understanding of awe and reverence. But when that deep attachment becomes mature, he realizes Bhagavān’s sweetness, or *mādhurya*, within his heart. This is called *vijñāna*.

VERSE 3

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥३॥

manuṣyāṅām sahasreṣu kaścīd yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām kaścīn māṁ veti tattvataḥ

manuṣyānām – of men; *sahasreṣu* – among thousands; *kaścit* – someone; *yatati* – endeavours; *siddhaye* – for perfection; *yatatām* – of those who endeavour; *api* – yet even; *siddhānām* – of those who attain perfection; *kaścit* – some person; *mām* – Me; *vetti* – knows; *tattvataḥ* – (as I am) in truth.

Among thousands of men, one may endeavour for perfection. And among those who attain perfection, it is rare for even one to know My *svarūpa* in truth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Even *jñānīs* and *yogīs* who are endowed with the symptoms described in the previous six chapters rarely attain knowledge of Me, complete with realization.” Saying this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks about realization of Him in this verse beginning with *manuṣyānām*. “Among countless living entities, one achieves a human birth, and among thousands of humans, only one strives for auspiciousness. Among thousands who endeavour thus, it is rare for one to know Me in truth and to have direct realization of My form as Śyāmasundara who holds the flute.”

The conclusion is that the bliss one experiences by realization of the transcendental form of the Lord (*saviṣeṣa-brahma*) is thousands of times greater than the bliss experienced by realizing His impersonal aspect (*nirviṣeṣa-brahma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Bhagavān is showing that knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān is extremely rare. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5), this has been described:

*muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune*

O great sage, among millions of such liberated and perfected persons, it is extremely rare to find a most peaceful devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa. More rare is one who has realized the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The bliss derived from tasting the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is millions of times greater than *brahmānanda*, the bliss of *brahma*.

Also in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.25):

*brahmānando bhaved eṣa cet parārdha-guṇī-kṛtaḥ
naiti bhakti-sukhāmbhodheḥ paramāṇu-tulām api*

Even when the bliss of *brahma* is multiplied by the number of days in Brahmā's lifespan, it still cannot be compared to a single particle of the pleasure one attains in tasting the mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness.

This is also stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.84-85):

*kṛṣṇa-viṣayaka prema—parama puruṣārtha
yāra āge tṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha*

Religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation are known as the four goals of life, but before love of Godhead, the fifth and highest goal, these appear as insignificant as straw in the street.*

*pañcama puruṣārtha—premānandāmṛta-sindhu
mokṣādi ānanda yāra nahe eka bindu*

For a devotee who has actually developed *bhāva*, the pleasure derived from religiosity (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) appears like a drop in the presence of the sea.*

VERSE 4

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥४॥

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

bhūmiḥ – earth; *āpaḥ* – water; *analaḥ* – fire; *vāyuh* – air; *kham* – ether; *manaḥ* – mind; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *ahaṅkāraḥ* – false ego; *iti* – as follows; *iyam* – this; *me* – of Mine; *bhinnā* – divisions; *prakṛtiḥ* – material energy; *aṣṭadhā* – eightfold.

My external material energy has eight divisions: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In relation to *bhakti*, the word *jñāna* only indicates knowledge of the opulence of Śrī Bhagavān. It does not indicate knowledge of the self. Therefore, in this verse beginning with *bhūmi* and in the next verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is delineating knowledge of the grandeur of Śrī Bhagavān by explaining His spiritual (*parā*) and material (*aparā*) energies. The words *bhūmi-ādi* (earth, etc.) indicate the five material elements along with their respective subtle elements, such as fragrance. The word *aḥaṅkāra* (false ego) refers to its function through the senses, and it also refers to their cause, the material nature, or *mahat-tattva*. Since the intelligence and the mind are most prominent among these elements, they have been mentioned separately.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Knowledge of both My *svarūpa* and My opulence is called *bhagavat-jñāna*. It is described in this way: ‘I, the Supreme Absolute Reality Śrī Kṛṣṇa, am always situated in My *svarūpa*, and I possess all potencies (*śaktis*) in full. *Brahma* is only a featureless (*nirviśeṣa*) expression of My potency and does not have a form. The existence of this *brahma* is based on the concept of negation of the created world. *Paramātmā* is also a partial manifestation of My energy in this world. In fact, *Paramātmā* is specifically related to the temporary material world and does not have an eternal *svarūpa*. My only eternal feature is My eternal form of Bhagavān, which has two types of energy. One is the external energy and is called *bahiraṅgā*, or *māyā-śakti*. Since it is the cause (mother) of the inert world, it is also called *aparā-śakti*. One should understand the number of elements in this *aparā-śakti*: the five gross elements, or *mahā-bhūta* (earth, water, fire, air and ether) and their five respective qualities (smell, taste, form, touch and sound), totalling ten in number. Therefore, there are ten elements. You should understand that the senses are their active components initiated by the element of the false ego, or *aḥaṅkāra*, and that the unmanifested material energy, or *mahat-tattva*, is their cause. The mind and intelligence have been mentioned as separate elements because of their prominent and distinctive functions among the group of elements, but in fact they are one. This entire group is part of My external energy.’”

VERSE 5

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत्॥५॥

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

aparā – inferior or inert; *iyam* – this (material energy); *itaḥ* – beyond it; *tu* – but; *anyām* – another; *prakṛtiṁ* – energy; *viddhi* – you must understand; *me* – of Mine; *parām* – superior (spiritual); *jīva-bhūtām* – the living beings; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed (Arjuna); *yayā* – by which (conscious energy); *idam* – this; *dhāryate* – is accepted (by them in order to enjoy their fruitive actions); *jagat* – universe.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, you should know that My external energy, which consists of eight divisions, is inferior. There is another potency of Mine known as the *jīva*, which is superior and which accepts this material world for the purpose of enjoying the fruits of his action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Because its nature is inert, the earlier mentioned *bahiraṅgā-śakti* is inferior. The *taṭasthā-śakti*, in the form of the living entities, *jīvas*, is different from this external material potency and superior to it because of the presence of consciousness. It is superior because by its conscious nature it sustains the universe. In other words, it accepts the material world for the purpose of its own enjoyment.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Besides this material nature (*aparā-prakṛti*), there is My marginal nature (*taṭasthā-prakṛti*), which is also called *jīva* (*parā-prakṛti*). That *prakṛti* is conscious and it manifests as the *jīvas*, or living entities. The *jīvas* emanating from that energy have made this inert material world conscious. The *jīva* has the capacity to understand and move in either the transcendental world, which has emanated from My internal energy, or in the inert, material world, which has emanated from My external energy. For this reason the *jīva-śakti* is also called the *taṭasthā-śakti*.”

Those bound souls (*baddha-jīvas*), who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifest in this world from this *taṭasthā-śakti*. It is a great misconception to think that the souls in bondage have given up their service to Kṛṣṇa and have come to this world from Vaikuṅṭha or even higher, from Goloka. This is opposed to *siddhānta*. Once a *jīva* has attained service to Kṛṣṇa in His abode, it is impossible for him to fall from that position. As it is said in the *Gītā* (15.6):

yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama

Those who attain My supreme abode never return to this material world.

Citraketu Mahārāja and Jaya and Vijaya never fell down. They appeared in this world voluntarily and enacted the roles of conditioned souls for the pleasure of Bhagavān. The *jīvas* who are absorbed in service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world manifest either from Śrī Baladeva Prabhu or from His expansion Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa who is non-different from Him. They are eternally liberated *jīvas*. It is not possible that they ever fall.

VERSE 6

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥६॥

etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya
aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā

etad – that; *yonīni* – both of these previously mentioned energies have emanated; *bhūtāni* – living beings; *sarvāni* – all; *iti* – that; *upadhāraya* – know; *aham* – from Me; *kṛtsnasya* – of the whole; *jagataḥ* – cosmic manifestation; *prabhavaḥ* – the origin; *pralayaḥ* – annihilation; *tathā* – and.

Know that all created beings have been born from these two natures of Mine. I alone am the sole cause of the creation and destruction of the entire material manifestation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Here, Śrī Bhagavān establishes Himself as the cause of the universe, for He is the origin of both these potencies.

The two causes of all moving and non-moving created beings are *māyā-śakti* as the field (*kṣetra*) and *jīva-śakti* as the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*). “Thus, as the controller of both of these *śaktis*, I am the creator of the entire universe. At the time of annihilation, these potencies dissolve and rest in Me, the Supreme Energetic. I, therefore, am their only destroyer.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The conscious and the inert, that is, the *jīvas* and the inert creation, have emanated from these two *prakṛtis*. Both *māyā-śakti* and *jīva-śakti* are My potencies, since they originate from Me. I, Bhagavān, am therefore the root cause of both the origin and dissolution of the universe.”

VERSE 7

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥७॥

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

mattaḥ – than Me; *parataram* – greater; *na* – not; *anyat* – else; *kiñcit* – anything; *asti* – exists; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth (Arjuna); *mayi* – on Me; *sarvam* – all; *idam* – this material creation; *protam* – is dependent; *sūtre* – on a thread; *maṇi-gaṇāḥ* – jewels; *iva* – as.

O conqueror of riches, Dhanañjaya, there is nothing superior to Me. This whole creation is dependent on Me, like jewels strung on a thread.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “In this way, I am the cause of everything. Just as cause and effect are non-different from each other, so the energy and the energetic are non-different.”

It is said in the Śrutis, “*ekam evādvitīyaṁ brahma* – before the creation of this universe, there was only one Absolute Reality without a second” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1).

Moreover, “*neha nānāsti kiñcana* – nothing exists except *advaya-brahma*, the one non-dual Absolute Truth in its various forms” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.19).

Also in the Śrutis it is stated, “Since My potencies are the cause of all creations, I am the cause of everything.”

In this way, after first explaining His nature of being everything, Bhagavān is now explaining His quality of being all-pervading, with the words *mayi* and so on. *Sarvam idam* means, “Both the *cit* (conscious) and *jaḍa* (inert) universes are non-different from Me because they are My creations (effects). In other words, they are My *svarūpa*, and just as jewels are strung on a thread, they are hanging on Me, who am Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness of everything.” Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatīpāda has written *sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*. This example merely proves that the universe is resting in Bhagavān, but it does not prove that He is the cause of the universe. However, the example ‘gold is the cause of a golden earring’ is appropriate to establish Him as the cause of the universe.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Śrī Bhagavān established Himself as the independent cause of creation and dissolution. Now, in the present verse, He is establishing that as the all-pervading witness, He alone is the cause of maintenance. “I, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, am the Supreme Absolute Truth (*parama-tattva*) and the cause of all causes.” Lord Brahmā also establishes this principle in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.1):

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

The Supreme Lord, the embodiment of truth, consciousness and joy, is Govinda Kṛṣṇa. He is without beginning, He is the origin of all that be, and He is the cause of all causes.

To make this subject easier to understand, we will cite concepts from Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s *Govinda-bhāṣya*, his commentary on the Vedānta: “*Parabrahma-svarūpa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the Supreme prominent Absolute Reality. Apart from Him, there is no other independently existing entity, either superior or inferior to Him.

‘Yasmāt param nāparam asti kiñcit – there is no truth superior to that Supreme Person’ (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.9). These statements from the Śrutis have not accepted the existence of anything higher than the all-worshipable *brahma*. In the Vedas (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8-9) it is said, ‘I know this effulgent *brahma*, who is like the sun and beyond all darkness (ignorance). One attains immortality and the goal of human life by knowing Him. The only means to attain immortality is by knowledge of this Supreme Person. There is nothing superior to Him.’

“After accepting the superiority of Parabrahma, as established in these *mantras*, it is further said, ‘Those who know the pure, constitutional nature of *brahma* attain immortality in due course of time; otherwise there is no cessation to their miseries.’ If something is accepted as superior to *brahma*, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s statement *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanan̄jaya* becomes false” (*Govinda-bhāṣya, Brahma-sūtra* 3.2.37).

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8) repeats the same, “*na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛṣyate* – there is nothing equal to or greater than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth endowed with all transcendental attributes.”

VERSE 8

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥८॥

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

rasaḥ – the taste; *aham* – I; *apsu* – in water; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *prabhā* – the light; *asmi* – am; *śaśi-sūryayoḥ* – of the moon and sun; *praṇavaḥ* – the syllable *om*; *sarva-vedeṣu* – in all Vedic *mantras*; *śabdaḥ* – the sound; *khe* – in ether; *pauruṣam* – ability; *nṛṣu* – in man.

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

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “As Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness, I enter into and exist in this universe, which was created by Me. Similarly, I alone exist as the essence within all humans and all other living entities. Somewhere I am the cause and somewhere I am the effect.” In order to establish this truth, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *raso ’ham* and the next three verses.

“The meaning of *apsu* (water) is that the *rasa* (taste) in water is its cause, which is also My opulence. Similarly, My effulgence is the cause of the sun and the moon, and *omkāra* is the cause of the Vedas. They are also My opulences. I am also the cause of the sky and sound, and I am the very essence of human beings and the source of their ability.”

VERSE 9

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

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

punyaḥ – the pure; *gandhaḥ* – fragrances; *pṛthivyām* – within the earth; *ca* – and; *tejaḥ* – the heat; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *vibhāvasau* – within fire; *jīvanam* – life; *sarva-bhūteṣu* – in all beings; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *tapasviṣu* – in ascetics.

I am the pure fragrance of the earth, the heat in fire, the life in all beings and the austerity of the ascetics.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to the dictionary named *Amara-koṣa*, the word *punya* means ‘an original and attractive fragrance’. The use of the word *ca* indicates the relationship between the word *punya* and *rasa* (taste), etc. The word *teja* implies the capacity to digest and cook all ingredients. It also means ‘essence in the form of capacity’, ‘to illuminate’, ‘to protect from cold’, and so on. *Jīvana* means ‘essence in the form of life’, and *tapa* means ‘to tolerate dualities’.

VERSE 10

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १० ॥

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

bījam – cause; *mām* – Me; *sarva-bhūtānām* – for all living beings; *viddhi* – know; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *sanātanam* – the eternal; *buddhiḥ* – the intelligence; *buddhimatām* – of the intelligent; *asmi* – am; *tejah* – prowess; *tejasvinām* – of the powerful; *aham* – I.

O Pārtha, know Me to be the eternal cause of all beings. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of the powerful.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *bīja* (seed) means ‘the untransformed cause, which is called *pradhāna*’. *Sanātana* means ‘eternal’. “The essence of a brilliant person is his intelligence, and that is Me.”

VERSE 11

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम्।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ ११ ॥

*balam balavatām cāham kāma-rāga-vivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo ’smi bharatarṣabha*

balam – the strength; *balavatām* – of the strong; *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *kāma-rāga* – of lust and attachment; *vivarjitam* – devoid; *dharmāviruddhaḥ* – not incompatible with the codes of *dharmā*; *bhūteṣu* – in all living beings; *kāma* – passion; *asmi* – am; *bharata-rṣabha* – O best of the dynasty of Bharata.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, I am the strength of the strong, free from attachment and desire. In all beings, I am sexual union in accordance with religious principles, for the purpose of procreation alone.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *kāma* generally refers to the desire for one's maintenance, and *rāga* refers to anger. In this context, however, these meanings do not apply. *Dharmāvīruddhaḥ* means 'that which is not opposed to *dharma*', that is, 'passion which is used only to produce children with one's own wife'.

VERSE 12

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि॥१२॥

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

ye – whichever; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *sātṭvikāḥ* – in goodness; *bhāvāḥ* – states of existence; *rājasāḥ* – passion; *tāmasāḥ* – ignorance; *ca* – and; *ye* – whichever; *mattaḥ* – to come from Me; *eva* – certainly; *iti* – thus; *tān* – them; *viddhi* – you should know; *na* – not; *tu* – but; *aham* – I; *teṣu* – in them; *te mayi* – they are in Me.

Know that all states of existence – goodness (*sātṭvika*), passion (*rājasika*) and ignorance (*tāmasika*) – are manifested by the modes of My material nature. I am not subject to these modes, for they are all under the control of My energy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In this way, I have explained only some of My opulences (*vibhūti*s), such as those that are the cause and the essence of objects. But what is the purpose of going into detail? Everything is My potency and under My control.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the words *ye caiva*. “Control of the mind and senses, equanimity, and the demigods themselves are states of existence in the mode of goodness. Happiness, pride and other such feelings, as well as the demons themselves, are states of existence in the mode of passion. And lamentation, delusion and so forth, as well as Rākṣasas (man-eaters, who are lower than demons), are states of existence in the mode of ignorance. They all come from Me, but it should be understood that they are the effects of the modes of My material nature, so I am not

personally present in them. Unlike the living entities, I am not under their control; rather, they exist under My control.”

VERSE 13

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

*tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvaṃ idaṃ jagat
mohitaṃ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam*

tribhiḥ – three; *guṇa-mayaiḥ* – composed of the qualities of material nature; *bhāvaiḥ* – states; *ebhiḥ* – by these; *sarvaṃ* – entire; *idaṃ* – this; *jagat* – world; *mohitaṃ* – deluded; *na abhijānāti* – does not know; *mām* – Me; *ebhyaḥ* – these modes; *param* – beyond; *avyayam* – and imperishable.

Deluded by these three states of existence (the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance), the whole world does not know Me, who am beyond the modes and imperishable.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may ask, “Why do people not know You as the Supreme Lord, Parameśvara?” In response, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *tribhiḥ*. “The living entities of this world are bewildered because they are controlled by their acquired nature, which is composed of the activities of the three modes. This consists of control of the mind, control of the senses, and also happiness, lamentation, attachment and envy. But I am beyond the modes and free from any transformation caused by them. That is why these living entities cannot understand Me.”

VERSE 14

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४ ॥

*daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye praṇadyante māyām etaṃ taranti te*

daivī – she bewilders the *jīvas*; *hi* – indeed; *eṣā* – this; *guṇa-mayī* – consisting of the three modes of material nature; *mama* – of Mine; *māyā* – illusory external energy; *duratyayā* – difficult to overcome; *mām* – to Me; *eva* – only; *ye* – who; *prapadyante* – takes shelter; *māyām* – illusion; *etām* – this; *taranti* – transcends, or crosses over; *te* – they.

This external energy of Mine, which consists of the three modes and which bewilders the living entities, is certainly very difficult to overcome, but those who take exclusive shelter of Me can easily transcend this *māyā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following question may be raised: “How can one become free from the delusion created by the three modes of nature?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *daivī*. “This *māyā* is called *daivī* because she deludes the demigods (the living entities), who are divine by nature but who are absorbed in the sporting pleasures of sense enjoyment. This *māyā* is *guṇa-mayī*, composed of the three modes. The word *guṇa-mayī* has another meaning: ‘the form of a strong rope with three strands’. This external energy, which belongs to Me, Parameśvara, is extremely difficult to cross over. No one is able to cut this rope and become free from the bondage of the material modes of nature.” Śrī Bhagavān says, “Believe Me,” and then touching His own chest goes on to say *mām*: “A person can only transcend this *māyā* if he exclusively surrenders to Me in this form of Śyāmasundara.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān’s two types of energy, or *śakti*, are *parā* (spiritual) and *aparā* (material). The spiritual, internal energy is called *antaraṅgā* (*cit-śakti*), and the material, external energy is called *bahiraṅgā* (*acit-*, *aparā-* or *māyā-śakti*). In the Upaniṣads it is also said, “*māyām tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān mayinaṁ tu maheśvaram – māyā* should be understood as the material energy; and the person (*puruṣa*) who is the shelter of *māyā* should be understood as the Supreme Controller” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.10).

This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.5.30):

na yasya kaścātītarti māyām yayā jano muhyati veda nārtham

The living entity is bewildered by the deluding potency, *māyā-śakti*, and therefore he is unable to understand the nature of the self. This insurmountable *māyā* of Bhagavān cannot be overcome by anyone without Bhagavān's mercy.

One may question that if *māyā-śakti* is the cause of the living entity's bondage, can one become free from this bondage by pleasing this *māyā-śakti*? What is the need to take shelter of Śrī Hari, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas? In the present verse, Bhagavān responds to this with the words *mama māyā*. He says, "This *māyā* is not independent; rather, it is under My control, so it has no independence to liberate anyone from the material world." This is what He means by the statement *mām eva ye prapadyante*. "Only a person who surrenders to Me can cross over this insurmountable *māyā* of Mine; others cannot."

This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.58):

*samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ
mahat-padaṁ puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ
bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ paraṁ padaṁ
padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣāṁ*

When a person takes shelter of the boat of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is supremely famous and the shelter of such great personalities as Śiva and Brahmā, this ocean of the material world becomes just like the water contained in the hoof-print of a calf. That person then attains his supreme destination, Vaikuṅṭha, which is free from all types of miseries.

VERSE 15

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

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

na – not; *mām* – to Me; *duṣkṛtinaḥ* – those who are polluted by the performance of fruitive actions or unfortunate persons; *mūḍhāḥ* – those

devoid of discrimination; *prapadyante* – do surrender; *nara-adhamāḥ* – the lowest among mankind; *māyayā* – by illusion; *apahr̥ta-jñānāḥ* – those whose knowledge is covered; *āsuram* – of the demoniac; *bhāvam* – nature; *āśritāḥ* – those who take shelter.

Those contaminated by fruitive action and fools who are devoid of discrimination, who are the lowest among human beings, whose knowledge has been completely covered by *māyā*, and who have a demoniac nature, do not surrender unto Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The question may be raised, “Why, then, do learned persons not take shelter of You?” Śrī Bhagavān replies, “Those who are genuinely learned do in fact take exclusive shelter of Me, but those who consider themselves to be learned do not.” Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *na mām* to explain this. The word *duṣkṛtinaḥ* refers to those who are wicked, though they may have some piety. And some may appear to be learned (*pañḍitas*) but are actually pseudo *pañḍitas*. *Duṣkṛta* are of four types:

- (1) *Mūḍhāḥ* – those fruitive workers who are no better than animals. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.32.19) describes, “Just as a stool-eating hog rejects sweet-rice and enjoys stool, those cheated by destiny, who give up the nectar of hearing *hari-kathā* and engage in hearing other useless talks, are most unfortunate.” Who but an animal would not like to perform service to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Mukunda?
- (2) *Narādhamāḥ* – the lowest among mankind. Even after performing *bhakti* for some time and attaining the qualities of a human being, persons who are *narādhamā* finally give up the process of *bhakti* wilfully, thinking it to be ineffective in attaining their desired fruit.
- (3) *Māyayāpahr̥ta-jñānāḥ* – those whose knowledge has been stolen by *māyā*, even after studying the scriptures. They think that only the form of Śrī Nārāyaṇa situated in Vaikuṅṭha can be served eternally and can grant eternal *bhakti*; one cannot perform *bhakti* eternally to other forms, such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, because They have a human form. Śrī Bhagavān has said in the *Gītā* (9.11), “Fools disrespect Me when I appear in My human form.” He says, “They

seem to have surrendered to Me, but they have not surrendered in reality.”

- (4) *Āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ* – “Demons such as Jarāsandha shoot arrows at Me, attempting to injure My transcendental body. Similarly, the demoniac, through illogical arguments, deny my transcendental form in Vaikuṅṭha, as it appears to be an embodied form. They do not surrender unto Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Having taken shelter of a demonic mentality, four types of persons do not accept surrender to Me: the wicked (*duṣkṛta*), the foolish (*mūḍha*), the lowest of human beings (*narādhama*) and persons whose knowledge is covered by illusion (*māyayāpahṛta-jñānīs*).

- (1) Those who are wicked (*duṣkṛta*) live an extremely unrighteous life.
- (2) The *mūḍhās* are those atheistic persons who follow moral principles but do not take shelter of Me, the presiding deity of morality.
- (3) *Narādhamas* are the lowest of human beings. They consider Me to be only an aspect of morality but not the Lord of morality.
- (4) *Māyayāpahṛta-jñānīs* are those whose knowledge remains covered by *māyā*. Even when they have studied scriptures such as Vedānta, they still worship Brahmā and other demigods. They do not know My omnipotent nature, the eternal conscious nature of the *jīva*, the temporary nature of the relationship of the *jīva* with inert matter, or the eternal nature of the *jīva*’s relationship with Me as My servant.”

VERSE 16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६ ॥

catur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino ’rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha

catur-vidhāḥ – four kinds; *bhajante* – worship; *mām* – Me; *janāḥ* – persons situated in regulated life; *sukṛtinaḥ* – of pious; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *ārta* – the distressed (by disease, enemies and fear); *jijñāsuḥ* – the inquisitive

(desirous of self-realization); *artha-arthī* – the seeker of bodily happiness, heavenly enjoyment and wealth; *jñānī* – the man in knowledge; *ca* – and; *bharata-ṛṣabha* – best of the dynasty of Bharata.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, there are four types of pious men who perform worship of Me: the distressed (*ārta*), the inquisitive (*jijñāsu*), the seeker of wealth (*arthārthī*) and the man of wisdom (*jñānī*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Who, then, performs worship of You?” In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *catur-vidhā*. “*Sukṛta* refers to those who worship Me and who follow the rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. *Ārta* refers to persons afflicted with distress such as disease and who worship Me for relief. *Jijñāsu* means ‘those who worship Me, desiring *ātma-jñāna* (knowledge of the self) or scholarly knowledge of the scriptures through grammar’. *Arthārthī* refers to those who worship Me with a desire for enjoyment in this world, such as possession of land, elephants, horses, beautiful women, gold or enjoyment in the celestial planets. *Jñānīs* with pure hearts also worship Me. Of these four, the first three are householders who have fruitive desires, and the fourth group consists of renunciants who perform selfless action (*niṣkāma sannyāsīs*).

These four types of persons are eligible to perform *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, the process wherein *bhakti* predominates over *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth. The first three perform *bhakti* mixed with *karma* (*karma-miśrā-bhakti*), and the fourth performs *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna* (*jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*). Later, in the verse *sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya* (*Gītā* 8.12.), *bhakti* mixed with *yoga* (*yoga-miśrā-bhakti*) will be explained. However, *kevalā-bhakti*, which is devoid of *karma* or *jñāna*, is explained in the beginning of the Seventh Chapter: *mayy āsaktamanāḥ pārtha* (*Gītā* 7.1). *Kevalā-bhakti* will also be delineated later in two verses: *ananya-cetāḥ satatam* (*Gītā* 8.14) and *mahātmānas tu mām pārtha* (*Gītā* 9.13).

In the middle six chapters of the *Gītā* (Chapters 7–12), Śrī Bhagavān has explained two types of *bhakti*: *pradhānī-bhūtā* (in which *bhakti* predominates over *karma* and *jñāna*) and *kevalā* (exclusive *bhakti*). In a third process, *guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti*, *bhakti* is present to some extent

but is predominated by *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth. This is the process that *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs* perform simply to attain perfection in their respective endeavours. It cannot be called *bhakti* because *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth predominate and not *bhakti* herself. According to *prādhānyena vyapadeśā bhavanti*, the logic by which something is named after its predominating element, the different varieties of *guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti* are qualified either as *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga*. These processes are not categorized as *bhakti* because *bhakti* is not predominant.

The result of *sakāma-karma* is the heavenly planets, and the result of *niṣkāma-karma* is *jñāna*. The result of *jñāna* and *yoga* is liberation (*nīrvāna-mokṣa*). Now, the result of the two types of *bhakti*, *pradhānī-bhūtā* and *kevalā*, are being explained.

In *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, those who are distressed (*ārta*), those who aspire for knowledge (*jijñāsu*) and those who seek wealth (*arthārthī*) perform *bhakti* mixed with *karma* (*karma-miśrā-bhakti*). They are therefore called *sakāma-bhaktas*, or devotees who desire the fruits of their actions. The only result of this type of *bhakti* is the fulfilment of one's material desires. Due to the superior nature of the object of their endeavour (*bhakti*), they finally attain *sālokya-mukti*, in which they achieve the same planet as the Supreme Lord, which is characterized by a predominance of happiness and majesty (*aiśvarya*). They do not fall down like a *karmī* does after enjoying in the heavenly planets. This is stated later on: *yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām* (*Gītā* 9.25).

The result of the fourth type, *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna* (*jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*) is superior to that of *karma-miśrā-bhakti*. Those who practise it attain devotion to the Lord in a mood of neutrality, *śānta-rati*, such as the four Kumāras, headed by Sanaka. By the special mercy of Śrī Bhagavān and His devotees, this type of *bhakti* culminates in attaining the super-excellent result of *prema*, which is seen in people like Śukadeva Gosvāmī. When *karma-miśrā-bhakti* is selflessly performed, it results in *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*, the result of which has just been explained.

Sometimes, a person who is performing *bhakti* mixed with *karma* or *jñāna* attains *prema* in servitorship and other moods, due to his intense desire, which is developed by the association of devotees who

have that same mood. That *prema*, however, is predominated by awe and reverence. The result of pure devotion (otherwise called *śuddha-bhakti*, *ananya-bhakti*, *akiñcana*, *uttamā-bhakti* and so forth), which is free from *jñāna* and *karma* and which has various limbs of practice, is that one attains the position of one of Kṛṣṇa's loving associates in the mood of a servant, a friend and so on. Many commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* substantiate this. The concept of ultimate perfection in the performance of *bhakti*, known as *sādhya-bhakti*, has also been briefly explained in this commentary.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, "It is generally not possible for miscreants (*duṣkṛta*) to perform *bhajana* of Me, because they are not on the path of gradually developing their consciousness. Sometimes, however, such people attain service to Me by chance. Among those with piety (*sukṛti*) who lead a regulated life, four types are qualified to perform *bhajana* of Me.

"Those who are engaged in fruitive activities remember Me when they are afflicted by some misery. They are called *ārta*, the distressed. Even those who are bereft of piety sometimes remember Me when in distress.

"The foolish (*mūḍha*), who adhere to morality as described in the previous verse, engage in the gradual process of inquiring about *tattva-jñāna*, categorical knowledge of the Truth. By this, they feel the necessity of accepting the existence of the Supreme Lord. Since He is the object of their inquisitiveness, they gradually remember Me.

"*Narādhama*s, the lowest among mankind, take up *bhakti* and then later discard it. They gradually become dissatisfied with their concept of an ethical controller and come to realize the real controller of morality. They then become regulated devotees, and since they turn to Me to fulfil their desired goals, they are known as *arthārthī*, or those desirous of wealth.

"When the *jīva* realizes that knowledge of *brahma* and Paramātmā is incomplete, he takes shelter of pure knowledge of Me. The covering of *māyā* is then removed, and knowing himself to be My eternal servant, he accepts My full shelter.

“Those who are distressed have the defect of possessing various desires; those who are inquisitive have the defect of bondage to moralistic knowledge; the seekers of wealth have the defect of striving to attain the celestial heavenly planets; and the *jñānīs*, who think that *bhagavat-tattva* (fundamental truths in relation to Supreme Lord) is temporary, have the defect of wanting to merge into *brahma*. When these impurities are removed, these four types of persons become eligible to perform pure *bhakti*. As long as these impurities exist in them, their pure *bhakti* is considered to be mixed with another process (*pradhānī-bhūtā*). They attain *kevalā-*, *akiñcinā-* or *uttamā-bhakti* when their contaminations are completely removed.”

The word *sukṛti* used in this verse means ‘piety that is generated from following the principles of *varṇa* and *āśrama*’. Such pious persons, whose *bhakti* is mixed with another process, engage in service to Bhagavān in four ways. The first three are examples of *karma-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*.

- (1) *Ārta*: the kings who were captured by Jarāsandha, and Gajendra, who was caught by a crocodile.
- (2) *Jijñāsu*: Śaunaka and other ṛṣīs who were inquisitive about *ātma-jñāna*.
- (3) *Arthārthī*: those such as Dhruva, who sought wealth.

The fourth is an example of *jñāna-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*.

- (4) *Jñānī*: the four Kumāras are in this category.

Pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti is defined as that *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* in which *bhakti* predominates, or in other words, where *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are subordinate to *bhakti*.

Kevalā-bhakti is defined as follows:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (I.I.I.I)

-bhakti is performed when a person is free from all desires except to render service to Kṛṣṇa, when his intelligence is completely free

from an impersonal conception of the Truth and from affinity to *nitya* (regular) and *naimittika* (causal, or occasional) *karma*, *yoga*, *tapasya*, etc., and when he renders service to Kṛṣṇa in a favourable way.

Guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti is defined as that process in which *karma*, *jñāna*, and *yoga* predominate, not *bhakti*. When *bhakti* is only practised to assist in the attainment of the heavenly planets or liberation, then such activity is merely called *karma*, *jñāna* is called *jñāna*, and *yoga* is called *yoga*. Such *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are not pure *bhakti* but *bhakti* predominated by the modes of nature. *Guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti* is not considered to be in the category of *bhakti* because *bhakti* is not predominant.

In conclusion, therefore, *bhakti* is of two types: *kevalā* and *pradhānī-bhūtā*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has given detailed explanations of *bhakti-tattva* in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. For this information, one should consult the following verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *ātmārāmaś ca munayo* (1.7.10), *ṛte ṛtham yat pratīyeta* (2.9.34), *muktānām api siddhānām* (6.14.5), *yāvan nṛkāya-ratham* (7.15.45) and *ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa* (10.2.32).

VERSE 17

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

teṣāṃ jñānī nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir viśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ

teṣāṃ – among these; *jñānī* – the man in knowledge; *nitya-yuktaḥ* – is always connected to Me; *eka-bhaktiḥ* – and exclusively attracted to Me; *viśiṣyate* – is distinguished; *priyaḥ* – dear; *hi* – certainly; *jñāninaḥ* – to the *jñānī*; *ati-artham* – exceedingly; *ahaṃ* – I; *saḥ* – he; *ca* – and; *mama* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear.

The *jñānī*, My exclusive devotee who is eternally and exclusively attached to Me, is the best of these, because I am very dear to him and he is very dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Who is the best of the four types of devotees who are eligible to perform *bhakti*?” In answer, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *teṣām*. “Those *jñānīs* who are always united with Me are the best of the four. By the practice of *jñāna*, their thoughts are completely under control and thus their minds remain one-pointed. The other three types (*ārta* and so on) are not like this.” Arjuna then asks, “Do all *jñānīs* worship You out of fear that they may fail in their endeavour to attain *jñāna*?” In response, Bhagavān says *eka-bhakti*. *Eka* means ‘prominent’. This means, “Those *jñānīs* in whom *bhakti* is prominent (*pradhānī-bhūtā*) perform *bhajana* of Me, unlike other *jñānīs* in whom *jñāna* is prominent. Those who are attached to *bhakti* alone are *bhakti-eka*, and they are *jñānīs* in name only.

“I, in My beautiful Śyāmasundara form, am very dear to the *jñānīs*. In the states of both practice and perfection, they are unable to give up their attachment to this form. Also, to the degree that they surrender to Me – *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante* (*Gītā* 4.11) – they are dear to Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “When the distressed, the inquisitive, the seekers of wealth and the *jñānīs* become free from impurities, they all become My devoted followers. Among them, the *jñānīs* attain pure *jñāna*, having given up the impurity of *jñāna*, or the desire for salvation. They then become endowed with *bhakti-yoga* and attain superiority over the other three types of devotees. This means that although the process of *karma* cleanses the living entity, who is naturally conscious, of all impurities, the living entity’s *svarūpa* is not realized to the extent that it is revealed through *jñāna-yoga*. Ultimately, by associating submissively with devotees, everyone realizes their *svarūpa*. During the *sādhana* stage, only the *jñānī-bhaktas* are specifically endowed with one-pointed, pure devotion, and they are superior to the other three types of eligible persons described above. They are My unalloyed servants. Thus I am very dear to them and they are also very dear to Me.” Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī is such a personality. Previously, he was an impersonal *brahma-jñānī*, but in the association of Śrī Vyāsadeva, he realized *bhagavat-jñāna* (*prema-bhakti*). During the *sādhana* stage, those devotees who have attained pure knowledge

serve Kṛṣṇa in a way that is also supremely pure, without the slightest scent of materialism.

VERSE 18

उदाराः सर्वः एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ १८ ॥

*udārāḥ sarvaḥ evaite jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam
āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamāṁ gatim*

udārāḥ – magnanimous; *sarvaḥ* – all; *eva* – certainly; *ete* – these; *jñānī* – the man in knowledge; *tu* – but; *ātma eva* – My very self; *me* – by Me; *matam* – is considered; *āsthitaḥ* – abiding; *saḥ* – that; *hi* – indeed; *yukta-ātmā* – soul is always connected; *mām* – in Me; *eva* – certainly; *anuttamām* – as His unsurpassable; *gatim* – goal (of life).

These are all certainly great souls, but still, I consider the *jñānī* to be as dear to Me as My own self. His thoughts always dwelling in Me, he stalwartly takes shelter of Me as his supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Does that mean that the other three types of persons, the distressed and so on, are not dear to You?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “No, no, that is not so,” and speaks this verse beginning with *udārāḥ*. “Whoever worships Me with a desire to receive something from Me and accepts that benediction when I award it to him is dear to Me. Having had his desires fulfilled by Me, he gives Me the quality of being *bhakta-vatsala* (affectionate to My devotees). The words *jñānī tv ātmaiva*, however, refer to the *jñānī* who is considered to be My own self and extremely dear to Me. This is because while performing *bhajana* of Me, he does not expect anything in return, such as residence in the heavenly planets or liberation. As a result I always remain under his control. He is like My own self. This is My opinion. Because he knows only Me, Śyāmasundara, as the highest destination, he remains free from anxiety and he is determined to attain Me. He does not take shelter of My impersonal, formless aspect, *brahma-nirvāṇa*.

“I am always affectionate to My devotees, and I consider such a *jñānī*, who is endowed with *niškāma-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, to be My very self. But one who is endowed with unalloyed *kevalā-bhakti* is even more dear than My own self.”

It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.15): “O Uddhava, as a *bhakta*, you are so dear to Me. Not even My own son Brahmā or Śaṅkara, Śaṅkarṣaṇa, Laksmī-devī or My own *svarūpa* are as dear to Me as you are.” Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.64) says, “Without the association of My saintly devotees, I do not desire even the bliss of My own *svarūpa*.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.42) says that although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *ātmarāma*, He who delights within Himself, He mercifully enjoys pastimes with the *gopīs*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “When the above-described four classes of devotees accept *kevalā-bhakti*, they become supremely exalted. However, the *jñānī-bhaktas* are situated in Me because they have more determination than the others to realize Me, who am the Supreme Conscious Entity and the highest destination of their endeavours. They are very dear to Me and are able to control Me completely.”

People are able to perform *bhajana* to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a result of spiritual merit accumulated in their previous lives. Those who are averse to Kṛṣṇa remain non-devotees, engaged in the worship of various demigods and goddesses. Therefore, those who perform worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are endowed with great intelligence, whether they have material desires or are free from them. This is also expressed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10):

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

Everyone – whether *akāma* (a devotee), *sarva-kāma* (a *karmī*) or *mokṣa-kāma* (a *jñānī* or *yogī*) – is encouraged to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the direct method of devotional service.*

In his *Śārārtha-darśinī* commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the word *udāra-dhīḥ* to mean ‘of pure

and great intelligence (*subuddhi*): “The worship of Bhagavān is the symptom of great intelligence, regardless of whether one has material desires or is free from them. The absence of such worship is a symptom of impure and base intelligence.”

What to speak of the devotees who are free from material desires, even those devotees who have material desires attain service to Bhagavān in His abode, by His mercy or by the mercy of His devotees, after they have enjoyed their desired objective. Therefore, they possess great intelligence.

VERSE 19

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९ ॥

bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ

bahūnām – of many; *janmanām* – births; *ante* – at the end; *jñānavān* – one who has knowledge; *mām* – of Me; *prapadyate* – takes shelter; *vāsudevaḥ* – Vāsudeva; *sarvam* – is everything; *iti* – that; *saḥ* – that; *mahā-ātmā* – great soul; *sudurlabhaḥ* – extremely rare.

After many births, the *jñānī* who is endowed with the knowledge that everything, both conscious and inert, is related to Vāsudeva fully takes shelter of Me. Such a great soul is extremely rare.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following question may be raised: “Since the *jñānī-bhaktas* accept Your shelter as the supreme destination, they certainly attain You, but how long will it take for such *jñānīs* to become qualified to enter *bhakti*?” In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *bahūnām*.

“*Vāsudevaḥ sarvam* means that those *jñānīs* take shelter of Me when, after many, many births, they see Vāsudeva everywhere. Such *sādhus* surrender to Me due to the influence of good association, which is arranged by My will. That is, they surrender to Me according to the spiritual sentiments received in such association. Among thousands

and thousands of men, such a *jñānī-bhakta*, whose thoughts are fixed in Me, is very rare, what to speak of the exclusive (*aikāntika*) *bhaktas*, who are far more rare.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: “Of the four types of devotees (such as the distressed), the *jñānīs* who have fixed faith in Me, Kṛṣṇa, are the best.” A *jñānī* who has spiritual fortune (*sukṛti*) attains the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas after many, many lifetimes, and he thus becomes aware of the transcendental form, or *svarūpa*, of Śrī Vāsudeva. He sees Bhagavān Vāsudeva everywhere, which means that he sees everything as being related to Him. Thus he obtains pure devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such great souls are extremely rare.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has given the following comment on this verse: “The *bhaktas* who are distressed (*ārta*), inquisitive (*jijñāsu*) and in search of wealth (*arthārthī*) enjoy the highest type of material happiness for many lifetimes as a result of devotion to Me. Finally, they become detached from such material pleasure, and in some lifetime, they come in contact with Vaiṣṇavas who know the fundamental principles of My *svarūpa*. In that association, they attain knowledge of My *svarūpa*. Knowing only Me, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva and the Absolute Truth, they take shelter of Me.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “After performing *sādhana* for many, many lifetimes, the *jīvas* attain pure knowledge and become steadfast in transcendental consciousness. In the beginning of such spiritual practice, when they are trying to give up their mundane identification, they take support of impersonal monism to some extent. During this stage, they develop disgust for the material world, but they also remain indifferent toward spirituality, especially regarding the variegated nature of spiritual life. When they have become a little advanced in the eternal, conscious existence of the self and in understanding the special nature of spiritual life, which consists of variegated activities, they become attracted to it and surrender to Me, who am the Supreme Conscious Form. At that time, they understand that this mundane world is not independent but rather a perverted reflection of the conscious reality, the transcendental realm, and that a relationship with Lord Vāsudeva also exists in this

world. Therefore, everything is in relationship with Vāsudeva. Those great souls (*mahātmās*), who have such a surrendered attitude towards Me, are very rare.”

VERSE 20

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥

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

kāmaiḥ – lusty desires, such as for wealth; *taiḥ taiḥ* – by their various; *hṛta-jñānāḥ* – those whose knowledge is stolen; *prapadyante* – worship; *anya-devatāḥ* – other gods; *tam tam* – the various; *niyamam* – regulations; *āsthāya* – practising; *prakṛtyā* – nature; *niyatāḥ* – controlled; *svayā* – by their own.

Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires, such as the desire for wealth, try to eliminate their distress by following the rules of worship of a particular demigod who can fulfil their desires. Thus being controlled by their own nature, they worship such demigods.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Very well, I have understood that even those with material desires, such as the distressed, become somewhat successful by performing worship of You, but what is the destination of those distressed persons who worship the demigods for relief from their miseries?” In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *kāmais taiḥ* and the next three verses. “Those who think that the demigods, such as the sun-god Sūrya, can immediately remove miseries like disease and that Śrī Viṣṇu cannot have lost their intelligence. They remain bound by their own nature, and it is that ill-nature which keeps them from surrendering to Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Intelligent and fortunate persons who are still influenced by various types of desires try to satisfy

their desires by worshipping Parameśvara Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When they have fulfilled their desires, they gradually lose interest in such enjoyment by His mercy and can worship Him. In this regard, the following verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10 and 5.19.26) are worth contemplating:

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāradhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param*

Whether one is without desire [the condition of the devotees], desirous of all fruitive results, or seeking liberation, one should try to worship the Supreme Person for complete perfection, culminating in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.*

*yaiḥ śraddhayā barhiṣi bhāgaśo havir
niruptam iṣṭam vidhi-mantra-vastutaḥ
ekaḥ pṛthañ-nāmabhir āhuto mudā
grhṇāti pūrṇaḥ svayam āśiṣām prabhu*

In India [Bhārata-varṣa], there are many worshippers of the demigods, the various officials appointed by the Supreme Lord, such as Indra, Candra and Sūrya, all of whom are worshipped differently. The worshippers offer the demigods their oblations, considering the demigods part and parcel of the whole, the Supreme Lord. Therefore, the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts these offerings and gradually raises the worshippers to the real standard of devotional service by fulfilling their desires and aspirations. Because the Lord is complete, He offers the worshippers the benedictions they desire even if they worship only part of His transcendental body.*

As a result of being averse to Kṛṣṇa, fools and unfortunate persons remain bound by the modes of passion and ignorance and think that the demigods can fulfil their desires quickly. They therefore worship various unimportant demigods according to their individual natures in an attempt to satisfy their various material cravings. Thus the perishable fruits they seek are soon attained.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Those such as the distressed are averse to Me as long as their impurities remain, but when they are freed from material impurities, they naturally

perform *bhakti* to Me. Those who take shelter of My transcendental form, however, do not become averse to Me, even though they may be full of desires. I free them from all their material motivations within a short time. Conversely, those who are averse to Me lose their spiritual intelligence and, being impelled by their material hankerings, they worship particular demigods who can quickly award the trivial objects of their desires. They do not love Me, the eternal, beautiful Śyāmasundara, the embodiment of all spiritual existence, because they are driven away from Me by their lower natures, which are in the modes of ignorance (*tāmasika*) and passion (*rājasika*), and they worship particular demigods, following whatever insignificant rules are favourable to such worship.”

VERSE 21

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

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

yaḥ yaḥ – whichever; *yām yām tanum* – whichever form of the demigods; *bhaktaḥ* – [fruitive] devotee; *śraddhayā* – with faith; *arcitum* – to worship; *icchati* – desires; *tasya tasya* – to that particular devotee; *acalām* – unshakeable; *śraddhām* – faith; *tām* – in that (demigod); *eva* – certainly; *vidadhāmi aham* – I bestow.

Whichever demigod the fruitive devotee wants to faithfully worship, I, as the indwelling witness of everything, make his faith in that particular demigod unflinching.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may say, “For the auspiciousness of their devotees, those demigods generate within those devotees faith in *bhakti* to You, being pleased by their worship.” To this, Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying, “No, it is not so. The demigods are unable to generate faith in devotion to themselves, so how can they generate faith in *bhakti* to Me?” For this reason He speaks this verse beginning

with the words *yo yo yam*. “Whichever demigod they may want to worship, such as Sūrya, who is but one of My opulences, I, the indwelling Antaryāmī and witness of everything, inspire their faith in that particular demigod and not in Me. Even those demigods are unable to generate faith in Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Some think that as a result of their worshipping the demigods, faith in devotion to Bhagavān will be inspired in their hearts. However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains that it is He as Antaryāmī, the indwelling Supersoul, who gives the demigod worshippers steady faith in whichever demigod they care to worship according to their desires, although the demigods are nothing but His own potencies, or *vibhūti*. He does not inspire faith in Himself in the hearts of those who are averse to Him. If the demigods cannot generate faith towards themselves in their worshippers, how, then, can they create faith in Bhagavān?

VERSE 22

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārāadhanam īhate
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiiva vihītān hi tān

saḥ – he; *tayā śraddhayā* – with that faith; *yuktaḥ* – endowed; *tasya* – of that demigod; *arāadhanam* – the worship; *īhate* – tries to perform; *labhate* – he attains; *ca* – and; *tataḥ* – thereby; *kāmān* – his desires; *mayā* – by Me in the form of the indwelling witness; *eva* – in actuality; *vihītān* – granted; *hi* – alone; *tān* – those.

Endowed with such faith, he attempts to worship that particular demigod and thus attains the fulfilment of his desires, which in actuality is granted by Me alone.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Īhate* means ‘he does’. They attain their desired ends by worshipping the respective demigods, but in actuality those

demigods are not able to fulfil those desires. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān says, *māyaiva vihitān*. “In reality, those desires are fulfilled by Me alone.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Some think that if they worship the demigods, they will obtain the fruits of their desires by the mercy of that demigod. But from this verse it is clear that the demigods are unable to award the results of worship performed to them. Those who worship the demigods can obtain their desired results only when their worship is sanctioned by Bhagavān, but such ignorant people cannot understand that it is Śrī Bhagavān as the indwelling witness who has fulfilled their desires. Here it is seen that the demigods cannot generate faith in themselves even among their own worshippers. Similarly, they cannot independently award the results of fruitive activities unless Antaryāmī Śrī Bhagavān sanctions it.

VERSE 23

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

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

antavat – perishable; *tu* – but; *phalam* – fruit; *teṣām* – by those; *tad* – that; *bhavati* – is; *alpa-medhasām* – persons of meagre intelligence; *devān* – the demigods; *deva-yajāḥ* – the worshippers of the gods; *yānti* – achieve; *mat-bhaktāḥ* – My devotees; *yānti* – achieve; *mām* – to Me; *api* – whereas.

However, the fruit attained by such men of meagre intelligence is perishable. The worshippers of demigods achieve the planets of the demigods, whereas My devotees achieve Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The results obtained by worshipping the demigods are perishable and transitory. One may raise the question, “Although the endeavour performed in both types of worship is equal, why do You award perishable results to the worshippers of the demigods, and imperishable results to Your own devotees? For You, who are the Supreme Lord, Parameśvara, this is certainly unjust.”

Śrī Bhagavān responds by saying, “This is not unjust. Those who worship the demigods attain those demigods, and My devotees attain Me. One attains the object of one’s worship. This is indeed justice. If the demigods themselves are perishable, how will their worshippers become imperishable, and why will the results of their worship not be destroyed?” For this reason, these worshippers have been called less intelligent. Bhagavān is eternal and so are His devotees, His *bhakti* and the results of His *bhakti*. They are all eternal.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A question may be raised, “Since the demigods, as His opulences (*vibhūti*), are also the limbs of Śrī Bhagavān, there is no difference between the worship of the demigods and that of the devotees of Bhagavān. What is the harm in worshipping these demigods if, within the worshippers, Bhagavān Himself generates faith in their worshipable deity and also grants them the result of their fruitive activities?”

In response to this Śrī Bhagavān replies, “If, being impelled by some desire, one takes shelter of the demigods, he is called *hṛta-jñāna*, a person who has lost his intelligence.”

Since he attains only perishable results, he is described as less intelligent. Someone may say that because Bhagavān bestows eternal results upon His *bhaktas* and perishable results upon the worshippers of the demigods, He is not equal to both; rather He is biased. In response it can be said that it is certainly fair and just to receive the result that one desires. Because both the demigods and their planets are temporary, their worshippers attain perishable results on perishable planets. However, the devotees of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is *sac-cid-ānanda* – composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss – attain eternal service to Him in His eternal abode by worshipping Him. Therefore, those who are intelligent worship the eternal form of Śrī Bhagavān even if they have material desires. They do not worship other demigods and goddesses.

VERSE 24

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

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

avyaktam – the unmanifest; *vyaktim* – a manifest form (personality); *āpannam* – one who has taken birth like an ordinary human being afflicted by the illusionary potency; *manyante* – consider; *mām* – Me; *abuddhayaḥ* – the unintelligent; *param* – supreme; *bhāvam* – form, birth and pastimes which are transcendental to material nature; *ajānantaḥ* – they do not understand; *mama* – of My; *avyayam* – imperishable; *anuttamam* – top most.

The unintelligent consider that I, who am unmanifest and beyond mundane existence, take birth like an ordinary human being. They do not know the supreme, excellent, immutable and transcendental nature of My form, birth, pastimes and qualities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Even those who know scriptures such as the Vedas do not know the truth about Me, what to speak of less intelligent worshippers of the demigods. Brahmā said to Me, ‘O Bhagavān! O Deva! Only those who have attained a particle of mercy from Your lotus feet are able to understand Your real glories. No one else will be able to understand You, even if they search for a very long time’ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.29). Therefore, everyone but My devotee lacks the necessary intelligence to understand My factual position.”

To convey this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *avyaktam*. “Those who are unintelligent consider Me to be the unmanifest *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, which is beyond the mundane plane. They think that I have no eternal form and that My manifest human-like *svarūpa* is illusory like that of mortals, because I took birth in the house of Vasudeva. This is because they do not know My *para-bhāva*, My transcendental form, birth, pastimes, etc. What is the nature of that *bhāva*? It is eternal and supreme.”

The *Medinī* [a Sanskrit dictionary] states that existence, nature, purpose, endeavour, birth, action, pastimes and objects are all *bhāva*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* has established that Bhagavān’s form, qualities, birth, pastimes and so on are endless and therefore eternal. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “My

para-bhāva, that is, My *svarūpa*, is immutable. It is eternal, supremely pure and composed of spiritual existence (*viśuddha-sattva*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Men who have fruitive desires are less intelligent. It is a matter of great surprise, however, that those who are expert in scriptures such as the Veda and Vedānta also disregard the omnipotent *līlā-māyā-svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who takes birth, performs pastimes and so forth. Although He is the supreme objective established by the Vedas, they worship His featureless, immutable form of *brahma*, considering that to be supreme. This indicates that they lack intelligence.

VERSE 25

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam

na – not; *aham* – I; *prakāśaḥ* – revealed; *sarvasya* – to all; *yogamāyā* – by My internal potency; *samāvṛtaḥ* – covered; *mūḍhaḥ* – foolish; *ayam* – these; *na abhijānāti* – do not comprehend; *lokaḥ* – people; *mām* – Me; *ajam* – the unborn; *avyayam* – and imperishable.

I am not manifest to all. To the foolish I am veiled by My *yogamāyā* potency; therefore, they do not know My unborn and imperishable *svarūpa*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may raise a question: “If it is to be accepted that You are eternal and have an eternal form, qualities and pastimes, then why aren’t these pastimes visible at all times?” In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *nāham*. “I do not manifest Myself at all times, in every country, and before each and every person. The sun is continuously present in the universe, yet when it is blocked by the Sumeru Mountain, it is not seen by everyone at every moment. Similarly, although I exist

eternally, with My qualities, pastimes and associates, I am covered by My *yogamāyā*, so I am only seen occasionally, in some particular universe. I am not seen everywhere, all the time, by everyone.”

Someone may say, “The sun is always present among the luminaries in this universe, but it is not seen by everyone in all countries at the same time. The sun-god however, can always be seen in his abode. In the same way, like the sun, You are always visible to those in Your abode. Why, then, are You not visible to those now situated in Your abodes such as Mathurā and Dvārakā?” In response, Kṛṣṇa says, “If the Sumeru Mountain is in the midst of the luminaries, the sun will be blocked by it and will not be visible. Similarly, *yogamāyā* is always present in My abodes such as Mathurā, just like Mount Sumeru in the sun’s abode.” Therefore, Kṛṣṇa, who is like the sun, is not continuously visible. At certain periods, however, everyone can see Him. “That is why those who are foolish are not able to understand Me, Śyāmasundara, the son of Vasudeva, as being materially unborn and immutable. Although I am an ocean of all-auspicious qualities, they eventually give Me up to worship My impersonal *nirviśeṣa-svarūpa, brahma*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: In Goloka Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes are eternally manifest. Through the medium of His *yogamāyā* potency, He sometimes descends with His eternal associates to manifest His eternal pastimes out of compassion for the living entities in this world. Those who are unaware of this *tattva* are unable to understand this secret. They think that the unmanifest, impersonal *nirviśeṣa-brahma* is the only Absolute Truth, and that Bhagavān, whose names, forms, qualities and activities are transcendental, has manifested Himself from that *nirviśeṣa-brahma*. Such people have been described here as fools (*mūḍha*) because their intelligence is covered by the deluding potency, *mahāmāyā*.

Here, it should be understood that Bhagavān has two types of *māyā-śakti*: *yogamāyā* (internal) and *mahāmāyā* (external). *Yogamāyā* is His internal potency, the *svarūpa-śakti*, which is expert in making the impossible possible. And the external potency, *mahāmāyā* is the shadow of this *yogamāyā*. *Yogamāyā* arranges *yoga*, the enactment of the pastimes of Bhagavān, who is omniscient (*sarva-jñā*) and omnipotent

(*sarva-śaktimān*). *Yogamāyā* does this by putting Him and His eternal associates in transcendental illusion. She also arranges for the *jīvas* who are perfect by dint of their devoted practice of *sādhana-bhakti* to be united (*yoga*) with Bhagavān. For this reason, this potency is called *yogamāyā*. On the other hand, *mahāmāyā* bewitches those *jīvas* who are averse to Bhagavān and binds them by the results of their various activities. A cloud cannot cover the sun; rather, it is only the eyes of the living entities situated on the Earth that are covered and deprived of seeing the sun. Similarly, *mahāmāyā* cannot cover Bhagavān but can only cover the knowledge of the living entities and thus prevent them from seeing Him.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Do not think that I was previously unmanifest and that I have now manifested this beautiful *sac-cid-ānanda* Śyāmasundara form. This form is eternal. Although it is like the self-effulgent spiritual sun of the transcendental realm, it remains hidden from the vision of common men because it is covered by the shadow of *yogamāyā*. The less intelligent cannot understand My immutable form because of this covering.”

VERSE 26

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २६ ॥

vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni cārjuna
bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana

veda aham – I know; *samatītāni* – the past; *vartamānāni* – present; *ca* – and; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *bhaviṣyāṇi* – future; *ca* – and; *bhūtāni* – living beings, whether moving or non-moving; *mām* – Me; *tu* – but; *veda* – knows; *na kaścana* – no one.

O Arjuna, I know all the moving and non-moving beings of the past, present and future, but Me, no one knows.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “That *māyā* which cannot bewilder its foundation (Me) is called *bahirāṅga-māyā* (the external illusory

potency). *Antaraṅga-māyā* (the internal illusory potency) does not cover knowledge of Me.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *vedāham*. “No one can know Me fully, neither those in this mundane world nor those in the spiritual world, nor even personalities such as Mahārudra (Śiva), who are omniscient. That *māyā* which arranges *yoga* (union) between the *bhaktas* and Bhagavān is called *yogamāyā*. Most people’s knowledge is covered by *mahāmāyā*; therefore they cannot know Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One may raise the doubt: “If Bhagavān is covered by *yogamāyā*, He must also be in illusion like the living entity and have the defect of ignorance.” In response Kṛṣṇa says, “*Māyā*, being subject to My prowess, remains under My control and serves Me from afar, in the form of a curtain. This *māyā* cannot cause any transformation to take place in Me.” *Māyā* cannot cover knowledge of Bhagavān. Śrī Bhagavān is again emphasizing this. “I know everything in the past, present and future, but even great, omniscient personalities such as Mahārudra do not know Me fully, because their knowledge is covered by *yogamāyā*, what to speak of common men.” For this reason, common people do not accept that the human-like form of Śyāmasundara Kṛṣṇa is eternal. It is not possible to understand the fundamental truths regarding Śrī Kṛṣṇa and see His pastimes without the mercy and shelter of *yogamāyā*, even if one has knowledge of His *nirviśeṣa-brahma* or of His partial expansion, Paramātmā.

VERSE 27

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥ २७ ॥

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

icchā-dveṣa-samutthena – born of desire and hate; *dvandva-mohena* – bewildered by duality in the form of happiness and distress; *bhārata* – O scion of Bharata; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all living beings; *sammohaṁ* –

into complete illusion; *sarge* – at the time of creation; *yānti* – enter; *parantapa* – O Arjuna, conqueror of the foe.

O scion of Bharata, O Parantapa, at the time of creation, all living entities enter into complete illusion, bewildered by the dualities of happiness and distress, which are born of desire and hate.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “For how long have the living entities been bewildered by Your *māyā*?” Śrī Bhagavān anticipates this question by speaking this verse beginning with *icchā*. “*Sarga* means ‘creation’. All *jīvas* have been bewildered since the beginning of creation. Bewildered by what? By desire and hate, which are born from their previous actions, or *karma*. They are deluded by the dualities that arise from the desire for sense objects that are to their liking and from aversion to those that are not. Examples of this are honour and dishonour, cold and heat, happiness and distress, male and female. The living entities are bewildered by the designations that are delusions born of ignorance, such as ‘I am honoured and therefore I am happy’; ‘I am disrespected and therefore I am miserable’; ‘this beautiful woman is my wife’; or ‘this man is my husband’. In other words, they become deeply attached to wife, children and so on. Those with such deep worldly attachment do not have the qualification to engage in *bhakti* to Me. As I said to Uddhava (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.8), ‘By good fortune, a person who has developed faith in hearing topics of Me and who feels neither repulsion nor excessive attachment to sense objects attains perfection in *bhakti-yoga*.’”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *jīvas* remain bereft of knowledge of the Supreme because they are deluded by illusion, or *māyā*. At that time, being further bewildered by the delusion of duality arising from desire and hate, their aversion to Kṛṣṇa becomes deeper. The reason for this is that the living entity in his pure state sees, with his transcendental senses, the eternal form of Bhagavān. However, the conditioned soul within the material world is overpowered by ignorance (*avidyā*) and remains bewildered by duality, which arises from desire and hate. He is then rendered

bereft of the proper perception of transcendence. Bhagavān manifests His eternal form and becomes visible to the material eyes of the living entities on the strength of His spiritual potency, the *cit-śakti*. Even then, such persons think that the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān is temporary. They do not have the proper means or knowledge to perceive Him, because they are covered by *māyā*. This is their great misfortune.

VERSE 28

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

yeṣāṃ tv anta-gataṃ pāpaṃ janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ

yeṣām – whose; *tu* – but; *anta-gataṃ* – have come to an end; *pāpaṃ* – sinful activities; *janānām* – those persons; *puṇya-karmaṇām* – who have performed pious activities; *te* – they; *dvandva-moha* – from the bewilderment of duality, such as happiness and misery; *nirmuktāḥ* – freed; *bhajante* – worship; *mām* – Me; *dṛḍha-vratāḥ* – with determined vows.

Those pious persons, however, whose sins have been eradicated become free from the bewilderment of duality, such as happiness and misery, and engage in worship of Me with firm determination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Who, then, has the qualification to perform *bhakti*?” In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yeṣām*. “When a person’s sins are almost destroyed by pious activities, the mode of goodness rises within him and reduces the mode of ignorance and its effect, delusion. When he associates with My devotee, who is not overly attached to this world, his delusion decreases, and he voluntarily engages in worship of Me. Only those whose sins are fully destroyed by the practice of devotional service to Me have become completely free from delusion and perform worship of Me with great determination.”

Pious deeds alone are not the cause of *bhakti*. Śrī Bhagavān says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.9), “Although a person engages with great endeavour in *yoga*, analytical study, charity, vows, austerities, sacrifices, renunciation and study of the scriptures, he cannot attain *bhakti*, or devotion to Me.” One does not attain *bhakti-yoga* simply by taking shelter of pious activities. This has been established in various ways.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: There are two ways in which the conditioned souls (*baddha-jīvas*) attain one-pointedness in *bhajana* to Bhagavān. Firstly, a *jīva* who is bound by the deluding potency may, by good fortune, develop faith in hearing *hari-kathā* in the association of devotees, although he is not yet performing *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. Then, by continuously hearing descriptions of His name, form and qualities, he becomes free from sins, impediments (*anarthas*) and detached from worldliness. He develops fixed faith in Kṛṣṇa and progressively enters exclusive devotion (*aikāntika-bhakti*).

In the second category are the *jīvas* who have not completely renounced sense objects but who are also not excessively attached to them. When such *jīvas*, by great fortune, attain the association of a pure devotee, or a *mahā-bhāgavata*, they engage in *bhajana*, and as a result, all their sins, their attachment to sense enjoyment and their delusion are removed, and they also develop steadiness in *bhajana*. Having achieved such steadiness, they enter into exclusive devotion. The mercy and association of perfected souls and one’s own endeavour to perform *bhajana* are the only means of attaining *bhakti*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Hear from Me how one can gain the qualification to realize My eternal form. A person with a sinful, demoniac nature does not have *vidvat-pratīti*, or the knowledge to see Me properly. A person who has completely eradicated their sins by performing many pious deeds and by observing a regulated religious life first performs *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, worship of Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruit of his prescribed duties. He next enters *jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge, and finally he achieves ecstatic absorption in Me through *dhyāna-yoga*, meditation. Only then is he able to realize My eternal, beautiful, fully spiritual

Śyāmasundara form. That realization, which comes by virtue of transcendental knowledge (*vidyā*), is called *vidvat-pratīti*. Only those who are endowed with this realization can gradually become free from both duality (*dvaita*) and non-duality (*advaita*) and can engage in *bhajana* of Me with great determination.”

VERSE 29

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥

jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya mām āśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam adhyātmanī karma cākḥilam

jarā-maraṇa – from old age and death; *mokṣāya* – for deliverance; *mām* – of Me; *āśritya* – taking shelter; *yatanti* – endeavour; *ye te* – those who; *brahma* – spirit; *tat* – that (Supreme Personality); *viduḥ* – understand; *kṛtsnam* – in its entirety; *adhyātmanī* – the nature of the *jīvātmā*; *karma* – fruitive action and its result in the form of material existence; *ca* – and; *ākḥilam* – the sum total.

Those who strive for liberation from old age and death by taking refuge of Me attain knowledge of *brahma*, awareness of the pure constitutional nature of the living entity, and an understanding of the principle of fruitive action, which is the cause of their bondage to the material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān said earlier that all *sakāma-bhaktas*, such as the distressed, become perfect by worshipping Him. Others, however, who worship the demigods, degrade themselves and remain in the material world. In saying this, Bhagavān is also referring to those who are unqualified to perform worship of Him.

Here, in this verse beginning with *jarā*, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking about the fourth type of *sakāma-bhakta*. “Those *yogīs* who endeavour to stop the cycle of old age and death and who worship Me with a desire for liberation are, by the influence of My *bhakti*, eventually able to attain full understanding of *brahma* (that is, My eternal, beautiful

Śyāmasundara form), *adhyātmā* (the self, or the *jīva* who possesses a body and exists in it as an enjoyer) and the principle of *karma* (how the living entities enter this material world).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān first explained the first three types of *sakāma-bhaktas*, such as the distressed. “They initially worship Me in order to attain their desired goals. After they have attained these goals and understood that such aims are actually miserable and degrading, they become detached from them. Finally, by attaining *sādhu-saṅga*, they become successful and attain My one-pointed devotional service, or *aikāntikī-bhakti*.” In the present verse, Bhagavān is explaining the fourth type of *bhakta*, namely the *sakāma-bhakta*, who desires *mokṣa*. “When such *sakāma-bhaktas* achieve the association of My pure devotees, they lose their desire to merge with *brahma* and focus on becoming situated in their pure constitutional form as the servants of Bhagavān. These *sakāma-jñānī-bhaktas* are real *mumukṣus*, seekers of liberation. Only such *brahmabhūta-jñānī-bhaktas* (who have attained the nature of *brahma*) completely understand *brahma-tattva*, *adhyātmā-tattva* (the living entity) and *karma-tattva* and attain pure devotion.”

VERSE 30

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥३०॥

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

sa-adhibhūta – underlying principle of the gross material elements of the cosmos; *adhidaivam* – underlying principle of the demigods; *mām* – Me; *sa-adhiyajñam* – underlying principle of all sacrifices; *ca* – and; *ye* – who; *viduḥ* – know; *prayāṇa-kāle* – at the time of death; *api* – even; *ca* – and; *mām* – Me; *te* – they; *viduḥ* – know; *yukta-cetasah* – with minds attached to Me.

Those who know Me as the presiding deity, or governing principle, of the gross material elements (*adhibhūta*), the demigods (*adhidaiva*)

and sacrifice (*adhijajña*), and whose minds are attached to Me, remember Me even at the time of death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “By the influence of My *bhakti*, the knowledge of those who have realized Me as the presiding deity of creation (*adhibhūta*), the demigods (*adhidaiva*) and sacrifice (*adhijajña*) remains intact up to the time of death. Unlike others, their intelligence is not affected by the body that they will achieve in the future in accordance with their *karma* performed in this life.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *sādhimbhūta*. The words *adhibhūta*, etc., will be explained in the next chapter. Only the *bhaktas* of Bhagavān Śrī Hari can cross over *māyā* by completely understanding His *tattva*. Six types of such devotees have been delineated in this chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Seventh Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “Those who, by the power of My *bhakti*, know Me as the governing principle of *adhibhūta-tattva*, *adhidaiva-tattva* and *adhijajña-tattva* can remember Me at the time of death. They are not fearful of death because they do not forget Me.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Seventh Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER EIGHT



Tāraka-Brahma-Yoga

The Yoga of Absolute Deliverance

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

किं तद् ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*kiṁ tad brahma kim adhyātman kiṁ karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtam ca kiṁ proktam adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *kim* – what?; *tad* – that; *brahma* – spiritual substance; *kim* – what?; *adhyātman* – the principle of the *jīvātmā*; *kim* – what?; *karma* – the principle of *karma*, action and reaction; *puruṣottama* – O Supreme Person; *adhibhūtam* – the basis of the gross material elements; *ca* – and; *kim* – what?; *proktam* – said to be; *adhidaiva* – the principle underlying the celestial deities; *kim* – what?; *ucyate* – it is said.

Arjuna inquired: O Puruṣottama, what is *brahma* (Spiritual Reality)? What is *adhyātma* (the pure self)? What is *karma* (the principle of action)? What is *adhibhūta* (the basis of this material manifestation)? And what is *adhidaiva* (the principle underlying the demigods)?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the first two verses of this chapter, Arjuna raises seven questions. Six of these relate to the factual meanings of the six words mentioned at the end of the last chapter: *brahma*, *adhyātma*, *karma*, *adhibhūta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña*. The

seventh question is, “How does a man whose senses are controlled know You at the time of death?” In this chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains these topics in detail, answering all of Arjuna’s questions.

VERSE 2

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन् मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

*adhiyajñah katham ko 'tra dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇa-kāle ca katham jñeyo 'si niyatātmabhiḥ*

adhiyajñah – the Lord of sacrifice; *katham* – how (does He exist?); *kaḥ* – who?; *atra* – here; *dehe* – body; *asmin* – in this; *madhusūdana* – O killer of the demon Madhu; *prayāṇa-kāle* – at the time of death; *ca* – and; *katham* – how?; *jñeyah* – to be known; *asi* – are You; *niyata-ātmabhiḥ* – by those of self-disciplined mind.

O Madhusūdana, who is *adhiyajña*, the presiding deity of sacrifice? How does He dwell within the body? And by what means are You to be known at the time of death by persons whose mind is controlled?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this Eighth Chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa responds to Arjuna’s questions. In doing so, He also describes *bhakti* that is mixed with the practice of *yoga* (*yoga-miśrā-bhakti*). He also describes pure devotion (*suddha-bhakti*).

At the end of the last chapter, Bhagavān spoke on seven topics such as *brahma*. Now, in this chapter, in this and the previous verse, Arjuna is inquiring about those topics, beginning with the words *kim tad*. Who is the presiding deity of *yajña* (*adhiyajña*)? Who resides within this body? And how can He be known? The answers are given in the following verses.

VERSE 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच—
अक्षरं परमं ब्रह्म स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

*śrī bhagavān uvāca –
akṣaram paramam brahma svabhāvo ’dhyātmam ucyate
bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the illustrious, all-opulent Lord said; *akṣaram* – the immutable; *paramam* – Supreme Truth; *brahma* – spirit; *sva-bhāvaḥ* – the nature of the living entity; *adhyātmam* – the constitutional nature of the self; *ucyate* – is known as; *bhūta* – for the living beings; *bhāva* – the creation of the material bodies, etc; *udbhava-karaḥ* – that which brings about; *visargaḥ* – the material existence of the individual soul; *karma-samjñitaḥ* – is known as *karma*.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Indeed the eternal, indestructible Supreme Truth is known as *brahma*. The living entity in his pure constitutional state is known as *adhyātma*, and the process of transmigrating through successive species of life, whereby the living entity undergoes birth, growth and so forth, is known as *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: While answering Arjuna’s questions, Śrī Bhagavān says that *brahma* is that which is imperishable and eternally supreme. “O Gārgī, the learned *brāhmaṇas* call it immutable (*akṣara*)” (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 3.8.9).

Svabhāvaḥ: Those who create material bodies because they identify their self (*ātmā*) with their body are called *svabhāvaḥ*, or living entities in the conditioned state. The word *svabhāvaḥ* also means ‘living entities in their constitutional position’, and it refers to those who situate themselves in their pure state by cultivating *bhakti*, thus attaining *svam* (Paramātmā). Here *svabhāvaḥ* does not refer to the conditioned living entity but to the pure living entity, who is also known as *adhyātma*. The living entity’s cycle of birth and death in material existence, or *visarga*, results in the gross and subtle elements creating human and other bodies, according to the consciousness of the *jīva*: *bhūta-bhāva-udbhava-karaḥ*. The cycle of material existence is created by the action (*karma*) of the living entity, so here the word *karma* indicates the living entity’s material existence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRTTI: *Brahma* means ‘that which does not perish’. It is called *akṣara* (immutable) because it is infallible.

Akṣara-tattva is eternally free from destruction and transformation and is also called Parabrahma. Here it should be understood that only Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Conscious Reality who possesses all transcendental attributes, is Parabrahma. Parabrahma does not refer to *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, His featureless impersonal aspect. Although the word *akṣara* refers to all three features of the Supreme, namely *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, here it only indicates Parabrahma, or Svayam Bhagavān (Śrī Kṛṣṇa). One should deliberate on *Gītā* 15.16–18 for a detailed understanding of this subject. This is also established in the prayers of Lord Brahmā (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.32):

yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the complete, eternal *brahma* and whose form is composed of supreme bliss, is their friend.

This is also cited in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.96):

aham iha nandaṁ vande yasyālinde paraṁ brahma

I forever worship Nanda Mahārāja in whose courtyard Parabrahma is playing as his son.

Adhyātma means *svabhāvaḥ*, or ‘the pure *jīva* situated in his unalloyed state, free from any contact with inert matter’. *Svaṁ bhāvayati* means that one maintains the conception that ‘I am this gross body’ due to contact and identification with the body. There is another meaning of *svabhāvaḥ*, or *svaṁ bhāvayati*, which refers to the living entity who cultivates devotion to the Supreme Lord. Śrīpāda Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa also translates the word *svabhāvaḥ* as *jīvātmā* (living entity): “*jīvātmānaḥ sambandhī yo bhāvo – bhāva*, or existence, in relationship with the living entity is called *svabhāvaḥ*.” That same *jīvātmā* who has taken shelter of the body considers himself to be the enjoyer of sense objects. Therefore, the word *adhyātma* refers to the living entity.

Visarga means ‘sacrifice performed by offering material ingredients for the pleasure of the demigods’. This gives rise to the gross and subtle elements, which in turn create the material world in the form of the living entities’ gross bodies. This should be understood as *visarga*, the material existence of the living entity.

VERSE 4

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥४॥

adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaś cādhidaivatam
adhiyajñō 'ham evātra dehe deha-bhṛtāṁ vara

adhibhūtam – the manifestation of the five gross elements; *kṣarah* – destructible; *bhāvaḥ* – nature; *puruṣaḥ* – the universal form; *ca* – and; *adhidaivatam* – the original Lord of the demigods; *adhiyajñah* – the Lord of sacrifice, in the form of the indwelling Paramātmā (who inspires all to perform activities, such as sacrifice); *aham* – I; *eva* – indeed; *atra* – here; *dehe* – within the material body; *deha-bhṛtām* – of embodied beings; *vara* – O best.

O Arjuna, best among embodied beings, all that is perishable is called *adhibhūta*, and the universal form is known as *adhidaiva*, the presiding Lord of all demigods. I alone am *adhiyajña*, situated in the body as Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness, and I inspire a person to engage in activities such as sacrifice.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Adhibhūta* refers to perishable objects such as pots and cloth. According to the *Nirukta* dictionary, *adhidaiva* refers to the universal form of Viṣṇu, who has authority over the demigods such as Sūrya, the sun-god. “I inspire activity such as sacrifice by My partial expansion as the indwelling Supersoul; hence I am *adhiyajña*.” Śrī Bhagavān anticipates the doubt, “How are You situated as *adhiyajña*?” and thus He speaks the words *aham eva* – only I. “Only I am to be known in My non-different expansion of Paramātmā (Antaryāmī). Unlike the living entities (*adhyātma*), My plenary portion, the Supersoul, is non-different from Me. The living entity is My separated part (*vibhinnāmśa*), and Paramātmā, who is non-different from Me, is My direct, personal expansion (*svamśa*). Because you are My friend, you are the best among the embodied beings.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here Śrī Bhagavān is answering three of Arjuna’s questions:

Adhibhūta: Gross articles such as pots or cloth, which are perishable and which alter at every moment, exist by taking the support of the living entities.

Adhidaiva: The complete cosmic being, or *virāt-puruṣa*, is called *adhidaiva*, because He has sovereignty over the demigods.

Adhiyajña: The word *adhiyajña* refers to the personality who is situated in the bodies of the *jīvas* as the all-pervading Supersoul, or Antaryāmī, and who inspires action (*karma*) such as the performance of sacrifice. Antaryāmī also gives the results of action. The indwelling Supersoul is *svāmśa-tattva*, a personal plenary portion of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is said in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.6):

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sahkāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśvasajāte
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti*

Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and the living entity live as two friendly birds on the branch of a banyan tree, which is likened to this temporary material body. The living entity tastes the fruit of the tree according to his activities, while the other bird, Paramātmā, is not engaged in enjoying the fruit but simply witnesses the living entity's actions.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.2.8) Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī also says:

*kecit sva-dehāntar-hṛdayāvakāṣe
prādeśa-mātram puruṣam vasantam*

Some yogīs remember that Personality who is only the size of the thumb (*prādeśa-mātra puruṣa*) and who is situated within the cave of their hearts.

The word *prādeśa-mātra* has been translated by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī to mean the distance from the thumb to the tip of the first finger. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “By His power of inconceivability (*acintya-śakti*), He is situated within the area of the heart as a fifteen year old youth.” Moreover, it is said in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.1.12), “*anguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati* – the indwelling Supreme Person is the size of a thumb and is situated within the heart.”

All this evidence proves that Paramātmā is situated within the heart of the ordinary *jīva* and occupies a space the size of the thumb. For His special *bhaktas*, however, Kṛṣṇa Himself is situated in their hearts

in His form as a fifteen year old youth. For example, the Antaryāmī situated within the heart of Bilvamaṅgala is none other than the transcendental youth Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself:

*cintāmaṅḍir jayati somagirir gurur me
śikṣā-guruś ca bhagavān śikhi-piccha-mauliḥ
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (Maṅgalācaraṇa)*

All glories to Cintāmaṅḍir, whom I consider to be my *guru*, and who has fulfilled all desires. All glories to my *guru*, Somagiri, and to my *śikṣā-guru*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has a peacock feather in His hair and who is situated in my heart.

The indwelling Lord, Antaryāmī, situated in the heart of Arjuna, is the same ever youthful Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is situated on his chariot.

VERSE 5

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन् मुक्त्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥५॥
*anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*

anta-kāle – at the time of death; *ca* – and; *mām* – Me; *eva* – alone; *smaran* – remembering; *muktvā* – giving up; *kalevaram* – the body; *yaḥ* – who; *prayāti* – departs at death; *saḥ* – he; *mat-bhāvam* – My nature; *yāti* – attains; *na* – no; *asti* – there is; *atra* – on this point; *saṁśayaḥ* – doubt.

Whoever at the time of death leaves his body while remembering Me alone surely attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How can one know You at the time of leaving the body?” In answer to Arjuna’s question, Śrī Bhagavān says, “By remembering Me, a person is in knowledge of Me, but he can never know Me fully in the same way that he may know material objects, such as pots and cloth.” How many types of knowledge in the form of remembering Bhagavān are there? This is explained in the following four verses.

VERSE 6

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥६॥

*yam yam vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*

yam yam – whatever; *vā api* – anything; *smaran* – remembering; *bhāvaṁ* – contemplation; *tyajati* – one gives up; *ante* – at the last moment; *kalevaram* – the body; *taṁ tam* – that very same (state); *eva* – certainly; *eti* – one attains; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *sadā* – always; *tat* – of that; *bhāva* – contemplation; *bhāvitaḥ* – absorbed.

Whatever one remembers at the time of giving up the material body, O son of Kuntī, one is sure to attain that same state again, due to being always absorbed in such contemplation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Just as one attains Me by remembering Me exclusively, similarly, one attains the state corresponding to whatever else or whoever else one remembers.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking these words *yam yam*. People are absorbed in a particular state of existence due to remembrance of it through continuous meditation on it.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: By remembering Bhagavān at the time of death, one attains His nature. Similarly, one attains a nature corresponding to the other beings and objects one remembers [at the time of death]. Bharata Mahārāja thought of a young deer at the time of death, and in his next life he received the body of a deer. For this reason, at the time of death, one must not think of anything except Bhagavān. To attain such consciousness, it is imperative that one endeavour in this direction from the very beginning of one’s life. Although Bharata Mahārāja was a devotee of high calibre, being situated on the platform of *bhāva*, he was reborn as a young deer by the will of the Lord to set an example for humanity. Then, in his next two births, he completely avoided the association of materialistic persons, because he was able to remember his past life. Thus he

remained engaged in the cultivation of *bhakti*. The ordinary *jīvas*, who are bound by the results of their actions, or *karma*, should take a good lesson from the example of Bharata Mahārāja and should not commit any offence at his feet, thinking him to be bound by the result of his *karma* as they are.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also relates the story of Purañjana, who attained the body of a woman in his next life, all because he was thinking of a woman at the time of death. Actually, whatever we do in the course of our lives influences our consciousness at the time of death, and we take another birth accordingly. This is why *sādhakas* should chant the holy name and practise pure devotion in this life, so that at the time of death, their intense remembrance of Bhagavān will guide them on the path of auspiciousness.

VERSE 7

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मांमेवैष्यस्यसंशयः ॥७॥

*tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyasi asaṁśayaḥ*

tasmāt – therefore; *sarveṣu* – at all; *kāleṣu* – times; *mām* – Me; *anusmara* – remember; *yudhya* – fight; *ca* – and; *mayi* – unto Me; *arpita* – offered; *manaḥ-buddhiḥ* – with mind and intelligence; *mām* – Me; *eva eṣyasi* – you shall certainly attain; *asaṁśayaḥ* – without doubt.

Therefore, you should always remember Me and fight. With your mind and intellect devoted to Me, you will attain Me without a doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The mind is *saṅkalpātṁka*, meaning that it can concentrate on a particular motivation. *Buddhi* means ‘intelligence’ and *vyavasāyātmikā* means ‘that which is resolute’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “Thus, by constantly remembering My nature as the Supreme Lord and acting according to your own acquired nature as a *kṣatriya*, fight. In this way, your determined

mind and resolute intelligence will become fixed on Me and surely, since you are surrendered unto Me, you will attain Me.”

VERSE 8

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥८॥

abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena cetasā nānya-gāminā
paramam puruṣam divyam yāti pārthānucintayan

abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena – engaged in *yoga* practice; *cetasā* – with mind; *na anya-gāminā* – undeviating; *paramam* – that Supreme; *puruṣam* – Person; *divyam* – divine; *yāti* – one attains; *pārtha* – O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā; *anucintayan* – while continuously contemplating.

O Pārtha, by engaging in this *yoga* practice of constantly contemplating the Supreme Divine Person and not permitting the mind to wander elsewhere, one will surely attain Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In this way, he who practises remembering Me during his life will naturally remember Me at the time of death, and he will achieve Me. Thus, remembrance of Me alone is the supreme *yoga* of the mind.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *abhyāsa-yoga*. “*Abhyāsa* means ‘to practise continuous remembrance of Me’, and *yoga* means ‘to fix the mind in such practice, not hankering for different sense objects’. When one constantly remembers Me with such undeviating attention, he will be able to conquer the nature of the mind.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is necessary to engage in constant practice in order to attain unbroken continuity in *bhajana* (like the unbroken flow of a stream of oil). One will be able to engage the mind in remembering Śrī Bhagavān by continuous practice and by withdrawing it from other sense objects. By continually practising remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa throughout one’s life, a person will be able to conquer the distracted mind, thus enabling him to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death. This is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.18):

“*abhyāsenātmano yogī dhārayed acalam manah* – a yogī should make his mind steady by practice.” One may refer to *Gītā* 12.9 to study this topic further.

VERSES 9-10

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद् यः ।
 सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥९॥
 प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
 भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥१०॥

kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram
aṇor aṇīyāmsam anusmared yaḥ
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam
āditya-varṇam tamaśaḥ parastāt
prayāṇa-kāle manasā 'calena
bhaktiā yukto yoga-balena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa taṁ param puruṣam upaiti divyam

kaviṁ – all knowing; *purāṇam* – without beginning; *anuśāsītāram* – who is the controller of all; *aṇoh* – than the subtlest; *aṇīyāmsam* – subtler; *anusmaret* – one should remember; *yaḥ* – who; *sarvasya* – of everyone; *dhātāram* – the creator; *acintya-rūpam* – whose form is beyond material conception; *āditya-varṇam* – who is self-illuminating like the sun; *tamaśaḥ* – to illusion and ignorance; *parastāt* – transcendental; *prayāṇa-kāle* – at the time of death; *manasā* – mind; *acalena* – with undeviating; *bhaktiā* – through devotion; *yuktaḥ* – uniting; *yoga-balena* – by the power of yoga; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *bhruvoḥ* – the eyebrows; *madhye* – between; *prāṇam* – his life force; *āveśya* – fixing; *samyak* – completely; *saḥ* – he; *taṁ* – Him; *param* – Supreme; *puruṣam* – Person; *upaiti* – attains; *divyam* – divine.

One should remember that Supreme Person, who is all-knowing and eternal, who is the Supreme Controller, whose existence is more subtle than the most subtle, who is the creator of everyone,

whose form is inconceivable, who is self-effulgent like the sun, and who is transcendental to this material nature. One who, at the time of death, fully fixes his life-energy between one's eyebrows by the strength of *yoga* and concentrates upon Him with undeviating attention and full devotion, certainly attains Him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is impossible to withdraw the mind from sense objects without the constant practice of *yoga*. Without continuous practice of *yoga*, it is impossible to remember Śrī Bhagavān. *Bhakti* that is mixed with any type of *yoga* is called *yoga-miśrā-bhakti*. Śrī Bhagavān is explaining this in the next four verses, beginning here with *kavim*. *Kavim* means 'omniscient'. Sainly persons such as Sanaka are omniscient, but their omniscient nature is not unlimited at all times. This is why Śrī Bhagavān is using the word *purāṇam*, without beginning. Although the indwelling witness, Antaryāmī, is omniscient and without beginning, He does not give instructions on *bhakti*. For this reason Bhagavān is saying *anuśāsītāram*, meaning that He mercifully gives instructions on *bhakti* through His personal incarnations such as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *tattva* of such a merciful personality is very, very difficult to understand.

Śrī Bhagavān says that He is more subtle than the most subtle. Does this mean that He is atomic like the *jīva*? To clarify this, He says *sarvasya dhātāram*. "I am the sustainer of everything, and because I am all-pervading, I am of unlimited size; therefore I am inconceivable." Although He possesses a human-like form, He is explaining His manifestations, who are non-different from Him. *Āditya-varṇam* means that, like the sun, He illuminates both Himself and others. He is beyond material nature (*tamasah*) and, although He is the master of *māyā-śakti*, He is beyond *māyā*. At the time of death, *yogīs* remember Him with undeviating minds. These *yogīs* are blessed with the potency of continuously remembering Him, having practised this during their lives. How does one attain this stability of mind? Bhagavān says, "He attains it on the strength of continuous practice of *yoga*." What type of *yoga*? He answers, "The *yoga* in which the life-air is fixed between the eyebrows."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The previous verse mentioned remembering Śrī Bhagavān at the time of death, and now the process by which one can do that is explained in this verse.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Please listen as I explain the process of meditation on the Supreme Person. He is omniscient, eternal, without beginning and inconceivable to mundane intelligence. He is the smallest, yet He is also the Supreme Controller, who maintains everyone. He exists eternally in His beautiful, human-like form. He is beyond material nature, and because He is self-illuminating like the sun, His bodily hue illuminates His form. A person who leaves his body, having made his mind steady by *bhakti*, and who fixes his life-air between his eyebrows on the strength of his practice of *yoga*, attains that Divine Supreme Person. This *yoga* system has been instructed to ensure that one’s attention is not distracted from the Supreme Person by suffering and pain at the time of death.”

VERSE 11

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥११॥

yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti
viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ
yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti
tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa pravakṣye

yat – which; *akṣaram* – indestructible; *veda-vidāḥ* – those conversant with the Vedas; *vadanti* – speak of; *viśanti* – enter; *yat* – into which; *yatayaḥ* – renunciants; *vīta-rāgāḥ* – who are free from material attachment; *yat* – which; *icchantāḥ* – desire; *brahmacaryam* – celibacy; *caranti* – they practise; *tat* – that; *te* – to you; *padam* – state or object (worthy of attainment); *saṅgrahaṇa* – in summary; *pravakṣye* – I shall describe.

I will now tell you in summary about the ultimate goal, which those who are learned in the Vedas describe as imperishable. Those in the renounced order who are free from all material

desires enter there, as well as those desirous of attaining that state and who thus observe the vow of celibacy.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: One may ask, “Can He be known simply by fixing the life-air on the place between the eyebrows? What type of *yoga* is this? What is *japa*? What is the object of meditation? What is the ultimate goal? Please explain these in brief.” Anticipating these questions, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yad*, as well as the next two verses. “*Om̐kāra* (*om̐*), the sound manifestation of *brahma*, is *akṣara*, imperishable sound vibration, and it is identical with *brahma*. Those who know the Vedas proclaim this. The ascetics enter the syllable *om̐*, that imperishable reality. Please listen as I explain what this goal is and how it can be achieved.”

VERSES 12–13

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहारन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

*sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca
mūrdhny ādhāyatmanah praṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām*

*om ity ekākṣaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran
yah prayāti tyajan deham sa yāti paramām gatim*

sarva-dvārāṇi – all the gates of the body; *saṁyamya* – blocking; *manah* – the mind; *hṛdi* – within the heart; *nirudhya* – confining; *ca* – and; *mūrdhni* – at the top of the head; *ādhāya* – fixing; *ātmanah* – of the soul; *praṇam* – the life-air; *āsthitaḥ* – the situation; *yoga-dhāraṇām* – for the trance of self-realization; *om* – the sacred syllable *om̐*; *iti* – thus; *eka-akṣaram* – the one (i.e. complete and all-inclusive) syllable; *brahma* – the Supreme Absolute Truth; *vyāharan* – uttering; *mām anusmaran* – remembering Me according to the guidance of *guru*; *yah* – who; *prayāti* – departs for death; *tyajan* – giving up; *deham* – the body; *sa yāti* – he attains; *paramām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination.

Closing all the outlets of the senses from their sense objects, confining the mind within the heart, fixing the life-energy between the eyebrows, being deeply absorbed in *samādhi* upon the Supersoul through the practice of constant *yoga*, and repeating the syllable *om* – which is a sound manifestation of the Supreme Person – the *yogī* attains the supreme destination, giving up his body while meditating on Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: While explaining this type of *yoga*, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking the above two verses beginning with *sarva-dvārāṇi*. “A person attains the supreme destination of achieving residence in My own abode (*sālokya-mukti*) by restraining all his senses, such as the eyes, from their external sense objects; confining the mind to the heart, not desiring any sense object; fixing the life-air between the eyebrows; taking shelter of My form by meditating on Me from My feet to the top of My head; chanting *omkāra* (*om*), which is identical with *brahma*; and giving up his body while continuously meditating on the meaning of *om*, which is Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪPRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Om* is the sound manifestation of *brahma*. It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.17) “*abhyasen manasā śuddham trivṛd-brahmākṣaram param* – one should practise the mental repetition of the pure form of the sound manifestation of *brahma* (*praṇava*), made of three letters: ‘a’, ‘u’ and ‘m’.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

praṇava ye mahā-vākya-īśvarera-mūrti
praṇava haite sarva-veda, jagate-utpatti

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 6.174)

And also:

praṇava se mahā-vākya vedera nidāna
īśvara-svarūpa praṇava sarva-viśva-dhāma

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.128)

Praṇava (*omkāra*) is the essence of all the Vedas and it is the *mahā-vākya*, the greatest syllable (sound vibration). All other *mantras* have limitations. *Praṇava* is identical with the personal form of the

Supreme Lord. All the Vedas as well as this universe are generated from that sound vibration (*praṇava*). This sound vibration in the form of *praṇava* is the essence of the Vedas. It is the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān and the basis of the whole universe.

VERSE 14

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāham sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ

ananya-cetāḥ – devoid of any other thought; *satatam* – continuously; *yaḥ* – who; *mām* – Me; *smarati* – remembers; *nityaśaḥ* – every day; *tasya* – for him; *aham* – I; *su-labhaḥ* – easy to achieve; *pārtha* – O Arjuna, son of Prthā; *nitya-yuktasya* – constantly engaged; *yoginaḥ* – transcendentalist.

O Pārtha, for a yogī engaged in constant daily remembrance of Me, devoid of other thoughts, I am easily attainable.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: From *Gītā* 7.16 (*jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya*) to *Gītā* 8.8, devotion mixed with fruitive activity (*karma-miśrā-bhakti*) has been explained. And *Gītā* 8.9 (*kaviṁ purāṇam*) explains devotion mixed with *yoga* (*yoga-miśrā-bhakti*) and *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, along with their dominated factors, *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*. Now, in this verse beginning with the words *ananya-cetāḥ*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining pure, transcendental *bhakti*, or *kevalā-bhakti*, which is superior to all other types of *yoga*. “I am easily attainable for a devotee who continuously remembers Me daily, without considering the purity of time, place or circumstance, whose mind is not attracted to the practices of *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, and who does not worship the demigods or strive to achieve any other goal, such as residence in the heavenly planets or liberation. Such a devotee will not have to undergo the misery experienced while practising *yoga*, *jñāna* and so on. The words *nitya-yuktasya* refer to one who is always hankering for union with Me.” If one doubts that Bhagavān will also be easily attainable in the future, He responds, “I am always easily attainable for him.” *Yoginaḥ* means ‘one

who is endowed with *bhakti-yoga*, that is, one connected to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a relationship of servitude (*dāsya*) or friendship (*sakhya*), for example.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “From *Gītā* 7.16 to 7.28, I have explained *bhakti* mixed with *karma* and *jñāna*, which is performed by the distressed (*ārta*), the inquisitive (*jijñāsu*), those desirous of wealth (*arthārthī*) and men of knowledge (*jñānī*). In the *Gītā* (7.29), I have explained birth, death and liberation. In other words, I have instructed you about the nature of *bhakti* that predominates over *karma* and *jñāna* (*karma-jñāna-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*). From the verse *kaviṃ purāṇam* (*Gītā* 8.9), I have explained *bhakti* mixed with *yoga* – *yoga-miśrā-bhakti*, or the nature of *yoga-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*. And I have given some hints about exclusive devotion, or *kevalā-bhakti*, between these verses just to give you a taste. Now, please listen as I explain the nature of *kevalā-bhakti*. I am easily attained by such a *bhakti-yogī*, who is ever united with Me, who remembers Me with his mind restrained from attraction to all other objects, and who is exclusively devoted to Me. In other words, it is very difficult to achieve Me by performing devotion that is mixed with *karma* or *jñāna* (*pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*). This is to be understood.”

VERSE 15

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṃsiddhim paramāṃ gatāḥ

mām – Me; *upetya* – having attained; *punaḥ janma* – rebirth; *duḥkhālayam* – which is an ocean of misery; *aśāśvatam* – transitory; *nāpnuvanti* – do not attain; *mahātmānaḥ* – the great souls; *saṃsiddhim* – complete perfection; *paramām* – the highest; *gatāḥ* – having attained.

The great souls, having attained Me, do not take another temporary birth, which is the source of misery, for they have attained the highest perfection.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “What becomes of those who attain You?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *mām*. “They do not have to take another birth, which is temporary and full of misery. Instead, they attain a birth like Mine, which is eternal and full of bliss.” According to the *Amara-koṣa* (dictionary), the words *śāsvata*, *dhruva*, *nitya*, *sadātana* and *sanātana* are all synonymous. “When I take My blissful, eternal and transcendental birth in the house of Vasudeva, My eternal associates (My devotees) also take birth. They do not take birth at any other time.” The word *paramām* has special significance. “Other types of devotees attain complete perfection (*sāmsiddhi*), but those who have fixed their minds solely on Me, who are *ananya-cetāḥ*, attain an even more exalted type of perfection (*paramām sāmsiddhim*). That is to say, they become associates in My pastimes.” Thus it has been established that the devotees who are without any other thought than Śrī Kṛṣṇa are superior to the devotees who were described previously.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who have become indifferent to *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so forth, and who have not taken shelter of the various demigods but worship Kṛṣṇa only, with exclusive devotion, surely attain Him. They do not have to take another miserable, temporary birth but become eternally absorbed in service to Kṛṣṇa, being freed from the bondage of birth and fruitive activities (*karma*). As it is said in the *Padma Purāṇa* (quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 10.113): “*na karma-bandhanaṁ janma vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate viṣṇor anucaratvaṁ hi mokṣam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ* – For the Vaiṣṇavas, the bondage of *karma* does not exist. Since the Vaiṣṇavas have become the associates of Viṣṇu, they are described as being eligible for liberation by those who know the Truth.”

By performing *kevalā-bhakti*, or *rāgānugā-bhakti*, the exclusive devotees of Bhagavān attain supreme perfection. That is, by attaining realization of their eternal *svarūpa* (*svarūpa-siddhi*) and entrance to the spiritual world (*vastu-siddhi*), they are counted among the associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes and engage in service to Him. When it is time for His appearance they, like Him, also appear in order to nourish His manifest pastimes.

VERSE 16

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

*ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate*

ā-brahma-bhuvanāt – from Brahma-loka; *lokāḥ* – the planets; *punaḥ* – again; *āvartinaḥ* – returning; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *mām* – Me; *upetya* – having attained; *tu* – but; *kaunteya* – son of Kuntī; *punaḥ* – again; *janma* – birth; *na* – no; *vidyate* – there is.

O Arjuna, all planets in this universe up to the planet of Lord Brahmā are places of repeated birth and death, but one who attains Me, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Indeed, all *jīvas*, even those who have great piety, take birth, but My devotees do not take birth.” To explain this, the verse beginning with *ā-brahma* is spoken. The *jīvas* who live on any of the planets up to Satya-loka, the planet of Lord Brahmā, must take birth again.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “All planets, from Brahma-loka, or Satya-loka, down to the lowest planet, are temporary. The *jīvas* from those planets may take another birth, but one who takes exclusive shelter of Me as the object of one-pointed devotion does not take birth again.” It is not said that there is no rebirth for *karma-yogīs*, *aṣṭāṅga-yogīs* and those who take shelter of *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*. This implies that *kevalā-bhakti* is the ultimate fruit, or the perfection, of all these processes, and one can become free from the cycle of rebirth by gradually attaining this stage of *kevalā-bhakti*.

VERSE 17

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

***sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yat brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātrim yuga-sahasrāntām te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ***

sahasra-yuga – a thousand cycles of the four ages (one cycle equals 4,320,000 years); *paryantam* – comprises; *ahaḥ* – one day; *yat* – which; *brahmaṇaḥ* – of Brahmā; *viduḥ* – they know; *rātrim* – his night; *yuga-sahasra-antām* – lasts a thousand ages; *te* – those; *ahaḥ-rātra-vidaḥ* – who know his day and night; *janāḥ* – persons (conversant with the Vedas).

Those who know the truth about Brahmā's day and night understand that his day lasts for one thousand cycles of the four *yugas*, and that his night is also of the same duration.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may doubt what is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.6.19): "Above the three planetary systems (Bhūr, Bhuvaḥ and Svarga) is Mahar-loka, and above Mahar-loka are the three planets Jana, Tapa and Satya. These three appear to be free from death, contain all the requirements for one's maintenance, and are free from fear." Some say that Brahma-loka is free from fear, and that even *sannyāsīs* desire to dwell there. "Does this mean that those residing on that planet will never fall from there?" Anticipating this question, Śrī Bhagavān states, "No, it is not true. Brahmā, the master of that planet, himself dies, so what to speak of others." To clarify this further, He speaks this verse beginning with *sahasra*, which says that those who know the scriptures understand that Brahmā's one day equals one thousand cycles of the four *yugas* (totalling 4,320,000,000 years), and his night is of the same duration. After Brahmā's great life span of one hundred years of these days, he falls and dies, but that Brahmā who is a Vaiṣṇava attains liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "According to the calculation of human beings, one day of Brahmā is equal to one thousand cycles of four *yugas*, and his night is of the same duration. In this way, Brahmā falls, or dies, after living for one hundred such years. However, those Brahmās who are devoted to Śrī Bhagavān achieve *mukti*. If this is Brahmā's situation, then how can the fearlessness of *sannyāsīs* who have attained his planet be eternal? It cannot be. They are also bound to take birth again."

VERSE 18

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

*avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanti ahar-āgame
rātry-āgame praliyante tatraivāvyakta-samjñake*

avyaktāt – from the unmanifest; *vyaktayaḥ* – the individual embodied living beings; *sarvāḥ* – all; *prabhavanti* – become manifest; *aha-āgame* – when the day comes; *rātri-āgame* – when the night comes; *praliyante* – they dissolve; *tatra eva* – at that very time; *avyakta-samjñake* – into that (state) known as the unmanifest.

All living beings manifest from the unmanifest cause at the beginning of Brahmā's day, and again become dissolved into the same unmanifest cause upon the arrival of his night.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who are residents of the lower three planets, Bhūr, Bhuvah and Svaḥ, must die in every day of Brahmā. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *avyaktād*. Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī says, "In the cycle of the creation and annihilation of Brahmā's day, the element sky exists daily." Therefore, the word *avyakta* in this verse does not refer to the *pradhāna*, the unmanifest state of material nature; it indicates Brahmā's night.

From that unmanifest cause, namely Brahmā's night, comes his day, which manifests the field for enjoyment in the form of the body, sense objects and so forth. The whole world actively manifests in this way. Then, at the approach of his night, it is again dissolved into the unmanifest cause while he sleeps.

VERSE 19

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

***bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyam bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate
rātri-āgame 'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavaty ahar-āgame***

bhūta-grāmaḥ – host of beings; *saḥ* – that; *eva* – same; *ayam* – very; *bhūtvā bhūtvā* – having repeatedly taken birth; *pralīyate* – is dissolved; *rātri-āgame* – on the arrival of his night; *avaśaḥ* – under higher control; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *prabhavati* – becomes manifest; *ahaḥ-āgame* – on the arrival of his day.

O Pārtha, the hosts of living entities who come into being at the approach of Brahmā's day are again dissolved upon the arrival of his night. They repeatedly manifest at the approach of Brahmā's day, being under superior control.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this way, all moving and non-moving *jīvas* come into being and are again annihilated.

VERSE 20

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

***paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati***

paraḥ – superior; *tasmāt* – to that; *tu* – but; *bhāvaḥ* – nature; *anyaḥ* – another (or special); *avyaktaḥ* – unmanifest; *avyaktāt* – unmanifest state; *sanātanaḥ* – eternal (without beginning); *yaḥ* – which; *saḥ* – that; *sarveṣu* – even when all; *bhūteṣu* – living beings; *naśyatsu* – are destroyed; *na vinaśyati* – is not destroyed.

Yet superior to the previously mentioned unmanifest state, there exists another supernatural unmanifest nature, which is without beginning and which is not destroyed, even at the time of the great dissolution when all life-forms of this world are annihilated.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Superior to the unmanifest principle of the creator Hiraṇyagarbha, there is another unmanifest nature, which is

eternal and without beginning. That unmanifest nature is the cause of this Hiranyagarbha.

VERSE 21

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*

avyaktaḥ – the unmanifest; *akṣaraḥ* – without birth or beginning, being imperishable; *iti* – as; *uktaḥ* – is described; *tam* – that; *āhuḥ* – call; *paramām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination; *yam* – which; *prāpya* – having attained; *na nivartante* – they (the living beings) do not return to this material existence; *tad* – that; *dhāma* – abode; *paramam* – supreme; *mama* – My.

That eternal unmanifest nature is known as the imperishable Truth (*akṣara*) and it is the supreme destination. Having attained that destination, which is My eternal abode and My eternal nature, the living beings never return to this world of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *avyakta*, mentioned in the previous verse, is being explained in this verse beginning with *avyaktaḥ*. That which is imperishable, or indestructible, is called *akṣara*. The *Nārāyaṇa Śruti* states “*eko nārāyaṇa āsīn na brahmā na ca śaṅkaraḥ* – in the beginning there was only Śrī Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa; neither Brahmā nor Śiva existed.”

“My supreme abode is eternal. *Akṣara-parama-dhāma* [from the original Sanskrit commentary] means that My abode is *brahma*, and it possesses an effulgent form.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having described the temporary existence of all moving and non-moving beings, Śrī Bhagavān now explains the eternality of the principle, or *tattva*, of the Supreme Controller. In the present two verses, He explains the Supreme Eternal Personality, who is superior to the unmanifest creation of

Lord Brahmā and who is inaccessible to the mind and senses. This unmanifest reality is also called *akṣara-brahma*; this alone is the supreme destination of the *jīvas*. Upon attaining that supreme, imperishable abode, there is no possibility of ever again returning to this material world.

VERSE 22

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥२२॥

*puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv anyanyā
yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṁ tatam*

puruṣaḥ – Person; *saḥ* – that; *paraḥ* – Supreme; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *bhaktyā* – devotion; *labhyaḥ* – is attained; *tu* – indeed; *anyanyā* – through unalloyed; *yasya* – whose; *antaḥ-sthāni* – situated within; *bhūtāni* – of all living beings; *yena* – by whom; *sarvam* – entire (universe); *idaṁ* – this; *tatam* – is pervaded.

O Pārtha, that Supreme Person is solely attainable through unalloyed devotion. All living beings are situated within Him, and by Him, this entire universe is pervaded.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “That Supreme Person, who is My partial expansion, Paramātmā, is attained only by exclusive devotion, or *anyanyā-bhakti*. *Anyanyā* means ‘that *bhakti* in which there is no trace of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, worldly desire and so on’. This is the meaning of My earlier statement in the *Gītā* (8.14) *ananya-cetāḥ satatam*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: That Supreme Person (*puruṣa*) described in the previous verse, who is situated in the unmanifest stage, is the plenary portion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All *jīvas* are situated in Him and, because He is also situated within all *jīvas*, He is Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness. He can be attained only by unalloyed devotion, which is devoid of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, etc.

VERSE 23

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

*yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim āvṛttim caiva yoginaḥ
prayātā yānti taṁ kālam vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha*

yatra – at which; *kāle* – time, or path; *tu* – indeed; *anāvṛttim* – no return; *āvṛttim* – return; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *yoginaḥ* – yogīs; *prayātāḥ* – having passed from the body; *yānti* – they attain (their desired destination); *taṁ* – that; *kālam* – time, or path; *vakṣyāmi* – I shall describe; *bharatarṣabha* – O best of Bharata’s line.

O best of the dynasty of Bharata, I shall now explain the different paths (protected by the presiding deities of time) by which yogīs who pass from this world either return or never return.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Previously You said, ‘After attaining My supreme abode, the living entity never returns.’ By this statement, You established that after attaining Your abode, Your devotees never return. Yet You have not given any instruction about that special path and how to attain it. The path of *arci* (the sun-rays) is in the mode of goodness, but that special path of which You now speak must be beyond the material modes, since Your devotees are also beyond the modes. For now, however, I am inquiring about the path that is followed by *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs*.”

Anticipating Arjuna’s question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yatra*. “A person returns or does not return to this world, depending on the path that is indicated by the exact time he leaves his body. I will now explain that time, or path.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān’s one-pointed devotees easily attain His abode, unlike the *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs*, and they do not have to undergo the path of material goodness (*sattva-guṇa*) which is fraught with miseries. Since the devotees who follow that *bhakti* which is beyond the modes (*nirguṇā-bhakti*) are

also beyond the modes, their paths and the time of their passing are also beyond the modes. The devotees do not have to consider whether or not the sun is in the northern hemisphere. The moment in which they enter Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unmanifest pastimes is always beyond the modes of material nature.

VERSE 24

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṅ-māsā uttarāyaṇam
tatra prayātā gacchanti brahma brahma-vido janāḥ

agniḥ – fire; *jyotiḥ* – light; *ahaḥ* – an auspicious day; *śuklaḥ* – the moon's bright fortnight; *ṣaṅ-māsāḥ* – the six months; *uttarāyaṇam* – of the sun's northern course; *tatra* – then; *prayātāḥ* – who depart from the body; *gacchanti* – they enter; *brahma* – the realm of Supreme Absolute; *brahma-vidāḥ* – conversant with *brahma*; *janāḥ* – persons.

Those who know the Supreme Absolute Reality and who depart from this world during the influence of the presiding deities of fire, the light, auspicious days, the fortnight of the waxing moon and the six months of the sun's northern course, attain the realm of the Supreme Absolute (*brahma*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining how to follow the path from which there is no return. It is said in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, “*te ʼrciṣam abhisambhavanti* – they attain the presiding demigod of the sun-rays (*arci*).” Therefore, the words *agniḥ* and *jyotiḥ* indicate the presiding demigod of *arci* (light). The word *ahaḥ* refers to the presiding demigod of the daytime, and the word *uttarāyaṇam* refers to the presiding demigod of the six months of the northern course of the sun. The *jñānīs*, or those who are *brahma-vid* (who know *brahma*), attain the Supreme Absolute by following this path. In this regard, the Śrutis say that they attain the demigod presiding over *arci*, and after that they attain the demigods presiding over the day, the fortnight and

then the month, in that order. From the demigod of a particular month, they attain the demigod of the year, and then Āditya, the sun-god.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Those who know *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute, and who give up their bodies at the times of fire and light, on an auspicious day and when the sun is in the northern course, attain *brahma*. The words *agniḥ* and *jyotiḥ* refer to the presiding demigod of *arci* (light), and the word *ahaḥ* refers to the presiding demigod of the day. The word *śukla* refers to the presiding demigod of the bright fortnight, and *uttarāyaṇa* refers to the demigod presiding over the six months of the sun’s northern course. The only course for a *yogī* desiring to attain *brahma* is to successively pass through the day, the bright fortnight and so forth, at a particular time when the mind and the senses are satisfied and joyful. *Yogīs* who die at these times never return to this world.”

VERSE 25

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ ṣaṅ-māsā dakṣiṇāyanam
tatra cāndramasam jyotir yogī prāpya nivartate

dhūmaḥ – the demigod of smoke; *rātriḥ* – the presiding deity of night; *tathā* – and; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – the presiding deity of the moon’s dark fortnight; *ṣaṅ-māsāḥ* – in the form of the presiding deity of the six months; *dakṣiṇāyanam* – of the sun’s southern course; *tatra* – at this time or by this path; *cāndramasam* – to the heavenly planets like the moon; *jyotiḥ* – celestial delights; *yogī* – the *karma-yogī*; *prāpya* – after attaining; *nivartate* – he returns (again to the repetition of birth and death).

The *karma-yogī* who departs by the path of the demigods – who preside over the times of smoke, the night, the dark half of the month and the six months of the sun’s southern course – attains the heavenly planets, such as the moon. After enjoying celestial pleasures there, he again returns to this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the return path of the *karmīs*. As before, the words smoke, night and so on refer to the presiding demigods of those times. A *karma-yogī* who passes through the paths of these demigods attains the heavenly planets such as the moon, and enjoys the result of his *karma* there. He returns to this world when the results of his *karma* are exhausted.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Karma-yogīs* who pass through the path of smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the sun's six-month course in the southern hemisphere and the light of the moon, or who engage in fruitive acts with their senses, return to this material world after attaining the planets of the particular presiding demigods of these times.

VERSE 26

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hy ete jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yāty anāvṛttim anyayāvartate punaḥ

śukla – by light; *kṛṣṇe* – and by darkness; *gatī* – two paths; *hi* – certainly; *ete* – these; *jagataḥ* – of the cosmic manifestation; *śāśvate* – eternal; *mate* – have been accepted (by the sages); *ekayā* – by one; *yāti* – one enters; *anāvṛttim* – liberation, the state of no return; *anyayā* – by the other; *āvartate* – one returns; *punaḥ* – again.

In departing from this world, only two paths, the bright (*śukla*) and the dark (*kṛṣṇa*), are considered to be eternal. Passing through the bright path (*śukla-pakṣa*), one attains liberation, and passing through the dark path (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*), one returns to this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now in this verse beginning with the words *śukla-kṛṣṇa*, Śrī Bhagavān is concluding the topic on the above-mentioned two paths. *Śāśvat* means that there are two eternal paths in this beginningless material existence. One is the path of light (*śukla-pakṣa*), by which one attains liberation, and the other is the path of darkness (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*), by which one returns to the material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The above-mentioned paths of *arci*, etc., or *deva-yāna* (voyage through the paths of the demigods), are the illuminators of knowledge and are well known by the name *śukla-gati* (the bright path). The path of smoke etc., or *pitṛ-yāna* (voyage through the path of the forefathers) is full of darkness and ignorance and is called *kṛṣṇa-gati* (the dark path). From time immemorial, these two paths have functioned in this world. Those *yogīs* who know spiritual reality take shelter of the bright path and, passing through the planets of *arci* and so forth, they attain liberation. On the other hand, those *yogīs* who engage in *karma* to satisfy their own desires take shelter of *kṛṣṇa-gati* through the path of the forefathers (*pitṛ-yāna*). They enjoy the pleasures of the heavenly planets, having passed through the paths of the presiding demigods of darkness and so on, and finally they return to the material realm in the cycle of birth and death. A detailed description of these two paths is given in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

VERSE 27

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७ ॥

*naite sṛtī pārtha jānan yogī muhyati kaścana
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu yoga-yukto bhavārjuna*

na – not; *ete* – these; *sṛtī* – two paths; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *jānan* – knowing; *yogī* – the transcendentalist; *muhyati* – is bewildered; *kaścana* – ever; *tasmāt* – therefore; *sarveṣu* – at all; *kāleṣu* – times; *yoga-yuktaḥ* – connected in *yoga*; *bhava* – be; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

O Pārtha, *yogīs* who have knowledge of these two paths are never bewildered. Therefore, O Arjuna, always remain fixed in *yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Knowledge of these two paths gives rise to discrimination; thus in this verse beginning with *naite*, a person with this knowledge, a *jñānī*, is glorified. Śrī Bhagavān says to Arjuna, “Become a *bhakti-yogī*.” In other words, “Become a person of composed mind.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Devotees are never deluded because they remain fixed in *bhakti-yoga* with knowledge that is based on *tattva*. Therefore, they know the real distinction between these two paths, and they take shelter of the path of *bhakti*, which transcends both. That is, they take shelter of one-pointed devotion, or *anyā-bhakti-yoga*, knowing both paths to be miserable. Therefore, O Arjuna, you should take shelter of that *yoga* only.”

VERSE 28

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ २८ ॥

vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva
dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalam pradiṣṭam
atyeti tat sarvam idam viditvā
yogī param sthānam upaiti cādyam

vedeṣu – in reading the Vedas; *yajñeṣu* – in sacrificial performances; *tapaḥsu* – in performing austerities; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *dāneṣu* – in charitable deeds; *yat* – which; *puṇya-phalam* – pious benefit; *pradiṣṭam* – is allotted; *atyeti* – surpasses; *tat* – that; *sarvam* – of all; *idam* – this; *viditvā* – knowing; *yogī* – a *bhakti-yogī*; *param* – the supreme; *sthānam* – the (non-material eternal) realm; *upaiti* – attains; *ca* – and; *ādyam* – original and super-excellent.

The benefit achieved by the *bhakti-yogī*, who comprehends the truths that I have spoken to you, far surpasses all the results achieved through pious activities such as the study of the Vedas, performance of fire sacrifices, austerities and charity, for he attains My transcendental, eternal abode.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ; The benefit attained by acquiring *jñāna* as described in this chapter is explained in this verse beginning with

vedeṣu. Tat sarvam atyeti means that by surpassing the results of all these activities, the *bhakti-yogī* attains a superior place, which is eternal and transcendental.

The superiority of a *bhakti-yogī* was also described earlier, but here it is clarified further. In this chapter, the supremacy of the exclusive, one-pointed devotees has been established.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā* (the commentary that gives pleasure to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons) on the Eighth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "If you follow *bhakti-yoga*, you will not be denied the results of any other activity. You will attain whatever results may come from the performance of sacrifice, austerities, charity, or any type of knowledge or fruitive action, or from studying the Vedas, and you will reach My supremely transcendental and eternal realm." In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–33) it is stated:

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa śreyobhir itarair api
sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Through *bhakti-yoga* My devotee can easily attain whatever is to be achieved by performing fruitive activities, austerities, *jñāna*, detachment and so on.

In the *Mahābhārata* there is a statement pertaining to liberation, or *mokṣa*:

*yā vai sādhana-sampattiḥ puruṣārtha-catustāye
tayā vinā tadāpnoti nara nārāyaṇāśrayaḥ.*

A devotee who has taken shelter of Śrī Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, attains all the opulence one attains from the four goals of human life – religiosity (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sense enjoyment (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) – without undergoing any misery.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura also says that one attains all auspiciousness by performing exclusive devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*), and that without *bhakti* one cannot attain anything. Thus, *bhakti* is established as the supreme auspicious process in both the direct and indirect statements of the scriptures. This is also stated in *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*hari-bhakti-mahā-devyāḥ sarvā muktyādi sidhyaḥ bhuktayaś
cādbhutās tasyaś ceṭakavad anuvratāḥ*

Spiritual knowledge and the eight types of mystic perfection such as *aṇimā* appear before an exclusive devotee in their personified form, like devoted servants, even though he does not desire them.

In his Bengali commentary on the *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* named *Vidvadarāñjana-bhāṣya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, “Faith turns into *niṣṭhā*, or exclusive absorption in service to Me, when the unwanted tendencies (*anarthas*) of a devotee who has one-pointed faith are removed by *bhajana* in the association of My devotees. All sins are removed by *bhajana* that is performed in saintly association (*sādhusāṅga*), even though faith (*śraddhā*) may not have fully developed yet, even though an understanding of *tattva* may be lacking, and even though doubts about the worshipable deity may still linger as impurities.”

Moods of devotion that are mixed with *jñāna* and *yoga* and polluted by desires for material enjoyment and liberation are *anarthas* that prevent one from understanding the science of devotion, *bhajana-tattva*. One’s *bhajana* becomes purified of these *anarthas* to the extent that the tendency of one’s devotion becomes one-pointed, and he takes shelter of the pure, Absolute Reality, Śrī Bhagavān. This is the essence of the Eighth Chapter.

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Eighth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER NINE



Rāja-Guhya-Yoga

Yoga Through the Most Confidential Knowledge

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*idam tu te guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmy anasūyave
jñānam vijñāna-sahitaṁ yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *idam* – this; *tu* – indeed; *te* – to you; *guhyatamaṁ* – most confidential; *pravakṣyāmi* – I shall explain; *anasūyave* – free from faults (non-envious); *jñānam vijñāna-sahitaṁ* – knowledge together with realized knowledge, i.e. which has the symptoms of exclusive and pure devotion; *yaj* – which; *jñātvā* – knowing; *mokṣyase* – you shall be liberated; *śubhāt* – from inauspiciousness, i.e. from this miserable cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*).

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Arjuna, because you are non-envious, I shall impart to you this most confidential knowledge, which has the characteristics of pure devotion and which bestows direct realization of Me. Such knowledge will liberate you from the miseries of the material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This Ninth Chapter gives knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān's opulences (*aiśvarya*). Such knowledge is desired by His devotees so they can favourably execute their service to Him. This

chapter clearly describes the supremacy of pure devotion, or *śuddha-bhakti*.

In comparison to *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, we find that *bhakti* is supreme. In the Seventh and Eighth Chapters we have explained the two types of *bhakti*: *pradhānī-bhūtā* (devotion that predominates over *karma* and *jñāna*) and *kevalā* (exclusive devotion). Of these two, *kevalā-bhakti* is extremely powerful, and unlike *jñāna*, it does not depend upon purity of heart. This in itself substantiates its supremacy. Knowledge of Bhagavān's *aiśvarya*, or opulences, is necessary to perform *kevalā-bhakti*. Details of those opulences are given in this Ninth Chapter. The middle eight chapters (Six to Thirteen) are the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā* and all Vedic literature, and the Ninth and Tenth Chapters are the essence of these middle chapters. Śrī Bhagavān is glorifying the subject matter that will be defined in three consecutive verses, the first of which begins with the words *idam tu*.

“Knowledge that is favourable for liberation, as described in the Second and Third Chapters, is called *guhya*, confidential. Knowledge of the truth of Śrī Bhagavān, or *bhagavat-tattva*, which is essential for one who wishes to attain Me, is explained in the Seventh and Eighth Chapters. Such knowledge of the fundamental principles of devotion (*bhakti-tattva*) is more confidential, or *guhyatara*. Now in this chapter I shall explain that knowledge – along with the characteristics of pure devotion – which is most confidential, or *guhyatama*.”

Here the word *jñāna* should be understood to mean *bhakti* only. It does not refer to general *jñāna*, as delineated in the first six chapters. In the next verse, the word *avyaya*, eternal, has been used as an adjective for *jñāna*. By this, the word *jñāna* indicates *bhakti* only. This is because it refers to a transcendental entity. Thus, in this context, it does not indicate the *jñāna* previously mentioned, which although in the mode of goodness is not beyond the modes of nature.

In the verse *āsraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya parantapa* (*Gītā* 9.3), the word *dharma* means *bhakti* only. The word *anasūyave* means that this instruction is only for the non-envious, not others. *Vijñāna-sahitam* means, “I shall impart this instruction to you which leads to direct realization of Me. This will free you from the inauspicious

bondage of material life, which is unfavourable to *bhakti*. With this knowledge, you will become free from all obstacles.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In the Seventh and Eighth Chapters, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explained *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti* (devotion that predominates over and is mixed with *karma* and *jñāna*), *kevalā-bhakti* (pure, exclusive devotion) and the difference between the two. In the present chapter, He is elucidating on the supremacy of *kevalā-bhakti*.

Kevalā-bhakti does not depend on purification of the heart. *Bhakti* can mercifully enter the hearts of even those who are extremely abominable and who are gripped by all types of *anarthas*, turning such persons into supremely pure, highly exalted *mahā-bhāgavatas*, who are worshipful for the whole world. *Bhakti* is very powerful in her own right.

The spiritual knowledge explained in Chapters Two and Three, which is helpful in attaining liberation, is confidential, or *guhya*. The more confidential knowledge of Bhagavān (*guhyatara*) described in Chapters Seven and Eight causes the rise of *bhakti*. The present chapter describes knowledge related to pure, exclusive devotion. This knowledge is most confidential, or *guhyatama*. Only with the help of this most confidential knowledge can one attain freedom from the inauspiciousness of this world. “This most confidential knowledge, which is related to pure *bhakti*, can bestow direct realization of Me.” *Vijñāna* means ‘to comprehend and obtain realization of that knowledge which is related to Śrī Bhagavān’.

Śrī Bhagavān said to Brahmā:

*jñānam parama-guhyam me yad vijñāna-samanvitam
sa-rahasyam tad-aṅgam ca gṛhāṇa gaditam mayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.31)

Knowledge of Me is non-dual, absolute and highly confidential. Although non-dual, it has four eternal divisions: *jñāna* (knowledge of My *svarūpa*), *vijñāna* (realization of Me), *rahasya* (pure, loving devotion, or *prema-bhakti*, for Me) and *tad-aṅga* (the means to attain Me, the practice of *bhakti*). The living entity cannot understand this with his limited intelligence. He can only realize it by My mercy. My *svarūpa* is composed of *jñāna*. And *vijñāna*, or realization of

Me, is one's relationship with Me through *bhakti*. The living entity is My *rahasya*, and the material nature (*pradhāna*) is all that is accessory to My *svarūpa* (*jñāna-aṅga*). The eternal non-duality, as well as the confidential eternal difference between these four principles, is due to My inconceivable potency.

Bhagavān also spoke this to Uddhava, His most dear devotee:

*athaitat paramam guhyam śṛṇvato yadu-nandana
su-gopyam api vakṣyāmi tvaṁ me bhṛtyaḥ suhṛt sakhā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.49)*

O Yadu-nandana (Uddhava), please hear this most confidential knowledge. Although it is extremely confidential, I will speak it to you because you are My servant and well-wishing friend.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.8), Śrī Śaunaka and other saints requested Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī to explain such realized confidential truths:

*vettham tvaṁ saumya tat sarvaṁ tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya guravo guhyam apy uta*

The previous spiritual authorities have also explained these extremely confidential secrets to disciples of an affectionate nature.

Here also, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is imparting this most confidential knowledge to Arjuna, knowing that his heart is free from envy and hatred and filled with affection. The purport is that this confidential knowledge is instructed by a genuine spiritual master, who is fully conversant with *tattva*, only to the type of disciple previously mentioned.

A similar instruction is given in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.22–23):

*vedānte paramam guhyam purā-kalpe pracoditam
nāpraśāntāya dātavyam nāputrāya śiṣyāya vā punaḥ
yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

The highly confidential principle of worship of Bhagavān is the essence of Vedānta. In ancient times, Śrī Bhagavān illuminated the heart of Śvetāśvatara Ṛṣi with this same knowledge, being pleased

by his worship. Therefore, although this instruction is not for one who is not a pure devotee, it can be bestowed upon a sober son or disciple who is a devotee of Bhagavān. This instruction should not be imparted to anyone else, even if one is moved by affection for that person.

All the confidential meanings of the Śrutis fully illuminate the heart of that *sādhaka* – that great soul, or *mahātmā* – who has supreme devotion to Bhagavān and equally to his *gurudeva*. In this context, it is worth contemplating *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.54-58.

VERSE 2

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamam dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam

rāja-vidyā – the king, or best, of all knowledge; *rāja-guhyam* – the king, or best, of all confidential topics; *pavitram* – purity; *idam* – this (knowledge); *uttamam* – the highest; *pratyakṣa-avagamam* – directly realized; *dharmyam* – conducive to virtue; *su-sukham kartum* – performed very joyfully (without difficulty); *avyayam* – eternal and imperishable.

This is the king of all knowledge and the monarch of all confidential topics. It is extremely pure and can be directly realized. This transcendental wisdom is consonant with the principles of *dharma*. It is comprehended without difficulty and is eternal.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Moreover, this knowledge is the king of all knowledge. There are various types of knowledge, or worship, but *bhakti* is the monarch of them all. This *bhakti* is the king of confidential subjects, meaning that *bhakti* herself is highly confidential. Although there are many varieties of knowledge, this particular knowledge (*bhakti*), along with realization of that knowledge (*vijñāna*) is the king

of all, because it is the most confidential. Its purity is revealed by the fact that by performing it, all of one's sinful activities are atoned for. It is more purifying than knowledge of the self, or *tvam-padārthajñāna*. Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī says, "This *bhakti* can destroy within the blink of an eye the gross and subtle reactions of all types of sinful activities accumulated over thousands of lifetimes, as well as their cause, which is ignorance. Thus it is supremely purifying." *Pratyakṣa-avagamam* means 'that which can be perceived or realized directly'.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42) states:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

A person who is absorbed in eating achieves three results simultaneously: he becomes happy with every mouthful he tastes, he attains nourishment as his stomach is filled, and he is relieved of his hunger. These three results come to him simultaneously. In the same way, a person who is engaged in *bhajana* of Śrī Hari simultaneously attains *prema*, realization of the Lord and detachment from sense objects.

According to this statement from the Eleventh Canto, a person attains realization of Bhagavān in proportion to the intensity of his *bhajana*. This *jñāna* (*bhakti*) is *dharmya*, meaning it is not outside the bounds of religiosity. Simply by *bhakti*, a person can attain the perfection resulting from the complete performance of all occupational duties, even if he does not perform any other religious duties.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14), Devarṣi Nārada also says, "Just as by watering the root of a tree, its trunk, branches and leaves become nourished, similarly, by the exclusive worship of Bhagavān Acyuta, everyone else is automatically worshipped."

Kartum su-sukham means that one does not have to undergo too much physical, mental or verbal difficulty on the path of *bhakti*, unlike the processes of *karma*, *jñāna*, etc. In the practice of *bhakti*,

which is characterized by *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on, only the senses such as the ears and tongue are engaged. Since *bhakti* is untouched by material qualities, it is not perishable like *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The Ninth Chapter describes *kevalā-bhakti*, which is beyond the modes of material nature. This knowledge, in the form of *kevalā-bhakti*, is the crest jewel of all types of knowledge. It is supremely confidential, most purifying and experienced by direct perception. It bestows the fruits of all other religious processes, it is joyfully performed, and it bestows imperishable results.

Here, the word *vidyā* means ‘worship’; therefore, *kevalā-bhakti* is the best of all types of worship. For this reason, it is called *rāja-vidyā*, the king of knowledge, and because it is the most confidential of all confidential subjects, it is called *rāja-guhya*.

Pavitrām idam uttamam: Atoning for one’s sins by giving in charity (*dāna*), offering sacrificial oblations (*yajña*) or performing austerities such as the *cāndrāyaṇa-vrata*, does not completely destroy them. Furthermore, one may remove the results of sins through processes such as austerities and celibacy, but there is still a chance that the tendency to sin will again sprout. However, according to scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, sins are completely destroyed by the performance of exclusive devotion. This is true to such an extent that even by the concomitant results of exclusive devotion, all sins are destroyed at the root. In other words, even the very desire to perform sin is destroyed. This is not possible by processes other than *bhakti*, such as atonement (*prāyaścita*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*) and austerities (*tapasya*). This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.1.15): “*kecit kevalayā bhaktiyā vāsudeva-parāyaṇāḥ* – only by exclusive devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*) can all one’s sins be eradicated at the root.” And also, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.1.16) states, “*na tathā hy aghavān rājan pūyeta tapa-ādibhiḥ* – all one’s sins can be removed only by service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees, not by any other process.”

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the first characteristic of *kevalā-bhakti* is described as *kleśa-ghnī*, the mitigation of suffering. *Kleśa-ghnī* means that this *bhakti* completely destroys all sin (*pāpa*), the seed

of sin (*pāpa-bīja*), ignorance (*avidyā*), currently fructifying reaction (*prārabdha-karma*) and unfructified reaction (*apṛārabdha-karma*):

*apṛārabdham phalam pāpam kūtam bijam phalonmukham
kramenaiva praliyate viṣṇu-bhakti-ratātmanām*

Padma Purāṇa

There are different stages of dormant reactions to sinful activities to be observed in a sinful life. Sinful reactions may be just waiting to take effect [*phalonmukha*], reactions may be still further dormant [*kūta*], or the reactions may be in a seed-like state [*bija*]. In any case, all types of sinful reactions are vanquished one after another if a person engages in the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu.*

Exclusive devotion, or *kevalā-bhakti*, not only purifies the gross and subtle designations of the living entity, but it also purifies and satisfies the soul (*ātmā*): *yayātmā suprasidati* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6). According to the verse *ātmārāmās ca munayaḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.10), *bhakti* is attractive because of the bliss one derives from serving Kṛṣṇa. By this bliss, even those who are satisfied within the self (*ātmārāma*) and who have no desires left to fulfil (*āptakāma*) are attracted to serving the Lord and thus give up their self-satisfied natures.

Pratyakṣa-anubhava-svarūpa – direct realization of the *svārūpa* of the Lord:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42)

Just as a person feels satisfaction, nourishment and the removal of hunger with every mouthful of food that he eats, similarly, *prema*, direct experience of Bhagavān, as well as aversion to sense enjoyment, appear simultaneously within a devotee, even during the stage of practice.

The processes of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna*, etc., cannot bestow direct realization upon the *sādhaka* as *bhakti* can. *Brahma-sūtra* also states

“*prakāśaś ca karmaṇy abhyāsāt – bhakti* is so powerful that she bestows an experience of herself even in the initial stages.”

Sarva-dharma-phala-prada: By performing *bhakti* one receives the complete result of performing all types of religiosity and also attains pure love for Bhagavān, which is the objective established in the Vedas, Upaniṣads and other Śrutis. According to the verse *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja* (Gītā 18.66), one who has given up all types of *dharma*, such as *varṇāśrama-dharma*, *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and all other paths that are followed for the purpose of satisfying the body and mind, and who has taken sole shelter of exclusive devotion, or *kevalā-bhakti*, by performing *bhajana* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, can easily and naturally attain the result of all these other processes. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.13) “*sāmsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam – the highest perfection in life is to please Śrī Hari.*”

And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.33):

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhaktō labhate 'ñjasā

By pure devotional service, My devotee can very easily achieve such benedictions as attainment of the heavenly planets, liberation or My supreme abode.

Although the performance of different mundane religious processes does not exist in the practice of exclusive devotion, the real nature, or *dharma*, of the living entity, which is to serve the spiritual master and so forth, remains present within him. The Śrutis also confirms this opinion in *mantras* such as “*ācāryavān puruṣo veda – he who takes shelter of a bona fide spiritual master comes to know that Supreme Personality, who is described in the Vedas.*”

Devarṣi Nārada also establishes this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14):

*yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prānopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*

Just as by properly watering the root of a tree, its trunk, branches, twigs, leaves and flowers are nourished, and just as by eating, the

life-air is satisfied and all the senses nourished, in the same way only by worshipping Śrī Bhagavān is everyone worshipped.

Sukha-sādhya: The practice of exclusive devotion, *kevalā-bhakti*, involves no difficulty as do the paths of *jñāna*, *yoga* and so on; what to speak of misery or discomfort. Instead, one experiences happiness. *Kevalā-bhakti* is therefore called *sukha-sādhya*, or that which is joyfully performed. *Bhakti-sādhana* can be performed simply by engaging the senses such as the tongue and ears in chanting the sweet holy names of Kṛṣṇa and hearing about His pastimes, or merely by offering Him Tulasī leaves and a little water. Prahlāda Mahārāja also gave this instruction to the sons of the demons: “*na hy acyutam prīṇayato bahv-āyāsaḥ* – to please Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is also known as Acyuta (beyond mundane sense perception), one does not have to work laboriously” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.19).

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “Although one has to endure great troubles to maintain and satisfy a family, one need not undergo such trouble to please Śrī Hari. Because He is eternally situated within everyone’s heart as the indwelling Supersoul, one need not undergo any trouble to search for Him. One can please Him at all times, in all circumstances and in all respects, even by serving Him within the mind or by following any one of the processes of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. One can even please Him just by the desire to perform service. Thus, there is no pain involved in performing devotional service.” One experiences joy even while performing devotional service in the stage of practice.

taṁ sukhārādhyaṁ ṛjubhir ananya-śaraṇair nṛbhiḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.19.36)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is easily pleased by a person who has completely surrendered to Him and who has a simple heart.

It is also said in *Gautamīya-tantra*:

tulasī-dala-mātreṇa jalasya culukena vā

vikṛiṇīte svam ātmānaṁ bhaktebhyo bhakta-vatsalāḥ

Bhagavān, who is supremely affectionate to His own devotees (*bhakta-vatsala*), completely sells Himself to those devotees who, with love and devotion, offer Him a Tulasī leaf and a palmful of water.

Akṣaya-phala-prada: The processes of *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are impermanent. After yielding their fruit, or goal, such processes become futile and are then abandoned. *Bhakti*, however, exists in the stages of both practice and perfection (*sādhana* and *siddha*), because *bhakti* herself is not only the practice but is also the goal to be achieved. Even in the liberated stage, *bhakti* is not lost, but rather, it is performed purely and perfectly. Therefore, it is permanent and unchanging.

VERSE 3

अश्रद्धधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परन्तप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥३॥

*āsraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāsya parantapa
aprāpya mām nivartante mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*

āsraddadhānāḥ – faithless; *puruṣāḥ* – persons; *dharmasya* – of religiosity in the form of devotional service to Me; *asya* – of this; *parantapa* – O one who gives pain to His enemies; *aprāpya* – without attaining; *mām* – Me; *nivartante* – they return (wander); *mṛtyu* – and death; *saṁsāra* – of material existence; *vartmani* – on the path.

O Parantapa, those who have no faith in this *dharma* of devotional service to Me do not attain Me. They wander on the path of material existence, which is full of death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may raise the following doubt: “If this *dharma* of devotional service is so easily perfected, why do people remain in material existence?” In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *āsraddadhānāḥ*. The word *asya* means ‘*dharma* in the form of devotional service’. *Āsraddadhānāḥ puruṣāḥ* means ‘people who lack faith in this’.

“The superiority of *bhakti* is established by the statements of the scriptures, but those who are faithless consider such glorification to be exaggeration. They reject this *dharma* due to atheistic tendencies. Even if someone renounces the path of *bhakti* and practises severe alternative measures to attain Me, he will not be successful. Instead, he will continuously wander on this path of material existence, which is fraught with death.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Even after hearing and being acquainted with the glories of *bhakti* as described here, some consider those glories an exaggeration and do not develop faith in *bhakti*. Such faithless persons, who do not adopt *bhagavad-bhakti*, are forced to take repeated births in this material world. *Śraddhā* (faith) is the root cause of *bhakti*. One can only attain Bhagavān, who is affectionate to his devotees, by *bhakti*. This is also confirmed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.64) “*śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī* – those who are faithful are eligible for *bhakti*.” Furthermore, it is said:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 19.151)

In the course of wandering throughout this universe, that rare most fortunate living entity obtains the seed of the creeper of *bhakti* by the mercy of the bona fide spiritual master.

Śrī gurudeva infuses the desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa into the heart of the living entities. This desire is known as *kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā*, and by it one attains transcendental faith (*pāramārthika-śraddhā*), which is the root cause of *bhakti*. Those who are faithless and unfortunate do not take shelter of this path of *bhakti*, which has been established in all scriptures. They try to attain Śrī Bhagavān by adopting other processes, such as performing one’s prescribed duties, cultivating knowledge or performing mystic *yoga* and austerities, but their whimsical attempts go in vain. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.9) states:

yam na yogena sāṅkhyena dāna-vrata-tapo-dhvaraiḥ
vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ prāpnuyād yatnavān api

Even though one engages with great endeavour in mystic *yoga*, philosophical speculation, charity, vows, penances, ritualistic sacrifices, teaching Vedic *mantras* to others, personal study of the Vedas, or the renounced order of life, still one cannot achieve Me.*

Furthermore, the essence of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.33) is as follows: "Those who abandon service to the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva*, which is the primary support on the path of *bhakti*, and who desire to subdue their minds by *yoga* or other methods, are pursuing futile hopes. They fall down into the ocean of material existence, which is full of obstacles and various types of calamities." Śrī Bhagavān has also explained this topic in great detail in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.31 and 12.20).

VERSE 4

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥४॥

mayā tatam idam sarvam jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāham teṣu avasthitāḥ

mayā – by Me; *tatam* – is pervaded; *idam* – this; *sarvam* – entire; *jagat* – cosmic manifestation; *avyakta-mūrtinā* – by My form which is beyond the range of sense perception; *mat-sthāni* – are situated in Me; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all living beings; *na* – not; *ca* – yet; *aham* – I; *teṣu* – in them; *avasthitāḥ* – am situated.

This whole universe is pervaded by My form, which is beyond material sense perception. All living beings are situated in Me, but I am not in them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, "Only when *bhakti* is in the mood of servitorship (*dāśya*) do My devotees desire knowledge of My opulences (*aiśvarya*)." To explain this knowledge, Bhagavān is speaking seven verses, starting here with the word *mayā*. "I am the cause of this world, and I pervade it through My form, which is unmanifest (*avyakta*) and beyond the purview of the material senses. Thus all moving and

non-moving beings are situated in Me, who am the cause of everything and the complete conscious entity. Even so, because I am aloof and unattached, I am not situated in the created beings, unlike earth which is present in its effects (i.e. earthen objects such as pots).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Parīṇāma*: Milk is a pure substance. In contact with a souring agent, it turns to yogurt. This is called a transformation. Thus yogurt is a *parīṇāma*, or transformation, of milk.

Vivarta: To mistake one object for another is called *vivarta*. Examples of this are mistaking a rope for a snake and thinking that there is silver in an oyster.

The essence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s instruction lies herein. “This universe is not a *parīṇāma* (transformation) of Me, nor is it a *vivarta* (illusion). I have not transformed My existence to become either the individual living entity or the material world. Nor should they be mistaken to be Me, like a rope is sometimes mistaken to be a snake. I am the Absolute, self-effulgent Reality. The *jīvas* and the material world are also real; both are the transformation of My potency, or *śakti*. The *jīvas* are eternal and have come into existence from My marginal potency (the *taṭasthā-śakti*), but the material world, which is born of My external, material potency (the *bahirāṅgā-śakti*), is temporary and subject to destruction, even though it is also real.

“The *jīvas* and the material world are transformations of My potency, which is non-different from Me; therefore, they are simultaneously one with and different from Me. This conception is inconceivable (*acintya*), because it can be understood by scripture only and cannot be experienced by ordinary, material intelligence. Wherever one experiences both difference and oneness at the same time, the perception of difference is indeed stronger than the perception of oneness. Therefore, I am the Absolute Conscious Entity, different from both the individual living entity and the material world.”

VERSE 5

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृत्र च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥५॥

**na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūta-bhṛt na ca bhūta-stho mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ**

na – not; *ca* – and; *mat-sthāni* – situated in Me; *bhūtāni* – the moving and non-moving beings; *paśya* – behold; *me* – My; *yogam* – supernatural, mystic; *aiśvaram* – opulence; *bhūta-bhṛt* – the support of the moving and non-moving beings; *na* – not; *ca* – yet; *bhūta-sthaḥ* – situated in those entities; *mama* – My; *ātmā* – self; *bhūta-bhāvanaḥ* – and the maintainer of all moving and non-moving beings.

All that is created, also, does not actually exist in Me. Behold My supernatural mystic opulence! Although I support and maintain the entire cosmic existence, I Myself am not situated within it.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Therefore, although all living beings and elements are situated within Me, they are not situated in My *svarūpa*, because I am aloof from them. If you raise the doubt, ‘This is contrary to Your previous statement (*Gītā* 9.4) that You are all-pervading and the support of the whole universe,’ then in response I say, ‘Behold My extraordinary mystic opulence, which can make the impossible possible. This is simply the effect of My *aiśvarya* only. Behold another wonderful quality of Mine! One who supports the living beings is called *bhūta-bhṛt*, and one who maintains the living beings is known as *bhūta-bhāvana*. Although I possess these qualities, I am not situated in the living entities (*bhūta-stha*). There is no difference between My body and Me. The living entity remains within his body because he becomes attached to it in the course of supporting and maintaining it. Similarly, although I support and maintain the material manifestation, and although I am situated in the illusory cosmic creation, I am not in it because I am not attached to it; rather, I am detached.’”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “I pervade the whole material universe. All beings and elements are situated within Me, yet they do not exist in Me.” To clarify this subject further, Śrī Bhagavān tells Arjuna, “Although I am the supporter and maintainer of all beings, I am not situated within them.” This principle has also been confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.38): *etad īśanam īśasya prakṛti-stho ’pi tad-*

guṇaiḥ na yujyate. This means that the Supreme Controller, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is not affected by the modes of nature, although He presides over material nature. This is a most wonderful characteristic of His. This act of making the impossible possible is achieved through His mystic potency, or *yoga-aīśvarya*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “All beings and elements exist in Me alone. Do not conclude from this that all beings exist in My actual self. Rather, they exist by the power of My *māyā-śakti*. You, the *jīva*, will not be able to comprehend this fact by your own limited intelligence. Therefore, understand it to be My mystic opulence, and know Me as *bhūta-bhṛt* (the supporter), *bhūta-stha* (all-pervading) and *bhūta-bhāvana* (the maintainer of all manifestations). Consider My activities to be the functions of My energy. Fix yourself in the conception that there is no difference between Me and My body, as I am Absolute Spirit. For this reason, I am actually completely aloof, although I am the cause and basis of the material manifestation.”

VERSE 6

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥६॥

yathākāśa-sthīto nityam vāyuh sarvatra-go mahān
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni mat-sthānīty upadhāraya

yathā – just as; *ākāśa-sthītaḥ* – rests within space; *nityam* – always; *vāyuh* – wind; *sarvatra-gaḥ* – the all-pervading; *mahān* – the unbounded; *tathā* – similarly; *sarvāṇi* – all; *bhūtāni* – the cosmic elements; *mat-sthāni* – are situated in Me; *iti* – thus; *upadhāraya* – understand.

Just as the all-pervasive and limitless wind rests always in the sky, in the same way, all of the cosmic elements are situated in Me, but I am not in them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Asaṅga* means, “Although all beings and the elements are situated in Me, they are not actually in Me; and although I am in all beings and elements, I am not actually in them.” Śrī Bhagavān

is speaking this verse beginning with *yathā* to give an example of this. “It is the nature of the wind to be always moving, thus it is said to be *sarvaga*. It is described as mighty because its capacity is unlimited. Just as the wind is situated in the sky, which is by nature aloof, or unmixed [with other elements], simultaneously it is not situated in the sky. Furthermore, because the sky’s nature is to be separate and aloof, it is not situated in the wind, although it is also situated in the wind. Similarly, the five elements of material nature, such as sky and air, which exist everywhere, are not in Me, because My nature is aloof. They are not in Me, although they are situated in Me. Deliberate on this and try to understand it.”

Arjuna may raise the following question: “You said, ‘Behold My supernatural opulences and mystic potency!’ But how is the inconceivable nature of Your opulences and mystic potency proved by this example? If it can be explained by an example, how is it inconceivable?”

In response, Bhagavān says, “The sky, which is inert, is aloof, but among conscious beings, it is not possible for anyone other than Me to be aloof even if that person presides over the manifested creation.”

How can He who is the creator remain untouched by, or aloof, from His creation? If this can be so, it is indeed extraordinary and proves that He is inconceivable. Here the example of the sky is given so that common people may easily understand the *siddhānta*, or correct conclusion. Actually, in regard to the Inconceivable Entity, there is no real scope for comparison.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The statement “*paśya me yogam aiśvaram* – behold My mystic opulence,” has a deep meaning. One can only realize *bhagavat-tattva* by the mercy of Bhagavān. Without His mercy one cannot have *darśana* of Him. One can see Bhagavān only by *bhakti*, which is the propensity to render favourable service to Him. This has been confirmed in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.38):

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

Saintly persons whose eyes of devotion are smeared with the salve of *prema* always behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts as Śyāmasundara, the embodiment of inconceivable qualities. I worship that original personality, Govinda.

Although Śrī Bhagavān is all-pervading, He always exists in His human-like feature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The sun is always existing in his individual, personal form, yet the sun pervades the whole universe by its light. Similarly, Bhagavān, by His *yogamāyā*, remains situated in His own personal form, and at the same time He pervades all moving and non-moving entities throughout the universe.

Out of His mercy, Kṛṣṇa gives this clear explanation to Arjuna: “O Arjuna, realization of Me is never possible with one’s gross, material senses. I am revealing Myself to you only out of mercy. My *yogamāyā-śakti*, which is expert at making the impossible possible, is the cause of great astonishment. It is only by the help of this *śakti* that I remain aloof from all beings, even while sustaining them.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Souls in material bondage cannot really understand this *tattva*, so to explain it with a mundane example is not very satisfactory. Yet, in an attempt to make it clearly understandable, I will give you an example. Although you will not be able to understand it fully even after serious contemplation, you will be able to comprehend something. Sky is an all-pervading element, and within it, the movement of the atoms is multi-directional. The sky is the substructure of everything, yet it is always aloof from the activities of the wind. In the same way, even though all of the living entities emanate from and are directed by My energy, I, like the sky, remain ever aloof.”

VERSE 7

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥७॥

*sarva-bhūtāni kaunteya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām
kalpa-kṣaye punas tāni kalpādau visṛjāmy aham*

sarva-bhūtāni – the five gigantic elements i.e. earth, water, etc.; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *prakṛtim* – material nature; *yānti* – enter; *māmikām* – My; *kalpa-kṣaye* – when devastation occurs at the end of a *kalpa* (the life span of Lord Brahmā); *punaḥ* – again; *tāni* – those (elements); *kalpa-ādau* – at the beginning of a *kalpa* (the time of creation); *visṛjāmi* – create; *aham* – I.

O son of Kuntī, when the universal devastation occurs, all of the universal elements merge into My material nature (*prakṛti*), and at the beginning of the next day of Lord Brahmā, by My potency, I again create them all with their distinct characteristics.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The following doubt may be raised: “At present it is known that all elements are situated in You, but where do they go during the great annihilation (*mahā-pralaya*)?” Anticipating this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *sarva*. “They enter My *māyā-śakti*, which consists of the three modes of nature. Then, after the annihilation, or in other words, at the beginning of creation, I again create all of them with their distinct characteristics.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The creation, maintenance and annihilation of this material world are carried out entirely by the will of Śrī Bhagavān. Here the word *kalpa-kṣaya* means ‘the end of Lord Brahmā’s life span’. This subject was explained earlier. There is a great annihilation at the end of Brahmā’s life span. At that time, all of the elements enter Śrī Bhagavān’s external potency, and by His will, they are again created by His material nature at the beginning of the next *kalpa*, or day of Lord Brahmā. One can refer to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.4.5-6) for further information.

VERSE 8

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥८॥

prakṛtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ
bhūta-grāmam imam kṛtsnam avaśaṁ prakṛter vaśāt

prakṛtim – material nature (consisting of three qualities); *svām* – of My; *avaṣṭabhya* – taking assistance; *visṛjāmi* – I create; *punaḥ punaḥ* – repeatedly; *bhūta-grāmam* – host of beings; *imam* – this; *kṛtsnam* – entire; *avaśam* – helpless; *prakṛteḥ* – by their (previous) natures (attained as a result of their past activities); *vaśāt* – being controlled.

Taking the assistance of My material nature, which consists of the three binding qualities, I repeatedly create the host of living beings who are bound by their previous *karma* in accordance with their individual natures.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may raise the following question: “If You are completely aloof and free from any transformation, how do You create?” Anticipating this question, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *prakṛtim*. “Being situated within My material nature and presiding over it, I create a multitude of living entities who are bound by their past *karma*, or acquired nature.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This material world is a manifestation, or transformation, of Bhagavān’s inferior energy (*aparā-śakti*). As far as the *jīvas* are concerned, they are His marginal potency, a transformation of the *jīva-śakti*, and they are eternal, unlike the material world, which is being constantly recreated. They are simply put into the womb of material nature from where they enter various species of life according to their previous actions, or *karma*, and they undergo the result of that *karma*. It is necessary to say at this point that all species of life, such as animals, birds and humans, are created simultaneously. The modern principle of evolution, introduced by Darwin, has no foundation and is a completely mistaken belief. Why is it that even after millions of years, no species of life superior to the human being has evolved?

Even after performing His act of creation, Śrī Bhagavān remains completely aloof from all these activities and without any transformation. The *jīvas* and the material world are manifested only when His energy is transformed.

VERSE 9

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।
 उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥
na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya
udāsīna-vad āsīnam asaktaṁ teṣu karmasu

na – not; *ca* – since; *mām* – Me; *tāni* – these; *karmāṇi* – activities such as creation; *nibadhnanti* – bind; *dhanañjaya* – O Arjuna; *udāsīna-vat* – as if neutral; *āsīnam* – I am situated; *asaktaṁ* – detached; *teṣu karmasu* – from these actions.

O Dhanañjaya, since I remain detached, like a neutral observer, from My actions such as creation, these actions cannot bind Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following question may be raised: “If You, like the living entity, perform action, why do You not become bound by it?” Śrī Bhagavān responds to this question with the present verse beginning with *na ca*. “It is only attachment to acts such as creation that cause bondage, but I am not attached. Being *āptakāma*, My every desire is satisfied.”

This is why Śrī Bhagavān says *udāsīna-vat*. “I remain indifferent to all acts such as creation, just as a person who is indifferent to others does not become involved in their miseries and lamentations.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Dhanañjaya, all these actions cannot bind Me. I remain detached from such actions, like one who is indifferent, although I am not actually so. Rather, I am always absorbed in My own spiritual bliss. Only My external potency (*māyā*) and the marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*), both of which nourish My transcendental bliss, create various kinds of beings. I am not disturbed by this. Whatever actions the living entities perform under the influence of My external potency help to enliven My pure, spiritually blissful pastimes. Thus, My neutral attitude toward mundane activities is easily recognized.”

VERSE 10

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १० ॥

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate

mayā – by My; *adhyakṣeṇa* – superintendence; *prakṛtiḥ* – nature; *sūyate* – gives birth; *sa-cara-acaram* – to the universe with moving and non-moving beings; *hetunā* – cause; *anena* – because of this; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *jagat* – the universe; *viparivartate* – revolves in its cycles.

O son of Kuntī, under My direction, My external potency gives birth to the cosmic manifestation with its moving and non-moving living beings. For this reason, the material world is created again and again.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may raise the doubt, “I cannot believe that You, as the creator of this cosmic manifestation, are so indifferent.”

Śrī Bhagavān thus speaks this verse beginning with *mayādhyakṣeṇa* to remove that doubt. *Adhyakṣeṇa mayā* means, “I am just the instrumental cause. It is the material nature that creates the entire moving and non-moving material world. My function is only to preside over it, just as the *prakṛti* (administrative advisors) of kings like Ambarīṣa perform the royal duties. The king is indifferent and simply represents the kingdom. The citizens cannot function without a king occupying the throne. Similarly, the material nature will not be able to perform any function without My supervision and authority.”

Hetunānena means ‘This material world is repeatedly created only because I preside over it.’

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān is the master of the material modes and the superintendent of *māyā*. He is the instrumental cause of material nature and He also presides over it in acts such as creation. It is only by the inspiration of His glance that material nature

can repeatedly create this world of moving and non-moving beings. Material nature receives the power to create from Him alone, because it is under His control. Inert matter cannot perform the function of creation by itself. Similarly, iron can only burn in contact with fire; it is not independently capable of burning without the potency of fire. Kṛṣṇa is therefore the root cause of the material world. Inert nature can be compared to the nipple-like bags hanging from the neck of a goat; they are for external show only, there is no milk to be had from them.

VERSE 11

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ११ ॥

*avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram*

avajānanti – show disrespect (due to their illusioned intelligence); *mām* – to Me; *mūḍhāḥ* – those without discrimination; *mānuṣīm* – in a human-like; *tanum* – form; *āśritam* – who has taken shelter; *param* – supreme; *bhāvam* – nature; *ajānantaḥ* – not knowing; *mama* – of My; *bhūta* – of all beings; *mahā-īśvaram* – the great Lord.

Fools whose intelligence is bewildered by illusion disrespect Me when I appear in a human-like form, being unaware of My supreme nature as the Lord of all beings.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may raise the following doubt: “It is true that You are none other than Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, whose form is composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), who pervades unlimited universes, and who is famous for creating the material world by Your material energy. Some persons however, upon having *darśana* of Your human form as the son of Vasudeva, do not accept Your supreme position.”

To remove Arjuna’s doubt, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *avajānanti mām*. “They deride Me only because they

do not know the supreme nature of the human-like form in front of you. This *svarūpa* is even superior to that of great personalities like Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu.”

“What is the nature of this *svarūpa*?” Bhagavān answers, “I am *bhūta-maheśvaram*, the great controller of *bhūta* (*brahma*), the embodiment of Truth. In other words, I am the eternal embodiment of the highest truth.” Here *maheśvaram* negates the possibility of another separate Truth. The *Amara-koṣa* (a Sanskrit dictionary) defines *bhūta* as a substance that is covered by earth (*yukte kṣmād āvr̥te bhūtam*).

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Śruti* says, “Śrī Govinda, His form composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*, is sporting within groves of immortal trees in Śrī Vṛndāvana, and the Maruts (demigods of the air) and I satisfy Him with great eulogies.” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.23.20) also says, “*narākṛtiḥ parabrahma* – the Absolute Truth appeared in a human-like form.”

“The eternal, cognizant and blissful nature (*sac-cid-ānanda*) of My human form is glorified only by My pure devotees who are well versed in fundamental absolute principles (*tattva*), in regard to Me, and who know that I pervade the entire universe in this body alone. This was observed by Mother Yaśodā in My childhood.”

The words *param bhāvam* also mean ‘supreme existence’ or ‘the pure transcendental form of eternality, cognizance and bliss’. In the *Amara-koṣa*, the words *bhāva*, *svabhāva* and *abhiprāya* are synonymous and imply ‘nature’. The word *parama-bhāva* (supreme nature) is also described in a more specific way in the statement *mama bhūta-maheśvaram*. “I am the Supreme Controller and the creator of a host of beings such as Lord Brahmā. Unlike the *jīvas*, the body of Me, Parameśvara, is non-different from Me. I am My body. That is, I am indeed that very same *brahma*. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who knows My *tattva*, states: ‘He displayed a body that can only be known by the Vedas’ (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.21.8). Therefore, Arjuna, persons like you, who are conversant with the *tattva* regarding Me, have faith in this statement.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all *viṣṇu-tattva*. *Nirviśeṣa-brahma*, the featureless aspect of the Supreme, is described in the Upaniṣads as the bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa. Paramātmā, who pervades the entire universe, is Kṛṣṇa’s partial

expansion. Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, is His pastime potency (*svāmśa-vilāsa*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the origin of all *avatāras*, He is the controller of all controllers and the ultimate Transcendental Reality. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the master of all beings and the only Lord of all the universes. He is omniscient, omnipotent, greatly compassionate and capable of doing anything simply by willing. Foolish people, however, disrespect Him when they have *darśana* of His beautiful human-like form. They consider the form of Vasudeva-nandana or Yaśodā-nandana Kṛṣṇa to be mundane and mortal, like that of an ordinary human being. Some think that Kṛṣṇa's body is material and perishable. They imagine His body to contain a soul, and that soul (*ātmā*) to be Paramātmā. Those who think like this are foolish, because scripture declares that Kṛṣṇa's body is composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), and that there is no difference between His body and His self. This is evident from the following quotations from different scriptures:

- (1) *om sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāya* – Yes, let us contemplate Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose form is imbued with eternality, cognizance and bliss (*Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* 1.1).
- (2) *tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham* – It is He alone, Govinda, who has an eternal, cognizant and blissful form (Śruti).
- (3) *dvi-bhujam mauna-mudrāḍhyam vana-mālinam īśvaram* – The Lord, while wearing a garland of forest flowers, plays His flute, enchantingly forming the *mauna-mudra* with His hands (Śruti).
- (4) *īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ* – The Supreme Lord, Īśvara, is Kṛṣṇa; His form is eternal, all-knowing and blissful (*Brahma-saṁhita* 5.1).
- (5) *apaśyaṁ gopām anipadyamānam* – I saw a boy who appeared in the dynasty of cowherds and who is never annihilated (*R̥g Veda* 1.22, 1.66.31).
- (6) *gūḍham paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* – The Supreme Lord is hidden by His accepting a human-like form (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.75).
- (7) *sākṣād gūḍham paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* – He is directly the Supreme *brahma*, yet He is hidden because He has a human form (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.10.48).

- (8) *yatrāvātīrṇo bhagavān paramātmā narākṛtiḥ* – ... whereupon the Supreme Lord descended in a human-like form (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.23.20).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed a resident *brāhmaṇa* of Kāśī that Kṛṣṇa's form and Kṛṣṇa's name are non-different. His name, form and nature are all *sac-cid-ānanda* and one in *tattva*. There is no difference between His body and His self, His name (*nāma*) and the possessor of His name (*nāmī*). Those who think that the *sac-cid-ānanda* form of Kṛṣṇa is material are severe offenders. Śrī Caitanya-*caritāmṛta* explains that amongst all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, His human-like pastimes are the best. Dressed as a cowherd boy, carrying a flute in His hand and appearing as a youthful dancer – this form is the most supreme and most endearing of all.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The essence of My statements is that My *svarūpa* is composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss and that My potency performs all actions by My mercy, although I am independent from those actions. It is only by My mercy and the strength of My potency that I am visible within this mundane world. I am the complete Transcendental Reality beyond all mundane rules and, even though I am the personification of the Conscious Reality, I become visible in this material world. But human beings, who are diminutive in size, give special respect to that which is immense and unmanifest. This is due to their conditioned intelligence. That feature, however, is not My supreme nature. My supreme nature is that although I am completely transcendental and have a human-like, medium sized form, by My potency, I am simultaneously all-pervading and smaller than the atom. My *svarūpa* is manifested by My *acintya-sakti*, My inconceivable potency. Those who are foolish consider My transcendental form, composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, to be that of a human. They think that I have been forced to accept this material body by the laws of material nature and are unable to understand that I, in this very form, am the controller of all beings. Therefore, because they have a misconception about transcendental reality (*avidvat-pratīti*), they superimpose their limited understanding on Me. However, those

who have developed a proper perception (*vidvat-pratīti*) are able to understand that My *svarūpa* is the ever-existing form of knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda-tattva*).”

VERSE 12

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
 राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२ ॥
moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasah
rākṣasīm āsurīm caiva prakṛtiṁ mohinīm śritāḥ

mogha-āśāḥ – baffled desires; *mogha-karmāṇah* – their fruitive work is baffled; *mogha-jñānāḥ* – knowledge baffled; *vicetasah* – those bewildered persons; *rākṣasīm* – ignorant; *āsurīm* – demonic nature; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *prakṛtiṁ* – nature; *mohinīm* – of the illusory; *śritāḥ* – take shelter.

The hopes of such bewildered persons for liberation, material gain and the culture of knowledge all go in vain. Thus, with their minds distracted, they adopt the nature of the deluded, ignorant and passionate.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What is the destination of those who deride Śrī Bhagavān, thinking that He has a human body made of *māyā*?” Anticipating this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān says that even though such people are devotees, their hopes go in vain. Their desires to attain one of the four types of *mukti*, such as *sālokya* (residing on the same planet as the Lord) bear no fruit. If they are fruitive workers, they cannot attain the result of their *karma*, like residence in the heavenly planets. If they are *jñānīs*, they cannot attain liberation as a result of their *jñāna*. So what do they achieve? In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the third line of this verse beginning with *rākṣasīm*. “They attain a demoniac nature.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse describes the destination of those who deride the supramundane, human-like body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, composed of eternity, cognizance and bliss, as

described in the previous verse. Their desires, activities and knowledge all become useless. Even their minds become distracted and they take shelter of a demoniac and atheistic nature, which destroys their discrimination. In this way, they fall from the path leading to the supreme goal. This is explained in the *Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava Tantra*:

*yo vetti bhautikam deham kṛṣṇasya paramātmanah
sa sarvasmād bahiṣ-kāryaḥ śrauta-smārta-vidhānataḥ*

Those who consider the body of the Supersoul Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be made of the five material elements are disqualified from performing all types of *karma* according to Śruti and Smṛti. It is recommended that if one sees the face of such sinful people, one should immediately take bath with his clothes on. It is said that being devoid of discrimination, those with such a bewildered, demoniac, ignorant and violent nature must go to the hellish planets.

VERSE 13

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

*mahātmānaḥ tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam*

mahā-ātmānaḥ – the great souls; *tu* – however; *mām* – Me; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *daivīm* – of the divine; *prakṛtim* – nature; *āśritāḥ* – taking shelter; *bhajanti* – worship; *ananya-manasaḥ* – with undeviating minds; *jñātvā* – knowing; *bhūta-ādim* – cause of all beings; *avyayam* – the imperishable.

O Pārtha, the great souls, however, having taken shelter of My divine nature, know Me to be the original and imperishable cause of all beings. They constantly engage in worship of Me with their minds fixed exclusively on Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Those exalted souls who attained greatness by the mercy of My *bhakti*, even though they are only human beings, and who have taken shelter of the divine nature (*daivīm prakṛtim*), engage

exclusively in *bhajana* to serve Me in My human-like form. Their minds are not attracted by *karma*, *jñāna* and other desires; therefore, they are solely absorbed in Me (*ananya-manāḥ*). Having received knowledge of My opulence, such as *mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ* (*Gītā* 9.4), they know Me to be the cause of all beings, from Lord Brahmā down to a blade of grass. They know Me to be eternal and immutable (*avyaya*) and My form to be *sac-cid-ānanda*, composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss. In regard to worship of Me, My devotees need this type of knowledge, not more. One should regard exclusive devotion, which is free from *tvaṁ-padārtha-jñāna*, *karma* and so on, as the topmost knowledge and as the king of all confidential secrets.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One may raise the question, “Then who is that person who engages in *bhajana* to Him, respecting Kṛṣṇa’s form of eternality, cognizance and bliss?” Bhagavān answers this with the present verse. Those who have attained the causeless mercy of a devotee and Śrī Bhagavān take shelter of pure *bhakti*. Only such great souls engage in *bhajana* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of *sac-cid-ānanda*. Such great personalities are very rare. This principle has been confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Such great personalities are endowed with divine natures. Contrary to this, there are others with demonic natures. It is said in the *Padma Purāṇa*, “*viṣṇu-bhaktāḥ smṛto daiva āsurās tad-viparyayaḥ* – according to the Smṛtis, the devotees of Viṣṇu are called demigods, and those who are averse to Him are called demons.”

VERSE 14

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ १४ ॥

satataṁ kīrtayanto mām yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate

satatam – constantly; *kīrtayantaḥ* – chanting; *mām* – Me; *yatantaḥ* – endeavouring; *ca* – and; *dṛḍha-vratāḥ* – with determined vows; *namasyantaḥ* – bowing down; *ca* – and; *mām* – before Me; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *nitya-yuktāḥ* – they with a mood of eternal union; *upāsate* – worship.

Constantly chanting the glories of My names, qualities, form and pastimes, endeavouring with determined vows, and offering obeisances with devotion, they engage in My worship, remaining always connected with Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “You said that they engage in *bhajana* (worship) of You, but what is that *bhajana*?” In answer to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *satatam*. “They constantly perform *kīrtana* of Me in which there is no consideration of the purity or impurity of time, place or person, unlike in *karma-yoga*. Smṛti (*Viṣṇu-dharmottara*) says, ‘For a person who is attached to chanting the name of Śrī Hari, there is no rule regarding time or place. What to speak of chanting with a contaminated mouth, there is no restriction to chanting in any impure state.’ These great souls are *yatantaḥ*, which means that they endeavour with steadfast vows. A poor householder may endeavour to maintain his family near a wealthy person, in the hope of gaining wealth. Similarly, My devotees develop an attachment to the limbs of devotion, such as *kīrtana*, and in order to obtain *bhakti*, they go to an assembly of *sādhus*. Even after attaining *bhakti*, they practise it again and again, just as one may revise the scriptures many times. Those who are steadfast and never break their vow to chant a fixed number of names, who offer obeisances a set number of times, who perform other such services regularly and who fast on Ekādaśī are called *yatnavān*, or persons of endeavour. They think, ‘This practice is imperative for me.’ In the phrase *namasyantaś ca*, the word *ca* means that all other limbs of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *pāda-sevana*, are also included in this. These great devotees are called *nitya-yuktāḥ*, meaning that they desire to obtain My eternal association. The import of the two phrases *kīrtayanto mām* and *mām upāsate* in this verse is that worship of Me is composed exclusively of *kīrtana* and other limbs of *bhakti*. Therefore, repetition of the word *mām* is not a defect.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse explains how the great personalities who were described in the previous verse worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.3.22) states: “*bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ* – they incessantly engage in the *kīrtana* of

My name, form, qualities and pastimes.” It is stated in the *Vaiṣṇava-cintāmaṇi*:

*na deśa-niyamo rājan na kāla-niyamas tathā
vidyate nātra sandeho viṣṇor nāmānukirtane*

This *bhakti*, in the form of *kīrtana*, does not depend on the purity of time, place or person.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* states, “*cakrāyudhasya nāmāni sadā sarvatra kīrtayet* – the name of Śrī Hari, who carries a disc in His hand, is to be chanted everywhere, and at all times.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu confirms this in *Śikṣāṣṭakam*: “*kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* – always chant the name of Śrī Hari.”

An ordinary person cannot become a *mahātmā* simply by advertising himself or collecting votes. No one can become a *mahātmā* like this. In this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself describes the intrinsic characteristic of a *mahātmā*. Those who are constantly engaged in hearing, chanting and remembering the supremely pure name, form and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the *ātmā* of all *ātmās*, are called *mahātmās*. Others, such as *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and *tapasvīs*, those who engage in pious activities and those who consider Bhagavān to be featureless (*nirviśeṣa*), formless, or impersonal (*nirākāra*) and devoid of potency (*niḥśaktika*), are not addressed as *mahātmā* in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Any person in any *āśrama*, be he a *brahmacārī*, a *gṛhastha* or a *sannyāsī*, can become a real *mahātmā* by taking shelter of a bona fide *guru* and by cultivating devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “*Mahātmās*, who understand Me properly, always perform *kīrtana* of My name, form, qualities and pastimes. That is, they follow the nine limbs of *bhakti* – such as hearing and chanting – with determined vows, in order to attain eternal service to My eternal, all-cognizant and all-blissful Śyāmasundara form. They perform all activities – bodily, mental, social or spiritual – with the sole determination of pleasing Me. They surrender to Me by the process of *bhakti-yoga* even while living in this material world. This ensures that their minds do not become disturbed by materialistic activities.”

VERSE 15

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
 एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ १५ ॥

*jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye yajanto mām upāsate
 ekatvena pṛthaktvena bahudhā viśvato-mukham*

jñāna-yajñena – through the culture of knowledge; *ca* – and; *api* – however; *anye* – others; *yajantaḥ* – worship; *mām* – Me; *upāsate* – worship; *ekatvena* – through the monistic conception; *pṛthaktvena* – with a conception of duality; *bahudhā* – with the conception of many gods; *viśvataḥ-mukham* – with the concept of the universal form.

There are others who engage in sacrifice (*yajña*) by cultivating knowledge. Some worship Me with a conception of oneness, some with a conception of duality, some through the forms of various demigods, and some worship Me as the universal form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this chapter and in previous chapters, only exclusive devotees, those in whom there is no trace of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, worldly desire and so on, have been referred to as *mahātmās*. It has been shown that such devotees are superior to all other types of devotees, such as those seeking relief from distress. Now Śrī Bhagavān is speaking about the other three types of devotees who were not described earlier and who fall into a different category. They are *ahaṅgraha-upāsakas*, those who identify themselves with their object of worship. The *pratīka-upāsakās* worship the demigods, considering them to be Supreme, but in fact those demigods are simply potencies of the Lord. The *viśvarūpa-upāsakas* worship the universal or cosmic form of the Lord. None of them are *mahātmās* because they are unable to perform the *sādhana* described previously (*Gītā* 9.14).

The three meanings of *jñāna-yajña* are described in the Śrutis:

- (1) “O Deva-puruṣa, Master of all opulences! Whatever You are, I am that, and whatever I am, You are also that.” This is *aḥaṅgraha-upāsana*, and some *jñānis* engage in the worship of Parameśvara by this. Here, the word *ca* has been used to mean *evam* (also) and *api*

has been used in the sense of ‘giving up all other processes’. The word *ekatvena* (oneness) means ‘thinking that the worshipper is one with the worshipable’. In the Tantra it is said, “*nādevo devam arcayet* – one who is not a demigod oneself cannot worship a demigod.” *Ahaṅgraha-upāsanā* means to worship Gopāla with the feeling “I am Gopāla.”

- (2) Inferior to this type of worship is *pr̥thaktvena* (worship in duality), wherein the worshippers engage in sacrifice in the form of *pratīka-upāsanā*. The Śrutis state, ‘The sun is *brahma*; this alone is the instruction.’ This is the explanation of Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

Some worshippers think that the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu is the sun, and that there is no sun other than Him; that He Himself is Indra, and there is no other Indra; and that He is Soma, and there is no other Soma. This type of worship, in which the *vibhūtis* (opulences) are seen as being Bhagavān in different forms, is called *pratīka-upāsanā*.

- (3) To worship all the *vibhūtis* with the knowledge that Viṣṇu is everything is called *viśvarūpa-upāsanā*. “Those who have less intelligence worship My universal form in various ways, considering Me to be the soul of everything.”

In this way, *jñāna-yajña* has three divisions. Sometimes, the oneness of the worshipper with the object of worship (*ekatvena*) and the worship of Śrī Bhagavān’s *vibhūtis* as being different from Bhagavān (*pr̥thaktvena*) are placed in one category, because they are almost the same. For example, in *ahaṅgraha-upāsanā* is the mentality “I am Gopāla” and also “I am the servant of Gopāla.” These two types of feelings are likened to a river that is approaching the ocean. The river is different from the ocean, yet it is also non-different. Therefore, *jñāna-yajña* is of two types when categorized in this way.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The superior position of the exclusive, or one-pointed, devotees is apparent when they are compared to certain devotees, such as those who approach the Lord

out of distress (*ārta*). An *ananya-bhakta* can be addressed as *mahātmā*, exalted soul. Having stated this, Śrī Bhagavān then explains three other types of worshippers who are inferior to them. These three types of worshippers are unable to perform the *sādhana* of the exclusive, one-pointed devotees, so they worship Śrī Bhagavān by the sacrifice of knowledge endowed with *bhakti*, which is predominated by *karma* and so forth (*guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti*), and they deliberate on the reality of *ekatvena* (oneness), *prthaktvena* (difference, duality) and *bahudhā*, or *viśvatomukham* (the universal form).

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, superior to those devotees who approach Me out of distress are the exclusive devotees who are known as *mahātmās*. I have described the devotees who approach Me, in various ways, out of distress. Now I will explain the three other types of devotees who are inferior to them and whom I have not yet mentioned. Learned scholars call these three types of worshippers *ahaṅgraha-upāsaka*, *pratīka-upāsaka* and *viśvarūpa-upāsaka*.

“*Ahaṅgraha-upāsakas* are superior to the other two. They call themselves ‘Bhagavān’ and with this ego, they perform worship. This mentality, or egoism, is one type of *yajña* for worshipping Parameśvara. The *ahaṅgraha-upāsakas* worship *brahma*, the featureless aspect of the Absolute, while performing this *yajña* with a conception of oneness with *brahma*. *Pratīka-upāsakas* are inferior to them. They think of themselves as separate from Bhagavān and they worship the sun, Indra, etc., but without the understanding that the sun and Indra are only Śrī Bhagavān’s opulences, or *vibhūtis*. Those who are even less intelligent worship Śrī Bhagavān in the form of *viśvarūpa* (the universal form). Thus, *jñāna-yajña* is of three types.”

VERSES 16–19

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
 मन्त्रोऽहमहेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ १६ ॥
 पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
 वेद्यं पवित्रमोँकार ऋक् साम यजुरेव च ॥ १७ ॥

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ १८ ॥

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ १९ ॥

aham kratuḥ aham yajñāḥ svadhāham aham auśadham
mantraḥ 'ham aham evājyam aham agniḥ aham hutam

pitāham asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ
vedyam pavitram omkāra ṛk sāma yajur eva ca

gatiḥ bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇam suhṛt
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānam nidhānam bījam avyayam

tapāmy aham aham varṣam nigṛhṇāmy utsṛjāmi ca
amṛtam caiva mṛtyuś ca sad asac cāham arjuna

aham kratuḥ – I am the *agniṣṭoma* ritual; *aham yajñāḥ* – I am the *smārta-yajña* (such as *vaiśva-deva*); *svadhā aham* – I am the *śrāddha* (offering to the forefathers); *aham auśadham* – I am the medicinal herbs; *mantraḥ aham* – I am the *mantra*; *aham* – I am; *eva* – certainly; *ajyam* – the ghee; *aham agniḥ* – I am the fire; *aham hutam* – I am the offering in the fire; *pitā aham* – I am the father; *asya* – of this; *jagataḥ* – universe; *mātā* – the mother; *dhātā* – supporter; *pitā-mahaḥ* – and the grandfather; *vedyam* – I am worthy to be known; *pavitram* – the purifier; *om-kāraḥ* – I am the syllable *om*; *ṛk sāma yajuh* – the *Ṛg, Sāma* and *Yajur Vedas*; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *gatiḥ* – the fruit of *karma*; *bhartā* – the sustainer; *prabhuḥ* – the controller and master; *sākṣī* – the witness of good and bad actions; *nivāsaḥ* – the abode; *śaraṇam* – the protector; *suhṛt* – the well-wisher; *prabhavaḥ* – the creator; *pralayaḥ* – the destroyer; *sthānam* – foundation; *nidhānam* – the place of rest; *bījam* – cause; *avyayam* – the imperishable; *tapāmi aham* – I cause heat; *aham* – I; *varṣam* – rain; *nigṛhṇāmi* – I withhold; *utsṛjāmi* – release; *ca* – and; *amṛtam* – liberation; *ca* – as well as; *eva* – I am certainly; *mṛtyuḥ* – death; *ca* – and; *sat* – subtle spirit; *asat* – gross matter; *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

O Arjuna, I am the Vedic rituals such as *agniṣṭoma*, I am the *smārta-yajñas* such as *vaiśva-deva*, and I am *śrāddha*, the oblation of grain

made to the forefathers. I am the potency of the healing herb, the *mantra*, the ghee, the fire and I am *homa*, or *yajña*. I am the mother, the father, the maintainer and the grandsire of the universe. I am the object of knowledge and the purifier. I am the syllable *om* and I am also the *R̥g*, *Yajur* and *Sāma Vedas*. I am destiny in the form of the fruit of *karma*, the sustainer, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the dearest well-wishing friend. I am the creation, the dissolution, the basis, the foundation, the resting place and the eternal cause, or the inexhaustible seed. I give heat and I withhold and release the rain. I am immortality and I am death personified. I am the cause of everything and also the effect, and I am both spirit and matter.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Why do people worship You in various ways?” Anticipating this question, in this and the next three verses, Śrī Bhagavān is giving the details of His nature in which he explains that everything within the universe is He and He alone. In other words, He is describing His cosmic form. The word *kratuḥ* means sacrifices such as *agniṣṭoma* that are prescribed in the Vedas, as well as *yajñas* such as *vaiśva-deva*, which are described in the Smṛtis of the *smārtas*. The word *auśadham* means ‘that which is produced from *auśadhi*, herbs that have medicinal benefit’. The word *pitā* signifies that because He is the ingredient material cause of the universe, either individually or collectively, He is the father. The word *mātā* means that because He holds the universe in His womb, He is the mother. He maintains the universe and nourishes it; therefore He is *dhātā*, the sustainer. And since He is the father of Brahmā, who is the creator of this universe, He is the grandfather. The word *vedyam* means ‘the object of knowledge’ and *pavitram* means ‘that which purifies’. The word *gati* means ‘fruit, in the sense of result’. *Bhartā* means ‘the husband or protector’, *prabhuḥ* means ‘the controller’, *sākṣī* means ‘the witness of auspicious and inauspicious activities’ and *nivāsaḥ* means ‘the abode’. *Śaraṇam* means ‘one who delivers others from calamities’ and *suḥṛt* means ‘one who does welfare work without any motive’. *Prabhavaḥ* means, ‘Only I perform the actions of creation, destruction and maintenance.’ *Nidhānam* means, ‘I am the treasure, being endowed

with lotus, conch shell, club and disc.’ The word *bīja* means ‘the cause, or seed’. *Avyayam* means ‘I am not, however, perishable like seeds of rice. I am imperishable, eternal and unchanging. I provide heat in the summer season in the form of the sun. I award the rains in the rainy season. I am *amṛta* – liberation, *mṛtyu* – the cycle of birth and death, *sat* – subtle substance, or spirit, and *asat* – gross matter. Knowing Me in this way, they worship Me in My universal form.’ This is how this verse relates to the previous one.

VERSE 20

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
 यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
 ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकम्
 अश्नन्ति दिव्यान् दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २० ॥

trai-vidyā mām soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣṭvā svar-gatiṁ prārthayante
te puṇyam āsādy surendra-lokam
aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān

trai-vidyāḥ – those who are absorbed in fruitive work through the *karma-kāṇḍa* portions of the three Vedas; *mām* – Me (in the form of Indra); *soma-pāḥ* – drink the remnants of sacrifice as *soma-rasa*; *pūta-pāpāḥ* – being freed from sinful reaction; *yajñaiḥ* – through sacrifices; *iṣṭvā* – having worshipped; *svaḥ-gatiṁ* – for the destination of the heavenly planets; *prārthayante* – they pray; *te* – they; *puṇyam* – in the form of pious merit; *āsādyā* – upon achieving; *sura-indra-lokam* – and the planet of Indra; *aśnanti* – enjoy; *divyān* – divine; *divi* – in heaven; *deva-bhogān* – godly delights.

Those who are devoted to fruitive activity as described in the three Vedas worship Me as Indra or other demigods by performing *yajña*. Having become free from sins by drinking the *soma* juice, the remnants of the *yajña*, they pray for entrance into the heavenly planets. When they attain the planet of Indra by virtue of their pious deeds, they enjoy the celestial pleasures of the demigods.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In this way, these three types of devotees who perform worship attain liberation, or *mukti*, knowing only Me to be Parameśvara, but those who are fruitive workers (*karmīs*) do not attain *mukti*.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks two consecutive verses beginning with *trai-vidyā*. “Those who know the science of the three Vedas – *Ṛg*, *Yajur* and *Sāma* – and who are devoted to the actions (*karma*) prescribed in them worship Me indirectly by the performance of sacrifice. Even though they do not know that demigods such as Indra are My form, they worship Me in the form of Indra and so forth and drink *soma* juice, the remnants of sacrifice. Those who take this *soma* juice attain piety and enjoy celestial pleasures.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Only when there is some scent of *bhakti* in these three types of worship does the living entity begin worshipping Me in the form of Parameśvara. He will gradually give up the impurities of mixed worship and attain liberation (*mokṣa*) in the form of My *śuddha-bhakti*. If the worshipper abandons the false conception of himself as being Bhagavān, as in the *ahaṅgraha-upāsanā* process, he can gradually attain pure *bhakti* by properly deliberating on *bhakti*. The idea in the *pratīka-upāsanā* process that other demigods are Bhagavān can also gradually culminate in realization of My *svarūpa*, composed of eternality, cognizance and concentrated bliss, by deliberating on *tattva* in the association of saintly persons. The unsteady knowledge of Paramātmā in the process of *viśvarūpa-upāsanā* can also be removed by gradually realizing My *svarūpa*. The worshipper can then concentrate on My human-like *sac-cid-ānanda* feature.

“But if a person who performs one of these three types of worship persists in his attraction for *karma* and *jñāna*, which is a symptom of his aversion to Me, he cannot attain all-auspicious *bhakti*. Because of their aversion to Me, those who identify themselves with their object of worship (*ahaṅgraha-upāsaka*) gradually fall into the network of illusory *māyāvāda* reasoning. The *pratīka-upāsakas* become bound by the laws of *karma* prescribed in the *Ṛg*, *Sāma* and *Yajur Vedas*. Having studied these three types of Vedic knowledge, which give instruction on *karma*, they become freed from sin by drinking *soma*, the heavenly nectar. They worship Me by sacrifice and pray to attain the heavenly

planets of the demigods as a result of their pious deeds. Thus they attain the divine pleasures of the demigods.”

VERSE 21

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ २१ ॥

*te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti
evam trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante*

te – they; *taṁ* – that; *bhuktvā* – having enjoyed; *svarga-lokaṁ* – planets of heaven; *viśālaṁ* – vast; *kṣīṇe* – is exhausted; *puṇye* – when pious merit; *martya-lokaṁ* – the region of mortals; *viśanti* – enter; *evam* – thus; *trayī-dharmam* – the *karma-kāṇḍa* portions of the three Vedas (that describe obligatory duties); *anuprapannāḥ* – in accordance with; *gata-āgataṁ* – repeated going and coming (from Earth to heaven); *kāma-kāmāḥ* – those desiring sense pleasures; *labhante* – achieve.

When their pious merit is exhausted, they again fall to the mortal world, having enjoyed the pleasures of the immense celestial realm. In this way, those who desire sense pleasures and who perform fruitive activities as described in the three Vedas receive only repeated birth and death within this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Gata-āgataṁ* means ‘repeated birth and death’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who desire material pleasures, as described in the previous verse, and who are averse to Bhagavān, again fall into this earthly world after enjoying celestial pleasure. They receive the result of taking birth repeatedly. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.32.2):

*sa cāpi bhagavad-dharmāt kāma-mūḍhaḥ parān-mukhaḥ
yajate kratubhir devān pitṛiṁś ca śraddhayānvitāḥ*

With their faith in the path of fruitive activity and being averse to the natural religion of the soul, which is worship of the Supreme Lord, such persons are bewildered by material desires and perform various types of *yajñas* to worship material demigods and the forefathers.

*karma-vallīm avalambya tata āpadaḥ kathañcin narakād
vimuktaḥ punar apy evaṁ saṁsārādhvani vartamāno
nara-loka-sārtham upayāti evam upari gato 'pi*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.14.41)

In this way, living beings achieve the heavenly planets by taking refuge in the creeper of fruitive activity. Thus they attain temporary relief from the miseries of hell. When their piety is exhausted, however, they again enter the world of birth and death.

*tāvat sa modate svarge yāvat puṇyam samāpyate
kṣīṇa-puṇyaḥ pataty arvāg anicchan kāla-cālitaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.10.26)

They enjoy the pleasures of the heavenly planets until their piety has been exhausted. They then reluctantly fall back down, being impelled by the power of time.

VERSE 22

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

*ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemam vahāmy aham*

ananyāḥ – devoid of other desires; *cintayantaḥ* – absorbed in contemplation; *mām* – on Me; *ye* – who; *janāḥ* – persons; *paryupāsate* – worship by every means; *teṣām* – for them; *nitya-abhiyuktānām* – who are constantly engaged; *yoga* – providing necessities; *kṣemam* – and maintaining what they possess; *vahāmi* – carry; *aham* – I.

However, for those who are devoid of material desires, who are always absorbed in thoughts of Me, and who always worship

Me completely, with one-pointed devotion, I Myself carry their necessities and preserve what they have.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “My devotees do not derive their happiness from receiving the fruit of *karma*; rather their joy comes from the fact that these fruits are granted by Me. *Nityābhilyuktānām* refers to those who are always united with Me. The happiness of such highly learned persons, who are connected with Me, is bestowed by Me. Others, who are not connected with Me, are to be known as not learned. *Nityābhilyuktānām* also means that I grant success in *yoga*, meditation and so on to those who always desire a connection with Me. *Kṣemam* means that even if they are not expecting it, I personally maintain them and carry their burden.” Here Śrī Bhagavān has not used the word *karomi* which means ‘I do’, but He has used the word *vahāmi* which means ‘I carry’. This implies, “I personally carry the burden of maintaining their bodies, just as a householder carries the burden of maintaining his wife, sons and other family members. Their *yoga* (progress) and *kṣema* (maintenance) are not a result of the fruit of their *karma*, unlike others.”

“What is the purpose behind You, Parameśvara, who are always indifferent and self-satisfied, carrying their burden?” As it is said in *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Eastern Division, 15), “*Bhakti* means devotional service to Him, in which one gives up all kinds of designations, be they material or transcendental, and absorbs the mind only in Bhagavān.” This is called *niṣkarmya*, freedom from *karma* and its reactions. “My pure *ananya-bhaktas* are *niṣkāma* (selfless), and because of this selfless nature, whatever bliss one sees in them is personally given by Me. Even though I am completely neutral, I give this bliss to My *bhaktas* because of My affection for them, and therefore I am called *bhaktavatsala*, always affectionate to My devotees. It is incorrect to say that those devotees are lacking in love for Me because they give Me the responsibility of their maintenance and nourishment, for I willingly accept this responsibility even if they do not completely give it to Me. I am capable of creating all the universes merely by My will, so this is not a burden for Me. Furthermore, because I am attached to My devotees, it is a great pleasure to carry their burden, just as it is a pleasure for a man to carry the burden of maintaining a pleasing wife.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: How does Śrī Bhagavān see to the necessities and maintenance (*yoga-kṣema*) of His *bhaktas*? In this regard a true story is told.

Once, there was a poor *brāhmaṇa* named Arjuna Miśra. He was a most exalted devotee of Śrī Bhagavān. Every morning after performing his *bhajana*, he spent two hours writing a commentary on Śrī *Bhagavad-gītā* and then went out to beg for alms. Whatever he received by begging he would give to his wife, who would prepare, cook and offer the food to Śrī Bhagavān with great love. She then gave the *mahāprasāda* to her husband. Whatever was left over she would eat with great satisfaction. They were very poor and all their clothes were old and torn. They had only one *dhotī* suitable for going outside. When the *brāhmaṇa* wore that *dhotī* to go for alms, his wife covered her body with some torn cloth, and when he returned, she put on that same *dhotī* to go outside or to perform other household duties. They both considered their poverty to be a gift from Śrī Bhagavān and were fully satisfied. They always offered whatever alms were collected by Bhagavān's mercy to their worshipable deity (*iṣṭa-deva*), Śrī Gopīnātha, and later accepted His *mahāprasāda*. This was their constant mood. Thus their time passed blissfully, and they were not the least disturbed by their situation.

The *brāhmaṇa* regularly wrote his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*. One day, after performing his morning *bhajana*, he sat down to write a commentary on this very verse:

*ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānāṃ yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

Bhagavad-gītā (9.22)

Upon reading this, his mind became perplexed with a grave doubt that he was unable to resolve. “The Supreme Person Svayam Bhagavān is the only master of the whole universe! Will He personally carry the *yoga-kṣema* – or see to the necessities and maintenance – of those who are exclusively engaged in worshipping Him? No, this cannot be true. If this were so, then why is my situation as it is? I am completely dependent on Him, and with exclusive devotion, I have offered everything at His lotus feet. Why, then, do I have to undergo the misery

of poverty? Therefore, this statement, *nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemam vahāmy aham*, could not have been spoken by Bhagavān Himself; it must have been interpolated.” He tried to resolve this difficulty on the strength of his own intelligence, but instead he became more and more perplexed and his doubt gradually increased. Finally, with his red pen, he put three slash marks through this line, stopped writing and went out to beg alms.

Now, the most compassionate Bhagavān, who protects the surrendered souls, saw that a doubt had appeared in the mind of His devotee regarding His words. Taking the form of an extremely beautiful, tender, dark-complexioned boy, He filled two baskets with ample rice, *dāl*, vegetables, ghee and so on and putting them on either ends of a bamboo stick, He personally carried them on His shoulders to the house of this *brāhmaṇa*.

The door was locked from inside. He knocked and then loudly called, “O mother, O mother!” But the poor *brāhmaṇī* was only wearing a torn cloth, so how could she come out? Out of shyness, she sat quietly, but the loud knocking and calling out continued. Finding no other alternative, she shyly came, keeping her head lowered, and opened the door. Carrying that weight, the boy entered the courtyard, placed His load on the floor and stood to one side. Out of shame, the *brāhmaṇī* lowered her head and re-entered the house. Śrī Bhagavān, in the guise of that boy, spoke to her as follows, “Mother, Paṇḍitajī (the *brāhmaṇa*) has sent these supplies. Please take them inside.”

Until now, the *brāhmaṇī* had been standing with her face lowered. Upon hearing the sweet words of the boy, she looked up and saw in the courtyard two big baskets filled with foodstuffs. She had never seen so many vegetables and food grains. Being repeatedly requested by the boy to take them, she carried them to the inner part of the house. While doing so, she constantly gazed upon His beautiful face, and became completely satisfied. “Aho, how beautiful His face is! How can such a darkish complexioned person have such transcendental beauty?” She had never even imagined such beauty. Awestruck, she stood transfixed. Her eyes then noticed that on the boy’s chest were three bleeding slash marks, as if someone had cut it with a sharp weapon. Her heart disturbed, she cried, “O son! What merciless person has wounded

Your chest? Alas, Alas! Even a stone-hearted person would melt at the thought of cutting such soft limbs!”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of the boy, said, “Mother, while bringing you these foodstuffs, I was delayed, so your husband himself made these cuts on My chest.”

Her eyes full of tears, the *brāhmaṇī* cried, “What! He did this? Just let him come home and I will ask him how he could have been so cruel! My son, do not feel distressed. Stay for some time. I will prepare this food and You also can accept the *prasāda* of Ṭhākuraḥ (the deity).”

Seating the boy in the courtyard, the *brāhmaṇī* went to the kitchen and started to prepare an offering. Kṛṣṇa then thought, “The purpose for which I personally carried these foodstuffs has been fulfilled. Now, when the *brāhmaṇa* returns to his house, he will immediately discover the authenticity of My words, and he will never doubt them again.” In this way, having made arrangements to dispel the doubts of His devotee, Kṛṣṇa disappeared.

That day, despite great effort, the *brāhmaṇa* was unable to collect any alms. Losing all hope, he returned home, thinking that his inability to collect anything was the will of Ṭhākuraḥ. He knocked on the door and his wife opened it. When he saw that she was busy cooking, he inquired, “How is it that you are cooking when I received no alms today? What is there to cook?”

“Why do you ask this? Some time back you sent so many foodstuffs in the hands of that boy that it will take both of us six months to finish them, so why are you asking me, ‘What will you cook?’” She was a little surprised. “And your heart is like stone. This I did not know before. That boy had three red gashes on His chest that looked on the point of bleeding. How could you slash the tender body of that boy? Have you no mercy?”

The *brāhmaṇa*, completely amazed, asked her to explain. “I did not send anything home nor did I beat a boy. I do not understand what you are talking about.”

After hearing the statements of her husband, she showed him the rice, *dāl*, flour and other things, but when she entered the courtyard to show him the boy and His cuts, the boy was not there. She began to search for Him everywhere. Where had He gone? The outside gate

was closed as before. They both looked at each other in surprise. Miśra, the *brāhmaṇa*, now began to understand the whole situation and tears flowed continuously from his eyes. After washing his hands and feet he entered the deity room, and to completely dispel his doubt, he opened his *Bhagavad-gītā*. That morning he had made three slash marks with red ink on the line *nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*, but now these three marks were gone. Overwhelmed with happiness, he came out of the deity room crying. “My dear, you are so fortunate! Today you have directly seen Śrī Gopīnātha! And all these foodstuffs were brought personally by Him! How could I possibly have brought so much stock? This morning, while writing my commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, I doubted the statements of Bhagavān and slashed those words with three lines of red ink. That is why the tender chest of our worshipful Gopīnātha was bearing three red gashes. He is supremely compassionate. He has taken so much trouble to prove the authenticity of His statements and to remove the doubts of an atheist like me.” His throat choked up and he was unable to speak. Overwhelmed with love, he cried out, “*Hā Gopīnātha! Hā Gopīnātha!*” and fell to the ground.

Standing in front of Śrī Gopīnātha, the eyes of his wife, who was struck dumb, filled with tears. After some time the *brāhmaṇa* returned to consciousness and, after taking his bath, he performed his daily duties. He offered the preparations to Śrī Gopīnātha that his wife had prepared, and with great love, they both accepted His remnants. He continued writing his *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary daily, and his life became full of *prema*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “You should not think that these three types of *upāsakas* (worshippers), who have fruitive desires, attain happiness and that My *bhaktas* suffer. My *bhaktas* think of Me without deviation. For the maintenance of their bodies, they accept anything that is favourable for their *bhakti* to Me, and they reject all that is unfavourable. In this way, they are *nitya-abhiyukta*, or ever united with Me through devotion. Free from selfish desires, they offer everything to Me only. I alone provide all their wealth and any of their other requirements, and thus I maintain them.

“From an external point of view, the materially motivated *pratīka-upāsakas* and My devotees, who only accept that which is favourable for service to Me, may appear to be similar, as both appear to be enjoying the objects of this world. However, there is a big difference between the two. I see to the *yoga* (necessities) and *kṣema* (maintenance) of My devotees even if they have no material desires. The special benefit My devotees receive is that by My mercy, they enjoy all sense objects in a dispassionate manner and finally they attain eternal bliss. However, the *pratīka-upāsakas* again return to the field of *karma* after enjoying sense pleasure. They do not attain eternal bliss. I am indifferent to all mundane occurrences, but out of affection for My devotees, I feel delight in helping them in every respect. In My doing so, there is no offence at all on the part of My devotees, because they do not pray to Me for anything except My favour. I personally supply their requirements.”

VERSE 23

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

ye 'py *anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ*
te 'pi *mām eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam*

ye – who; *api* – although; *anya-devatā* – other demigods; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *yajante* – worship; *śraddhayā anvitāḥ* – with faith; *te* – they; *api* – also; *mām* – Me; *eva* – certainly; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *yajanti* – worship; *avidhi-pūrvakam* – in a way that is contrary to the injunctions for attaining Me.

O son of Kuntī, those who worship other demigods with faith actually worship Me alone, but in a way that is unauthorized.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following doubt may be raised: “In accordance with *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.15) – *jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye* – You said that worship of You is of three types. The statement *bahudhā viśvatomukham* explains the third type, worship of Your universal form. You revealed the nature of that form in statements such as, ‘I am sacrifice, I am the

Vedic ritual, etc.’ (*Gītā* 9.16–19). No demigod exists independently from You; such is the nature of Your universal form. It can be concluded from this that those who worship demigods such as Indra are in fact worshipping You, so why will they not be liberated? Furthermore, You have said that those who have material desires become entangled in the cycle of birth and death (*Gītā* 9.21) and attain perishable results. Why is this so?”

In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “It is true that they worship Me, but they do so without following the prescribed rules to attain Me. They therefore remain in the material world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The following point may be raised: “The demigods are Bhagavān’s *vibhūti-svarūpa* (forms of opulence) and the limbs of His body. However the devotees of the demigods perform their worship, ultimately it reaches Bhagavān. Those who worship the demigods attain the planets of the particular demigods they worship, and after enjoying the perishable fruits there, they return to this earthly plane. The unalloyed worshippers of Śrī Bhagavān, however, do not return to this material world after attaining service to Śrī Bhagavān in His eternal abode. If both types of worship are meant for Bhagavān, why do their end results differ?”

In response to this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining to Arjuna, “The demigods are not separate from Me nor are they independent of Me. The worship of those who consider them as such is unauthorized.”

This subject is also clearly explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.31.14):

*yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*

By properly watering the root of a tree, its trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and so forth all become nourished, just as a person’s life-air and senses are nourished by eating. Similarly, by worshipping Bhagavān Acyuta everyone, including all the demigods, is worshipped.

The essence of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse is that by watering the root of a tree, its branches and twigs become nourished, but that same result is not achieved by pouring water on its leaves, branches, fruits and flowers. Somebody may say that there is no harm in giving water to the branches as well as to the root of a tree; rather there is some benefit. Consequently, if one worships the demigods and also worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then what is the harm? In response to this another example is given. The life-air is sustained by supplying food to the stomach; thus all of the body's organs and senses become nourished. However, if one gives food to the ears, eyes and nose, then one will become deaf and blind and ultimately one will die. In the same way, by worshipping the various demigods, considering them independent gods, one will only attain adverse results. The authorized process, therefore, is to exclusively worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.40.9–10) says:

*sarva eva yajanti tvām sarva-deva-mayeśvaram
ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yady apy anya-dhiyaḥ prabho
yathādri-prabhavā nadyaḥ parjanya-pūritāḥ prabho
viśanti sarvataḥ sindhum tadvat tvām gatayo 'ntataḥ*

When reading these verses, most people will understand them to contain the following meaning: “Just as rivers flowing from the mountains become filled with rain water, divide into various branches and enter the one ocean from various directions, in the same way, the worship of various demigods ultimately culminates in worship of Śrī Bhagavān alone. Subsequently, by worshipping the demigods, one will also receive the result of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” However, this understanding is not correct. The essence of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on the above two verses is as follows: “*Karmīs*, *yogīs* and others actually worship Me exclusively, because I alone am the embodiment of all the demigods and I am the Supreme Controller of all controllers. A person who thinks, ‘I am worshipping Śīva, I am worshipping the sun-god Sūrya, I am worshipping Gaṇeśa,’ considering himself to be devoted to them, factually only worships Me. However, if it is said that in this way they worship Me alone and as a result will surely attain Me, it is not

so. The worship performed by them certainly comes to Me, but the worshippers do not. The rivers flowing from the mountains become full of rain water. The clouds pour forth water all over the mountains and eventually this water takes the form of rivers. All the rivers take their independent courses through different places, and finally enter the ocean. The rivers coming from the mountains enter the ocean, but their source, the mountain, does not. In the same way, worship performed by persons practising various processes comes to Me alone. However, their source, the worshipper, does not.”

Here, Śrī Bhagavān is compared to the ocean, the Vedas to the clouds, the various types of processes of worship to the water, the worshippers to the mountain and the various demigods to the different places. Just as rivers pass through various lands and enter the ocean, the worship of various demigods comes to Śrī Viṣṇu, and just as the mountain does not reach the ocean, the worshipper of the demigods does not reach Śrī Viṣṇu.

Worship of different demigods involves different processes that are performed by persons of varying qualification, and the worshippers are known by the names of those various types of worship. Ultimately, however, their worship comes to Śrī Viṣṇu, through the medium of the demigods. Through this worship, a person only attains his own worshipable demigod and a temporary position. He does not attain eternal service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the eternal abode.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “In reality, I, the embodiment of eternity, cognizance and concentrated bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*) am the only Supreme Controller, Parameśvara. There is no demigod independent of Me. In My own *svarūpa*, I am the transcendental *sac-cid-ānanda* Reality, eternally beyond the material creation. Many persons worship demigods such as the sun-god Sūrya. In other words, conditioned human beings in the material world venerate the majestic feature of My deluding material potency in the form of various demigods and worship them. But by proper deliberation it can be understood that My *vibhūti*s, the demigods, are simply My incarnations of the modes of nature (*guṇa-avatāras*). Those who worship these demigods, knowing their actual position and the reality of My *svarūpa*, understand them to be My *guṇa-avatāras*

(incarnations presiding over material qualities). In this way, their worship is authorized as the progressive path. But those who worship the demigods, thinking them to be eternal and independent of Me, worship in an unauthorized way. Because of this they do not achieve eternal results.”

VERSE 24

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४ ॥

*aham hi sarva-yajñānām bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
na tu mām abhijānanti tattvena tāś cyavanti te*

aham – I; *hi* – because; *sarva-yajñānām* – of all sacrifices; *bhoktā* – the enjoyer; *ca* – and; *prabhur* – the master; *eva* – indeed; *ca* – and; *na* – do not; *tu* – but; *mām* – Me; *abhijānanti* – recognize; *tattvena* – as I am, in My *svarūpa*; *ataḥ* – therefore; *cyavanti* – they fall down from the path of attaining Me or they wander in the cycle of *samsāra*; *te* – they.

I am the only master and enjoyer of all sacrifices, but those who do not recognize My transcendental body fall down and repeatedly wander in the cycle of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “What is meant by the phrase ‘in an unauthorized manner?’” In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *aham hi*. “In the form of various demigods, I, only, am the enjoyer; I am the Lord and master and I am the giver of results. Those who are separatists, however, do not know the fundamental truth (*tattva*) concerning Me. For example, they worship Sūrya, the sun-god, whom they see as Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller, thinking that Sūrya will be pleased with them and fulfil their desires. They cannot understand by their intelligence that Parameśvara, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, has become Sūrya, and it is Śrī Nārāyaṇa Himself who instils such faith in them. Indeed, it is He who bestows the results of Sūrya worship. Therefore, it is because of a lack of knowledge about the *tattva* concerning Me that they fall down. But those who

understand that it is exclusively Śrī Nārāyaṇa who is worshipped in the form of Sūrya and the other demigods, and who worship Me, being conscious of My universal existence, become liberated. Therefore, it is imperative for those who worship My *vibhūtis*, or the specific displays of My potency, such as Sūrya-deva, to know that they are actually My *vibhūtis*. They are not to be worshipped independently of Me.” This is explained here.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “Why is the worship of various demigods improper? What is the result of that unauthorized worship?” This is being explained in the present verse. “In the form of demigods such as Indra, I alone am the enjoyer of all sacrifices. I am the master, the maintainer, the controller and the bestower of the results of them all. Those who worship the demigods do not know that the demigods are My potencies, or *vibhūtis*; therefore, they worship them with faith, considering them to be independent of Me and the bestowers of the results of their activities. Because they are unaware of My *tattva*, they do not have faith in Me; therefore, their type of worship is unauthorized. As a result of such unauthorized worship, they fall away from the truth and remain entangled in the cycle of birth and death.

“However, by worshipping demigods such as Sūrya, considering them to be My opulence, or *vibhūti*, they gradually ascend the progressive path, and by the mercy of My devotees who know the *tattva* of Me, they come to understand the science of My *svarūpa*. Thus, their intelligence becomes exclusively fixed on Me, Kṛṣṇa, whose *svarūpa* is eternal, all cognizant and ever blissful.”

The Śrutis also verify this philosophical conclusion (*siddhānta*).

*nārāyaṇād brahmā jāyate
nārāyaṇād indro jāyate
nārāyaṇād dvādaśādityā rudrā
sarva-devatā sarva-ṛṣayaḥ
sarvāṇi bhūtāni nārāyaṇād eva
samutpadyate nārāyaṇe pratīyante*

Brahmā is born from Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Indra is born from Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Śiva is born from Śrī Nārāyaṇa, all the demigods and

all living entities are also born from Śrī Nārāyaṇa. When their universal duties are complete and they die, all will again merge into Śrī Nārāyaṇa.

The Smṛtis have also established the same conclusion:

*brahmā śambhus tathaivārkaś candramās ca śatakratuḥ
evam ādyās tathaivānye yuktā vaiṣṇava-tejasā
jagat tu viyujyante ca tejasā kāryāvasāne
vitejasas ca te sarve pañcatvam upayānti te*

Brahmā and Śiva, as well as the sun-god, the moon-god, the king of the demigods, Indra, and other powerful personalities empowered by Śrī Viṣṇu, are forced to give up all those powers when they die.

This conclusion is also seen in other Upaniṣads. The above statements from Śruti and Smṛti indicate a difference between the demigods and the Supreme Controller, Śrī Viṣṇu. The supremacy of Śrī Viṣṇu over demigods is established in Śruti and Smṛti, yet somewhere in them it is said that a particular demigod is equal to Śrī Viṣṇu. This statement is made either because a particular demigod's influence is under the control of Śrī Viṣṇu, or because the demigod is very dear to Him.

If one concludes from this that it is proper to worship all demigods, considering them to be Nārāyaṇa, then the following is to be understood: everyone has generated from Nārāyaṇa, by Him they exist and in Him they are annihilated, or dissolved. None of them are Nārāyaṇa, nor can they ever become Nārāyaṇa. It has been stated in the scriptures that it is a grievous offence to equate the demigods, who are living entities, with Śrī Bhagavān. Such offenders are called atheists:

*yas tu nārāyaṇam devam brahma-rudrādi-daivataih
samatvenaiva vīkṣeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*

Padma Purāṇa

Just as it is improper to worship the demigods with the understanding that they are independent lords, it is also atheistic to equate the demigods (*jīvas*) with Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Therefore, it is prescribed that the worshippers of the universal form (*viśvarūpa-upāsakas*) should worship the demigods as the opulence, or *vibhūti*, of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. In this regard, the scriptures make two types of statements. It is said in *Nārada-pañcarātra*, “*antaryāmi-bhagavad-dṛṣṭyaiva sarvārādhanam vihitam* – all are to be worshipped with the vision that the all-pervading Lord is dwelling within them.”

And the *Viṣṇu-yāmala* states:

*viṣṇu-pādodakenaiva
pitṛṅnām tarpaṇa kriyā
viṣṇor niveditānena
yaṣṭavyam devātāntaram
ādi-prakāreṇa vihitam iti*

It is with the foot bath water of Śrī Viṣṇu that one should perform activities such as offering oblations to the forefathers. And it is with the remnants of Śrī Viṣṇu’s foodstuffs that one should please the demigods.

VERSE 25

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन् यान्ति पितॄव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५ ॥
*yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛṅn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino ’pi mām*

yānti – go; *deva-vratāḥ* – those who worship the demigods; *devān* – to the demigods; *pitṛṅn* – to the forefathers; *yānti* – go; *pitṛ-vratāḥ* – those who worship the forefathers; *bhūtāni* – to the spirits; *yānti* – go; *bhūta-ijyāḥ* – the worshippers of the ghosts and spirits; *yānti* – go; *mat-yājinaḥ* – My worshippers; *api* – indeed; *mām* – to Me.

Those who worship the demigods go to the planets of the demigods, those who worship the forefathers go to the planets of the forefathers, those who worship the spirits go to the planets of the spirits, and those who worship Me will surely come to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Various rules and regulations have been prescribed for the worship of the different demigods, and the Vaiṣṇavas worship Śrī Viṣṇu by a similar process, according to the injunctions of scripture. One may question, “What is the defect in this demigod worship?” To clear up this doubt, Śrī Bhagavān says, “It is true that as a result of their worship, the devotees of the demigods achieve those demigods. This is the principle.” To explain this point, Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yānti deva*. “If those demigods themselves are perishable, how can their devotees become imperishable? But I am imperishable and eternal, and therefore, My devotees are also the same.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.3.25) also verifies this point: “*bhāvān ekaḥ śiṣyate ’śeṣa-saṁjñāḥ* – after the devastation only You remain; therefore, You are called Ananta.” Moreover, the Śrūtis state, “*eko nārāyaṇa evāsīn na brahmā na ca śaṅkaraḥ* – in the beginning there was only Nārāyaṇa, not Brahmā or Śiva.”

Also in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* it is said, “*parārdhānte so ’budhyata gopa-rūpā me purastād āvirbabhūva* – at the end of the first half of Brahmā’s life, Brahmā understood that I had appeared before him in the form of a cowherd boy.”

The Śrūtis also state, “*na cyavante ca mad-bhaktā mahatyām pralayād api* – My devotees continue to exist even at the time of the great dissolution. In other words, they do not take birth again.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is showing the difference between those who worship the demigods and those who worship Him. He is also showing the difference in the results attained by both. Some may say, “Just as the Vaiṣṇavas worship Viṣṇu according to the process described in the scriptures, we are worshipping the demigods according to the rules of scripture. How, then, is our worship considered incorrect?”

In answer to this Bhagavān says, “One achieves whom one worships, according to the process described in the scriptures. This is just. The worshippers of the demigods therefore attain the planets of the demigods. Because both the demigods and their planets are perishable, their worshippers achieve perishable results. On the contrary, both My abode and I Myself are *sac-cid-ānanda*, eternal, cognizant and blissful; therefore, those who worship Me achieve blissful service to Me in My

eternal abode. It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.27), *sama-śilā bhajanti*, that those who worship the demigods (such as Indra) perform sacrifices such as *daśa-paurṇamāsyā-yajña*, which are in the mode of goodness, *sāttva-guṇa*. Those who worship the forefathers do so by ceremonies such as *śrāddha*, which are in the mode of passion, *rajo-guṇa*. And those who worship spirits, Yakṣas (ghosts), Rākṣasas and Vināyakas (entities that create obstacles for others) worship by the process of animal sacrifice, which is in the mode of ignorance, *tamo-guṇa*. My devotees, who are beyond these three modes, worship Me with devotion, using natural and easily available objects.”

Someone may say, “Those who worship the demigods also have faith in You, because the worship of all the demigods also includes the worship of Nārāyaṇa.” Bhagavān says in response, “The purpose of worshipping Nārāyaṇa in this manner is simply so that the worshippers can achieve their goals. Factually, it cannot be called *śrāddhā*, or faith, in Nārāyaṇa. Those who worship the demigods think, ‘I am a worshipper of Indra and other demigods. They are my venerable gods and it is they who, being satisfied with my worship, will fulfil my desires.’ Contrary to this, My devotees think, ‘I am a worshipper of Śrī Vāsudeva, the omnipotent Supreme Controller. He alone is my worshipable Lord, and only for His pleasure am I worshipping Him with various offerings, according to His liking. Being pleased, He will fulfil my desires.’ Externally, both types of worship appear to be equal, but, because those who worship the demigods are averse to *bhakti* to Me, they only attain the limited enjoyment on the planets of those demigods. After enjoying there, they again fall to this earthly plane of existence. My exclusive devotees, however, the *ananya-bhaktas*, attain service to My eternal, cognizant and blissful form in My eternal abode and do not return to this material world again. They remain absorbed in My loving pastimes, experiencing unlimited happiness in My association.”

VERSE 26

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६ ॥

*patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanah*

patram – a leaf; *puṣpam* – a flower; *phalam* – a fruit; *toyam* – or water; *yah* – whoever; *me* – to Me; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *prayacchati* – freely offers (without a desire for personal reward); *tat* – that very thing; *aham* – I; *bhakti-upahṛtam* – presented with devotion; *aśnāmi* – accept; *prayata-ātmanah* – from a pure-hearted devotee.

If any pure-hearted devotee offers Me a leaf, a flower, fruit or water with love and devotion, I will surely accept that gift.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “There is often much difficulty in demigod worship, but such difficulty does not exist in the performance of *bhakti* to Me; rather, it is performed with ease.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *patram* to explain this point. It is described here that it is the *bhakti* of the devotee that causes Bhagavān to accept his offerings. The word *bhaktyā* has been used in the second line and also again in the third line, in *bhakty-upahṛtam*. Thus there is repetition. According to Sanskrit grammar, the word *bhaktyā* in the third case implies those who are endowed with *bhakti*, that is, ‘My devotees (*bhaktas*)’. So it emphasizes, “If someone who is not My devotee offers Me fruits or flowers with superficial devotion, I do not accept it, but I accept (*aśnāmi*) whatever My devotees give Me, be it even a leaf. In other words, I fully enjoy that which is offered to Me with *bhakti*, but I do not enjoy the offering of someone who has been forced to do it. Still, if the body of My devotee is impure, I do not accept his offering.” For this reason, Bhagavān says *prayatātmanah*, meaning ‘he whose body is pure’. From this statement it is concluded that a woman is forbidden to make an offering during her monthly menstrual cycle.

Another meaning of the word *prayatātmanah* is, “I accept the offerings of those whose hearts are pure. Other than My devotees, no one’s heart is pure.”

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.8.6) Parīkṣit Mahārāja says, “Those who are pure-hearted never give up the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” The symptom of a person who has a pure heart is that he is unable to give

up service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān. Therefore, if such a *bhakta* is sometimes seen to possess lust or anger, it should be understood that he cannot do any harm to others. The comparison is made to a snake whose poisonous fangs have been removed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having explained the imperishable and unlimited nature of the result of worship of Bhagavān, Bhagavān is now explaining the quality of that worship: it is easy to perform. When an easily attainable object, such as a leaf, flower, fruit or water, is offered to Bhagavān with devotion, then He accepts it in an appropriate manner, even though He is endowed with unlimited opulence and is perfectly satisfied. He becomes hungry and thirsty because of His devotee's love for Him and, absorbed in that mood of devotion, He eats the offering out of *prema*. At the house of *bhakta* Vidura, Śrī Kṛṣṇa even ate banana peels from the hands of Vidura's wife, with great *prema*. And while eating the dry rice that His dear friend Sudāmā Vipra brought and offered to Him with *prema*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.81.4)

The preparation may be delicious or not, but if it is offered with love and a feeling that it is very delicious, it becomes most delicious to Me. At that time, I give up all other thoughts and relish it. Even if such a fruit or flower has no taste or fragrance, I still accept it, being captivated by My devotee's *prema*.

One may ask if Kṛṣṇa accepts that article which is offered to Him with *bhakti* by those who worship the demigods. In response, He says, "No, I only accept whatever My devotees give Me, not items offered by others."

The *ṛtvik* priests in the sacrifice of King Nābhi spoke to Śrī Bhagavān, who appeared there:

*parijanānurāga-viracita-śabala-samśabda-salila-sita-kisalaya-tulasikā-
dūrvāṅkurair api sambhṛtayā saparyayā kila parama parituṣyasi*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.3.6)

You certainly become especially pleased by the worship offered by Your devotees, who are full of attraction for You, who offer prayers with choked voices and who perform *pūjā* to You with water, *tulasī* leaves and sprouted *durvā* grass.

A similar statement from *Gautamīya Tantra* in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states:

*tulasī-dala-mātreṇa jalasya culukena vā
vikṛiṇīte svam ātmānam bhaktebhyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ*

Bhagavān, who is affectionate to His devotees, completely sells Himself to those devotees who, with love and devotion, offer Him a *Tulasī* leaf and a palmful of water.

While eating a morsel of dry rice from the begging bag of the devotee Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, Śrī Caitanya Mahārabhu said:

prabhu bale tora khūdkṇa mui khāūm abhaktera amṛta ulaṭi nā cāūm

O Śuklāmbara, I am accepting this dry rice from you, but I do not even look at ambrosial food that is offered by a non-devotee.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.3.1.21), Devarṣi Nārada also told the Pracetās, “*na bhajati kumaṇiṣiṇām sa iḥyām* – Śrī Hari never accepts the service of ill-minded people who, intoxicated by their scholarship, wealth or high birth, disrespect His devotees who perform exclusive service to Him.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally gave a similar instruction to Uddhava: “Even gifts offered to Me in profusion by non-devotees do not satisfy Me.” Furthermore, to clarify this *siddhānta*, the Lord told Sudāmā:

*aṅv apy upāhṛtam bhaktaiḥ premṇā bhūry eva me bhavet
bhūry apy abhaktopahṛtam na me toṣāya kalpate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.81.3)

If My devotee offers Me the smallest thing, I consider it extremely great, but if non-devotees give Me elaborate offerings, they cannot satisfy Me.

Here, the word *prayatātmā* means ‘one who has purified one’s heart by *bhakti*’. Śrī Bhagavān eats the foodstuffs offered with love by such pure-hearted devotees, but He does not eat foodstuffs given

by others. Prahlāda Mahārāja has also made a similar statement: “*iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇor arpitaiva sati yadi kriyate* – the performance of hearing, chanting and so on is pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) only if a person has fully surrendered himself at the lotus feet of Bhagavān, not otherwise.”

The purport is that only when the limbs of *bhakti* are performed with complete surrender can the heart become purified. Śrī Bhagavān lovingly accepts the offerings of such devotees only.

VERSE 27

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ २७ ॥

yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam

yat – whatever; *karoṣi* – undertakings you make; *yat* – whatever; *aśnāsi* – you eat; *yat* – whatever; *juhoṣi* – you sacrifice; *dadāsi* – you give in charity; *yat* – whatever; *yat* – whatever; *tapasyasi* – austerities you perform; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *tat* – that; *kuruṣva* – you must do; *mat-arpaṇam* – as an offering to Me.

O son of Kuntī, whatever activities you perform, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice and give in charity and whatever austerities you perform, offer them all to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may ask the following question: “From the verse *ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī* (*Gītā* 7.16) till now, You have explained various types of *bhakti*. Which one of them should I follow?”

To remove Arjuna’s doubt, Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, at present you are unable to give up *karma*, *jñāna* and so on, and therefore, you do not have the qualification to perform the topmost *bhakti*, namely *kevalā-* or *ananyā-bhakti*. And you do not need to perform the inferior and selfish acts of devotion performed with material intention (*sakāma-bhakti*), because your qualification is higher than that. Therefore, you

should perform *bhakti* that is predominated by and mixed with *karma* and *jñāna* – *niṣkāma-karma-jñāna-miśrā-pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*.”

For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with the words *yat karoṣi*, and also the next verse. “Whatever mundane or Vedic activities you perform as normal routine, whatever food or water you take daily, and whatever austerities you may perform, you should maintain the understanding that all of them can be offered to Me.” This, however, is neither *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* nor *bhakti-yoga*. Those who are devoted to *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offer to Bhagavān only those actions prescribed in the scriptures, not the normal activities of day-to-day life. This is common. But devotees offer every function of the senses along with their soul, mind and life-air unto their worshipable Lord. As it is said in a description of *bhakti* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.36), “Whatever activities a devotee performs with his body, speech, mind, senses, intelligence and soul, or by dint of his own nature, are all offered to the transcendental Śrī Nārāyaṇa.”

The following question may be raised: If *juhoṣi* (the performance of sacrifice) is the same as *arcana*, a limb of *bhakti*, which is performed for the purpose of satisfying Śrī Viṣṇu, and if *tapasya* (austerity) is to perform the Ekādaśī fast, then why are these acts not considered to be *ananyā-bhakti*, exclusive devotion? In response Bhagavān says, “This is all right, but in *ananyā-bhakti*, actions are not offered to Bhagavān after they have been performed; rather, a person first offers them to Him and then performs the act.” As Prahlāda Mahārāja said:

śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

iti pumsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavatya addhā tan manye dhītam uttamam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.23–24)

One who completely surrenders everything to *śrī guru* and Bhagavān, and having done so performs the nine limbs of devotional service such as hearing (*śravaṇam*) and chanting about Kṛṣṇa (*kīrtanam*), remembering Him (*viṣṇu-smaraṇam*), serving His lotus feet (*pāda-sevanam*), worshipping Him (*arcanam*), praying to Him (*vandanam*), becoming His servant (*dāsyam*), becoming His dear

friend (*sakhyam*) and fully surrendering to Him (*ātma-nivedanam*) possesses topmost knowledge.

Here it is evident that *bhakti* is performed if one first offers these activities to Him, not that the activities are offered after they are performed. In his explanation of this verse, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda says that *bhakti* to Viṣṇu is performed while offering these activities to Him, not after. Therefore, the present *Gītā* verse does not culminate in *kevalā-bhakti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Bhagavān speaks to His dear friend Arjuna, whom He is using as an instrument to teach humanity. His instruction is meant for those who are unable to take shelter of the most superior *anyā-bhakti* as He has described it, and also for those who do not have a taste for performing a lower class of *bhakti*. Śrī Bhagavān is advising them to adopt *karma* and *jñāna* that is selflessly performed, in which everything is offered to Him and which is mixed with and predominated by devotion (*niṣkāma-karma-jñāna-miśrā-pradhāni-bhūtā-bhakti*).

When Kṛṣṇa says, “Whatever actions you perform, be they mundane or Vedic, offer them to Me,” a person should not wrongly think that he can perform any activity and eat and drink whatever he likes as long as he offers it to Bhagavān, and that there will be no defect. His actions will not necessarily be successful simply because, out of obligation, he offers all of them to the lotus feet of Bhagavān. An act may be prescribed in the Vedas for worshipping a particular demigod or it may be executed with a particular desire in mind, but it may not be actually offered just by uttering the *mantra*, *śrī kṛṣṇāya samarpaṇam astu*, like the materialistic *smārtas* do, who are engaged in mundane activities. For this reason, all commentators on this verse, like Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, have explained the deep meaning: one should act in such a way that all of one’s activities are offered directly to Śrī Bhagavān. In other words, only those actions that are performed for His pleasure should be offered. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.36) Devarṣi Nārada also says, “*kurvāṇā yatra karmāṇi bhagavac-chikṣayā* – the surrendered devotees only perform those acts for Bhagavān that are pleasing to Him.”

In his commentary on this verse, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura shows the difference between the activities of a fruitive worker (*karmī*) and those of a devotee (*bhakta*). “A *karmī* only offers Bhagavān those activities that are in accordance with Vedic injunctions so that his desires will not go unfulfilled. *Bhaktas*, however, perform all their activities, whether mundane, Vedic or related to the body, with the feeling that ‘Bhagavān is my master, and it is for His pleasure that I am offering everything to His feet.’ This is the great difference between the two.”

This conclusion has also been confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.36) in the dialogue of the *Nava-yogendras*:

*kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā
buddhyātmanā vānusrta-svabhāvāt
karoti yad yat sakalam parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayet tat*

In accordance with the particular nature one has acquired in conditioned life, whatever one does with body, words, mind, senses, intelligence or purified consciousness one should offer to the Supreme, thinking, “This is for the pleasure of Lord Nārāyaṇa.”*

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda writes: “The activities of a devotee are performed with body, mind, speech, intelligence, false ego, heart and all the senses, but they should not be compared to the religious acts of fruitive workers (*karmīs*), which are performed for their own enjoyment. As a result of offering one’s actions to Kṛṣṇa as described above, one’s aversion to Him is gradually removed. *Jīvas* who are situated in their eternal constitutional position perform all their actions only for the purpose of serving Kṛṣṇa. If some pious fruitive workers who have spiritual good-fortune follow the ideals of devotees in a bona fide Vaiṣṇava lineage (*sampradāya*) and offer all their activities unto the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, they quickly rise above *karma-miśrā-bhakti*, or devotion mixed with fruitive work, and are counted among the *bhaktas*.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, now ascertain your own qualification. You are engaged in assisting Me in My pastimes, having descended with Me as a righteous hero;

therefore, you can neither be counted among the neutral devotees in *śānta-rasa* nor the selfish *sakāma-bhaktas*, who perform acts of devotion for material gain. You will only perform that particular *bhakti* that is mixed with selfless action (*niṣkāma-karma*) and real knowledge (*jñāna*). It is, therefore, your duty to offer Me whatever austerities and other activities you perform. The conception of the materialists is to perform an act with material desires and then offer the activity to Me simply as a remnant. This conception is empty and useless. You should offer the action in the right way at its inception and thus perform *bhakti*.”

VERSE 28

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ २८ ॥

*śubhāśubha-phalair evaṁ mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ
sannyāsa-yoga-yuktātmā vimukto mām upaiṣyasi*

śubha-aśubha-phalaiḥ – from the auspicious and inauspicious results; *evaṁ* – thus; *mokṣyase* – you shall be freed; *karma-bandhanaiḥ* – by bondage through fruitive reaction; *sannyāsa-yoga* – in the *yoga* of renouncing the fruits of work; *yukta-ātmā* – a soul linked up; *vimuktaḥ* – fully liberated; *mām* – Me; *upaiṣyasi* – you will attain.

In this way, you will be freed from the bondage of the auspicious and inauspicious results of *karma*. Being thus blessed with the *yoga* of renunciation by offering Me all the results of your actions, you will become distinguished even among liberated souls and you will attain Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In this way, you will become free from the bondage of *karma* and its unlimited good and bad results.” Śrī Gopālā-tāpanī Upaniṣad states, “Kṛṣṇa-bhajana (worship of Kṛṣṇa) is *bhakti*.” By this *bhakti* one becomes free from worldly as well as higher, celestial designations. In other words, one becomes free from desiring the fruits of one’s activities and fixes one’s mind only in *bhajana* to Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. This is called *naiṣkarmya*, freedom from work and its reaction. Therefore, to give up the result of *karma* is real *sannyāsa*. Those whose *ātmā* (mind) is fixed in such *yoga* are *yoga-yuktātmā*, linked, or connected. “When gifted with this *yoga*, you will not merely be *mukta* – liberated – but you will be *vimukta* – a distinguished person even among the liberated souls – and you will come to Me to engage in direct service to Me.”

“O *mahā-muni* (great sage), among millions of liberated and perfected beings, a peaceful devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa is most rare” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.14.5). And furthermore, “The Lord can give liberation, *mukti*, but He rarely gives devotion, *bhakti*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.6.18). From this statement of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, it is understood that direct service to Bhagavān with pure, loving devotion is superior to liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: One’s heart is purified by taking shelter of *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* that predominates over *karma* and *jñāna*, as described above, and by offering all actions to Bhagavān. Thus becoming free from the bondage of all good and bad actions, such persons can attain a special position amongst liberated souls and finally they can attain Bhagavān. Here it should be specifically understood that they attain the loving service to Śrī Bhagavān that is filled with *prema*. This is far superior to *mukti*.

VERSE 29

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥२९॥

samo 'ham sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ
ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham

samaḥ – seeing equally; *aham* – I am; *sarva-bhūteṣu* – all living beings; *na* – not; *me* – for Me; *dveṣyaḥ* – worthy of hatred; *asti* – there is; *na* – not; *priyaḥ* – dear; *ye* – who; *bhajanti* – worship; *tu* – however; *mām* – Me; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *mayi* – in Me; *te* – they; *teṣu* – in them [I am attached to them in the same way as they are attached to Me]; *ca* – and; *api* – also; *aham* – I.

I am equally disposed to all living beings and am neither inimical nor partial to anyone. But as those who serve Me with devotion are attached to Me, I, too, am bound by affection for them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may say, “O Kṛṣṇa, You bring only Your *bhaktas* to You by liberating them, but You do not bring the non-devotees. This means that You are also partial, since Your doing this is an expression of attachment and envy.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *samo ’ham*, in which He says, “No, no, I am equal to all. The *bhaktas* live in Me and I also live in them.” According to this explanation, the whole universe is in Bhagavān and Bhagavān is also in the whole universe. This shows no partiality. The statement *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham* (Gītā 4.11) means, “I reciprocate with all according to the intention with which they surrender to Me, and I worship them accordingly. In whichever way the devotees are attached to Me, I, who exist in them, am attached to them in a similar way.” This should be understood.

In this regard, the example of a wish-fulfilling tree can be given for a partial understanding of this point. Those who desire the tree’s fruit take shelter of it, but in reality they are not attached to the tree at all; they are only attached to its fruit. Moreover, the wish-fulfilling tree does not become attached to those who take shelter of it, nor does it hate those who have enmity towards it. However, unlike a completely impartial wish-fulfilling tree, Bhagavān kills the enemies of His devotees with His own hands. As Bhagavān said of Prahāda, “When Hiraṇyakaśipu acts inimically towards Prahāda, I will certainly destroy him, despite his becoming powerful by the boons of Brahmā.”

Some commentators give a different explanation of the word *tu* in this verse. “This partiality in the form of affection for His devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*) is always the Lord’s ornament; it is not a defect.” In this way, Kṛṣṇa is celebrated for His affection for His devotees, not for the *jñānīs* or *yogīs*. Just as it is natural for a person to be affectionately inclined toward his own servant and not toward the servants of others, Bhagavān has affection for His devotees and not for the devotees of Rudra or Durgā-devī.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: The following objection may be raised: “By giving special liberation to His devotees, Bhagavān bestows upon them love-filled service to His lotus feet, but He does not do this with the non-devotees. Is this not symptomatic of the defect of partiality, which arises from attachment and envy?” In response to this, it is stated that He has equal vision. He does not hate anybody nor is anyone especially dear to Him. He creates and maintains humans and other living beings according to their *karma*. Somebody may say that while maintaining the living entities according to their *karma*, He gives happiness to one, misery to someone else and liberation, or *mokṣa*, to another, so does this not indicate the defect of partiality arising from attachment and envy? The answer to this is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.17.22) wherein it is said:

*na tasya kaścīd dayitaḥ pratīpo na jñāti-bandhur na paro na ca svaḥ
samasya sarvatra nirañjanasya sukhe na rāgaḥ kuta eva roṣaḥ*

He is equal to all living beings. There is nobody who is dear or not dear to Him. Since a detached person has no attraction to sense pleasure, how can he become angry when his sense pleasure is disturbed?

This is also seen in the next verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.17.23):

*tathāpi tac-chakti-visarga eṣāṃ sukhāya duḥkhāya hitāhitāya
bandhāya mokṣāya ca mṛtyu-janmanoḥ śarīriṇām saṁsṛtaye vakalpate*

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original performer of action, He Himself is not the cause of the living entity’s happiness, distress, bondage or liberation. It is only *māyā* which governs the karmic results of the living entity’s sin and piety and becomes the cause of his birth and death, happiness and distress.

Because there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, it is true that the activities of Bhagavān’s external potency, the *māyā-śakti*, will also be seen as His own work. Yet one cannot attribute the defect of partiality to Him, because the results a living entity receives for his actions are in accordance with his own acts.

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives the example of the sun and the owl. The sunlight is

miserable for the owl, for the *kumuda* flower (night lily) and for certain other entities, but it is pleasing for the *cakravāka* bird and the lotus flower. One cannot accuse the sun of having the defect of partiality. In the same way, Bhagavān's external potency awards results according to the living entity's actions. One cannot attribute to Him the defect of partiality simply because of this. In this context, one should also deliberate upon the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.5.22):

*na yasya vadhyo na ca rakṣaṇīyo
nopekṣaṇīyādaraṇīya-pakṣaḥ
athāpi sarga-sthiti-saṁyamārthaṁ
dhatte rajaḥ-sattva-tamāṁsi kāle*

For Śrī Bhagavān, there is no one to be killed, no one to be protected, no one to be neglected and no one to be worshipped. Nonetheless, for the sake of creation, maintenance and annihilation, in accordance with a specific time, He accepts different forms in either the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance.

This is Bhagavān's general principle for all *jīvas*, but in the present *Gītā* verse, He explains a special principle with the word *tu*. “Those who follow the limbs of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, and engage in worship of Me are extremely attached to Me and become situated in Me. And I, who am the Supreme Controller, also become situated in them, with devotion.”

According to the principle of a gem and gold, the gem produces the gold. Similarly, by the grace of Bhagavān, *bhakti* appears in one's heart. Bhagavān also is devoted to His *bhaktas*. As Śukadeva Gosvāmī says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.86.59), “*bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān* – the Supreme Lord is devoted to His devotees.” It is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.16.14), “*tathāpi bhaktaṁ bhajate maheśvaraḥ* – in the same way that devotees are attached to Maheśvara Kṛṣṇa, He is also attached to His devotees.” This is the special quality of mutual love. It is written in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.55), “*visṛjati hṛdayaṁ na yasya sākṣād* – such *premī-bhaktas* who have bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet with the ropes of love are never given up by Him.” This verse describes that just as their internal relationship is mentioned,

their external relationship is also established. This relationship is confirmed in *Ādi Purāṇa*:

*asmākaṁ guravo bhaktā bhaktānām guravo vyaṁ
mad-bhaktā yatra gacchanti tatra gacchāmi pārthiva.*

Bhagavān says, “Devotees are My *guru*, and I am the *guru* for the devotees. Wherever the devotees go, I also go there.”

A wish-fulfilling tree gives fruits according to the mood of those who have taken shelter of it; and it does not give results to those who have not taken that shelter. In the same way, although He is impartial, Bhagavān differentiates between those who take shelter of Him and those who do not, by giving them different results. The speciality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa over and beyond the wish-fulfilling tree is that the wish-fulfilling tree does not become subordinate to those who take shelter of it, whereas Kṛṣṇa becomes subordinate to His *bhaktas*. Therefore, one can only see the qualities of friendship, hatred and indifference in Him in relationship to *bhakti*. Well-known examples are His friendly relationship with Ambarīṣa Mahārāja and His indifference toward Durvāsā and others who were envious. It is a fact that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is equal to all, but what is more important is that He favours His *bhaktas*. Of all His qualities, this particular quality is a special ornament. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures give evidence of this.

VERSE 30

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥३०॥

*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

api – even; *cet* – if; *su-durācāraḥ* – a person of very bad character; *bhajate* – worships; *mām* – Me; *ananya-bhāk* – exclusively devoted; *sādhur* – a virtuous person; *eva* – certainly; *saḥ* – he; *mantavyaḥ* – should be considered; *samyak* – rightly; *vyavasitaḥ* – because of being situated (in intelligence); *hi* – indeed; *saḥ* – he.

Even if a man of abominable character engages in *ananya-bhajana*, exclusive devotion to Me, he is still to be considered a *sādhu*, because his intelligence is firmly fixed in *bhakti* to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “My attachment to My devotee is natural. Even if his behaviour is degraded, My attachment to him is not lost and I make him supremely righteous.” For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *api cet*. *Sudurācāraḥ* means that even if he is addicted to killing others, to having illicit relations with women and to being attached to others’ wealth, if he engages in *bhajana* (worship) of Me, he is surely saintly. What type of *bhajana* must he perform? In answer to this Bhagavān says *ananya-bhāk*. “He is a *sādhu* who does not worship any demigod but only worships Me, who does not engage in any fruitive work (*karma*) and speculative knowledge (*jñāna*) but only engages in *bhakti* to Me, and who does not desire any happiness such as the attainment of a kingdom but only desires to attain Me.”

But where is the question of his being a *sādhu* if some type of bad behaviour is visible in him? In response, Bhagavān says *mantavyaḥ*. “He must be considered a *sādhu*. From the word *mantavyaḥ*, the following injunction is indicated: There is a flaw in that person who does not consider him to be a *sādhu*. In this regard, My order alone is authoritative.”

If a person who engages in worship of You is also poorly behaved, can he be considered a partial *sādhu*? In response, Śrī Bhagavān says *eva*. “He is to be considered a complete *sādhu*. One should not see that he lacks any saintly qualities. This is because he has made a staunch resolve (*samyag vyavasitah*): ‘due to my sins, whether I go to hell or degrade to a bird or animal species, I will never give up exclusive, one-pointed *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.’ ”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Bhagavān, who is very affectionate to His devotees (*bhakta-vatsala*), is explaining the inconceivable power of His *bhakti* by making a declaration. “Even if My devotee is seen to be engaged in an abominable act, I will very quickly transform him into an exalted person of impeccable behaviour. There is no possibility of bad behaviour in such perfect persons, who take shelter of exclusive devotion to Me. Even if they appear to be badly

behaved in the eyes of ignorant persons, in reality they are not; they are definitely saintly. What to speak of the ignorant, even big scholars cannot understand the actions and moods of the Vaiṣṇavas.” It is said in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, “vaiṣṇavera kriyā mudrā vijñe nā bujhaya – it is not possible to understand the behaviour of *uttama-adhikārī bhaktas*, the most exalted class of devotees, with one’s material senses.”

While warning a *brāhmaṇa* resident of Navadvīpa to not disrespect Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:

*śuna vipra mahādhikārī yevā haya
tābe tāna doṣa-guṇa kichu nā janmaya
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 6.26)*

There is no possibility of good or bad material qualities even touching an *uttama-bhāgavata*, or pure devotee. Those who continue to view him as lowly will go to hell.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa similarly instructed Uddhava:

*na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ
sādhūnām sama-cittānām buddheḥ param upeyuṣām
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.36)*

There is no possibility of the piety or sin that results from the performance of prescribed or forbidden activities coming to My exclusive devotees, who are free from attachment and envy, who have equal vision toward everyone and who have attained Bhagavān, who is beyond mundane intelligence.

Yet one should always remember that the apparently poor behaviour of such *ananya-bhaktas* is not to be imitated. One should neither criticize them nor associate with them. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.29), *tejīyasām na doṣāya vahneḥ sarva-bhujo yathā*. Destruction is certain for those who criticize the behaviour of *mahā-bhāgavatas*, who externally may appear to behave improperly. Fire burns all substances, either pure or impure, although it remains pure itself. Similarly, although externally the behaviour of powerful *mahā-puruṣas* may appear improper, they always remain pure. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that the sons of Marīci, who were the grandsons

of *jagad-guru* Brahmā, had to take birth among the demonic species as a result of ridiculing Brahmā's inconceivable behaviour.

What to speak of perfected devotees, even if the *sādhaka* of *ananya-bhakti* is seen to sometimes act improperly due to previous habits, he should still be considered saintly because his action is accidental. This is the deep meaning of this verse. While commenting on the above verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.36), Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives the same conclusion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “A devotee who performs *ananya-bhajana*, who does not worship any other god or goddess, who does not take shelter of any process – such as *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* – other than My *bhakti*, who does not desire anything besides My pleasure, and most of all, who knows Me as the only Master and as the Supreme, engages in *bhajana* of Me. Such a devotee naturally has no taste for improper behaviour. But if accidentally or by the will of fate there is a discrepancy in his behaviour, he should still be considered saintly. This is My special order. If a person disobeys it, he will incur sin. The reason such persons are to be considered *sādhus* is explained herein. It is because their resolve is proper. In other words, they have *aikāntika-niṣṭhā*, exclusive fixed faith, in Me.”

In this regard, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has commented on the following verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–28):

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasuveda
duḥkhātma-kān kāmān parityāge 'py anīsvaraḥ*

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhānur dṛḍha-nīscayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

If a person whose faith in hearing narrations of Me has been awakened is unable to give up sense enjoyment and the desire for it, even though he knows it gives misery, he should with a sincere heart condemn his inability to give it up. All the while, he should continue worshipping Me with firm faith, conviction and love.

He writes that the word *dṛḍha-nīscayaḥ* in the phrase *śraddhānur dṛḍha-nīscayaḥ* means, “Whether I am attached to home, etc., or not, or whether that attachment increases, if millions of obstacles enter

my *bhajana*, if due to offences I have to go to hell, or even if I am overpowered by lust, I will not accept the processes of *jñāna*, *karma* and *yoga* under any circumstance, even if Lord Brahmā himself orders me to.” Those who have such determination are called *dr̥ḍha-niscayaḥ*, or ‘of unflinching determination’.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Even if those persons who engage in one-pointed, unwavering *bhajana* of Me are badly behaved, still they should be considered saintly because their engagement is righteous in every respect and all-beautiful.” The meaning of the word *su-durācārah* must be understood properly. The behaviour of a conditioned soul is of two types: conditional (*sāmbandhika*) and constitutional (*svarūpa-gata*). Activities such as keeping clean, performing pious acts and nourishing or satisfying the needs of the body, society and progress of mind are called *sāmbandhika* (conditional, or relative, being related to one’s material condition). *Bhajana*, a fully conscious activity, which is performed for Me by the *jīva* in his pure state, is his *svarūpa-gata* (constitutional function). This function is also called *amiśrā-bhakti* (literally, ‘unmixed devotion’) or *kevalā-bhakti*. In the bound state the *jīva*’s performance of *kevalā-bhakti* has an irrevocable relationship with his conditioned life. *Sāmbandhika* behaviour will certainly continue as long as one has this body, even when *ananyā-bhakti* appears. Only when *bhakti* appears does the *jīva* lose his taste in everything that is unfavourable to devotion. One becomes detached from sense objects to the extent that one’s taste increases in *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Until the taste for sense objects is completely removed, it sometimes forces one to behave improperly, but that taste is very quickly subdued by a taste in devotional service. The behaviour of a person who is situated in the higher levels of *bhakti* is all-beautiful and righteous. If sometimes, accidentally, such a person is seen to be engaging not only in bad but evil behaviour, performing activities for which a devotee does not have a natural taste – such as killing others, stealing others’ wealth and having illicit relationships with others’ wives – he will nonetheless be very quickly purified of such behaviour. My *bhakti*, which is very powerful and purifying, is not polluted by this behaviour. This should be understood. A superlative devotee should not be considered degraded because of

his past indulgence in activities such as eating fish or having illicit relationships with women.”

VERSE 31

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ३१ ॥

kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

kṣipram – quickly; *bhavati* – he becomes; *dharmātmā* – a virtuous soul; *śaśvat* – lasting; *sāntim* – peace; *nigacchati* – attains; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *pratijānīhi* – you should proclaim; *na* – never; *me* – My; *bhaktaḥ* – devotee; *praṇaśyati* – perishes.

He quickly becomes virtuous and attains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, boldly proclaim that My devotee never perishes.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following questions may be raised: “How can You accept the service of such an irreligious and unrighteous person? How can You eat the foodstuffs offered by a person whose heart is polluted by defects such as lust and anger?” Śrī Bhagavān answers by speaking this verse beginning with the word *kṣipram*. “He very quickly becomes righteous.” Here the word *kṣipram* means that he quickly becomes righteous and achieves eternal peace. The words *bhavati* and *nigacchati* are used in the present tense instead of the future. This proves that immediately after engaging in irreligious, or abominable, activity, he laments and remembers Kṛṣṇa again and again. In this way, he quickly becomes righteous. “Alas, alas! There is nobody fallen like me who has brought such infamy to *bhakti*. Fie on me!” Repeatedly lamenting in this way, he attains eternal peace. Even if he eventually becomes righteous, irreligiosity and contamination may remain in him in a subtle form. The deadly heat of fever or poison may remain for some time, even after taking the best medicine. Similarly, as soon as *bhakti* enters the mind of such a person, his evil conduct ceases, though it may remain in a subtle form for some time.

Later, in a higher state, indications of poor behaviour such as lust and anger may exist, but they will have no influence, just like a snake whose poisonous fangs have been removed and whose poison is thus ineffective. This should be understood. Thus, his lust and anger are eternally quelled (*sāntim*) in a way that is unparalleled. He should be considered to possess a pure heart even while in a condition in which he still behaves inappropriately.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī says that if such a person become religious, or righteous, then there is no argument, but what can be said of a devotee who is unable to give up such bad behaviour, right up to the time of death? In response to this, Bhagavān strongly and angrily says, “*kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati* – even when he dies, he does not fall, but those who speak harshly against him due to poor logic will not accept this.” Thinking like this, Kṛṣṇa spoke words of encouragement to Arjuna, who was overwhelmed with grief and doubt. “O Kaunteya, while making a tumultuous sound with kettle drums, go to the assembly of those who dispute this. Raising both your arms in the air and being free from any doubt, declare that a devotee of Mine is never destroyed, even if he is poorly behaved. Rather, he becomes successful. In this way all their illogical words will be destroyed by your eloquence and they will definitely take shelter of you, accepting you as their *guru*.”

Here, the following objection may be raised: Why is Bhagavān asking Arjuna to make this declaration instead of making it Himself? As Bhagavān says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.65), “You will surely attain Me. In truth, I am taking this vow because you are very dear to Me.” So why does Bhagavān not say, “O Kaunteya, I declare that My devotee is never lost”? In response it is said that Bhagavān had pondered, “I cannot tolerate even the slightest insult to My devotees, and therefore, in many instances, I Myself break My own vow, even though consequently I have to receive insults. In this way, I protect the words of My devotee, just as I will protect the words of Bhīṣma in this battle by breaking My own vow. Those who are non-devotees and cynics will laugh at My vow [to desist from fighting], but the words of Arjuna will be like marks etched in stone.” For this reason, Kṛṣṇa made Arjuna take this vow.

Having heard about the *ananyā-bhakti* of such an ill-behaved person, some will understand this to mean that an *ananya-bhakta* is merely one who has no irreligious qualities, such as lamentation, delusion and anger, all of which arise from attachment to wife, children and so forth. But such an explanation by so-called scholars should be rejected.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Practitioners of *ananyā-bhakti* have a natural distaste for improper or evil behaviour and always will have. Yet if, due to the will of providence, the *ananya-bhakta* is poorly behaved, that tendency is only temporary. The inconceivable influence of *ananyā-bhakti* is not lost because of it. Rather, the *ananyā-bhakti* situated in the heart quickly removes the tendency to misbehave, and such a person becomes free from piety and sin and attains the supreme peace born of *bhakti*. “Exclusive devotees are never lost.” In the present verse, Kṛṣṇa, who is very affectionate to His devotees, is making His dear-most friend Arjuna take this oath. This statement is also in the *Nṛsimha Purāṇa*:

*bhagavati ca harāv ananya-cetā
bhṛṣa-malino 'pi virājate manuṣyaḥ
na hi śaśa-kala-cchaviḥ kadācit
timira-parābhavatām upaiti candrah*

Those devotees whose thoughts are exclusively absorbed in Śrī Hari are always situated in their own glory, even if externally they are seen to engage in abominable behaviour. This is because of the influence of *bhakti* situated within their hearts. It is likened to the full moon that has dark spots on it, even though it is never covered by darkness.

Śrī Bhagavān has also said:

*bādhyamāno 'pi mad-bhakto viṣayair ajitendriyaḥ
prāyaḥ pragalbhayā bhaktyā viṣayair nābhibhūyate
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.18)*

My dear Uddhava, if My devotee has not fully conquered his senses, he may be harassed by material desires, but because of his unflinching devotion for Me, he will not be defeated by sense gratification.*

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, “What to speak of pure devotees in whose hearts *bhāva* has already manifested, even those who are in the preliminary stage of *sādhana-bhakti* become successful and blessed, not to mention those who are gradually attaining the stages of *niṣṭhā* and *bhāva*.”

In literature dealing with the path of *jñāna*, both a *jñānī* who behaves improperly and his *jñāna* are criticized. But in the *bhakti-sāstras*, even if a *bhakta* behaves improperly, he and his *bhakti* are not criticized. In this regard, one of the *Nava-yogendras*, Karabhājana Ṛṣi, says:

*sva-pāda-mūlaṁ bhajataḥ priyasya
tyaktānya-bhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ
vikarma yac cotpatitaṁ kathañcid
dhunoti sarvaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.42)

It is not possible for those *premī-bhaktas*, who engage in exclusive *bhajana* to the lotus feet of their most dear Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having given up all other thoughts, faiths and activities, to engage in sinful activities. However, if somehow or other they do, then by sitting in their heart, Śrī Hari cleans everything and makes their hearts pure.

Someone may say that a devotee who engages in sinful activity must atone for it, but Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.25) states:

*yadi kuryāt pramādena yogī karma vigarhitam
yogenaiva dahed aṁho nānyat tatra kadācana*

A *bhakti-yogī* never engages in an abominable act, but if at some time he commits an offence inadvertently, then he should destroy this sin solely by the process of *bhakti-yoga*; he should not take to other difficult atonements such as *cāndrāyaṇa*.

This same conclusion is also given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*niṣiddhācārato daivāt prāyaścittān tu nocitam
iti vaiṣṇava-sāstrāṇāṁ rahasyaṁ tad-vidāṁ matam*

If by fate a *sādhaka* engages in a forbidden act, then it is not proper for him to atone for it separately, because the influence of *bhakti*

performs the function of atonement. Separate atonement is not necessary. This is the secret of the Vaiṣṇava literature.

Somebody may raise the following objection: “Why did Bhagavān Himself not make the statement, ‘My *bhaktas* are not lost.’ Why did He ask Arjuna to do it?” The answer is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is affectionate to His devotees, protects their words even at the expense of breaking His own. An example of this took place in the battle of Kurukṣetra, when He protected the vow of Bhīṣma by breaking His own.

VERSE 32

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥३२॥

mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim

mām – of Me; *hi* – certainly; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *vyapāśritya* – by taking shelter; *ye* – who; *api* – even; *syuḥ* – may be; *pāpa-yonayaḥ* – born of sinful parentage; *striyaḥ* – women; *vaiśyāḥ* – merchants; *tathā* – and; *śūdrāḥ* – manual labourers; *te* – those; *api* – even; *yānti* – attain; *parām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination.

O Pārtha, by taking shelter of Me, even low-born women, merchants, *śūdras* or whoever, are certain to attain the supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In this way, devotion to Me does not consider the incidental discrepancies of a person who behaves improperly due to the result of their *karma*. What is the wonder in this? My *bhakti* does not consider the natural, inherent defects in those who are badly behaved, simply because of their caste.” *Antyaja* (those outside the *varṇāśrama* system), *mlecchas* (meat-eaters), etc., are called *pāpa-yonayaḥ* (those of sinful birth). As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18), “I pay my obeisances to that omnipotent Bhagavān, who is so merciful that by taking shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*,

who is His representative and who has taken shelter of Him, one can become free from the defects born of caste or action, be he a Kirāta, Hūṇa, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana, Khasa, etc. All of these are miscreants because of their caste and are sinful due to their actions.”

Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.33.7) states, “Any person whose tongue has chanted Your name even once is most worshipable, even though he may be born in a family of dog-eaters (*caṇḍāla*). Those who chant Your name have already performed all types of austerities and sacrifices, bathed at all the holy places, studied the Vedas and performed all other prescribed actions.” This also refers to impure and untruthful women, prostitutes, etc.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Śrī Bhagavān explained that a *sādhaka* who devoutly engages in the practice of *ananyā-bhakti* should be considered saintly, even if externally some incidental, poor behaviour is seen in him. Now, in the present verse, Bhagavān is explaining that those who take shelter of Him by engaging in exclusive devotion – even if born in sinful *caṇḍāla* or *mleccha* families, in low-class *śūdra* families, or prostitutes and other women who are naturally engaged in illicit activities – all very quickly attain the supreme destination by the influence of *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is rare even for *yogīs*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.4.18), Śrī Sukadeva Gosvāmī says, “Kirāta, Hūṇa, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana, Khasa, etc., as well as all others addicted to sinful activities can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of Śrī Hari. I offer my obeisances to Him.”

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes: “Just by becoming endowed with a scent of *kevalā-bhakti*, or exclusive devotion, even the most sinful attain perfection. Those who are low by caste or birth, such as the Kirātas, and those who perform sinful actions, become purified by *bhakti* only when they accept a pure Vaiṣṇava as their *guru*. A person becomes supremely pure and free from the defects coming from his birth as well as his actions, merely by accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says that *bhakti* destroys both sinful reactions that have manifested within the present material body (*prārabdha*) and sinful reactions that have not yet manifested (*aprārabdha*) at their very root. The Kirātas, for example, are impure because of their birth in a low caste. Sin in the form of a low caste birth is *prārabdha-karma*, and it is removed by just a scent of *bhakti*.

In this regard, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura further says: “In practical life, ignorant persons identify those who have accepted Vaiṣṇava *dikṣā* by their dynasty, or caste.” From the spiritual perspective, none of the defects of caste and birth remain in a person who has taken *dikṣā*. This is the reality. Yet such ignorant persons place undue emphasis on the birth and caste of one who has taken *dikṣā* from a bona fide spiritual master. As a result, they themselves become fallen. Such condemnation, however, brings no harm to the person who has taken initiation. A person who criticizes Vaiṣṇavas is required to atone for it himself. Devahūti also said:

yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.33.6)

Simply by hearing and chanting Your name, paying obeisances to You and remembering You, even a dog-eater immediately becomes qualified to perform *soma-yajña* (a celestial Vedic sacrifice), without waiting for another birth to be able to do so. O Bhagavān, what, then, can be said about the incomparable influence of having Your audience?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda writes: “This verse is not spoken for common *caṇḍālas* (dog-eaters), who have taken birth in a fallen family according to their *prārabdha-karma* and who remain engaged for the rest of their lives in abominable acts fit for their caste. Rather, it is spoken for Vaiṣṇavas who, after taking birth in a family of dog-eaters, become disinterested in the abominable activities of their

family tradition and, after taking *dikṣā* from a bona fide *guru*, remain engaged in the service of Śrī Bhagavān.”

It is certain that those who are gifted with a saintly nature have in their past life followed with staunch faith all the behaviour of a brahminical tradition. In their previous birth, these people have completed austerities and sacrifices, bathed in the holy places, studied the Vedas and so forth. They have merely acted out taking birth in a demoniac family so as to bewilder the foolish and teach the ideal amongst learned persons. Bhagavān has also said in *Itihāsa-samuccaya*:

*na me 'bhaktaś caturvedī mad-bhaktaḥ śva-pacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham*

It is not that a *brāhmaṇa* who knows all the four Vedas will necessarily be a devotee. But My devotee, even if born in a *caṇḍāla* family, is dear to Me and is the proper recipient of charity and the proper person from whom charity should be accepted. Even if born in a *caṇḍāla* family, My devotee, like Me, is respected by all, even by the *brāhmaṇas*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that, in this way, the reason a person who has taken shelter of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes birth in the house of a *caṇḍāla* is to perfect the quality of humility, which is favourable for *bhakti*. From this verse, we can also understand more about the deliverance of the hunter by the mercy of Nārada Muni, of Jagāi and Mādhāi by the mercy of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, and of the prostitute by the mercy of Ṭhākura Haridāsa.

VERSE 33

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥३३॥

*kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām*

kim punaḥ – not necessary to say more about; *brāhmaṇāḥ* – *brāhmaṇas*; *puṇyāḥ* – who are always engaged in pure action; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *rāja-*

ṛṣayaḥ—saintly kings; *tathā*—and; *anityam*—temporary; *asukham*—unhappy; *lokam*—world of humans; *imam*—this; *prāpya*—therefore having come; *bhajasva*—worship; *mām*—Me.

What doubt, then, can there be that pious *brāhmaṇas*, who are always engaged in pure action, and devotee kings can achieve the supreme destination? Therefore, having come to this temporary and miserable world, engage yourself in performing *bhajana* of Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “If this is their destination, what to speak of the destination of the devotees who are *brāhmaṇas*, born in good families and who are of pure conduct. Therefore, O Arjuna, render loving service to Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: If those who are born in a low family and who behave badly can very quickly develop good conduct by taking shelter of exclusive devotion and thus attain the supreme destination, what is the wonder that those who are born in a pious family and whose conduct is pure also achieve the supreme destination by taking exclusive shelter of Śrī Bhagavān? Making Arjuna the object of His teachings, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is instructing all *jīvas* that as long as they remain in this temporary and miserable world, they should perform *bhajana* of His eternal blissful *svarūpa*.

This verse declares that the material world is mutable, perishable and miserable, but it does not describe it as false. Some philosophers imagine that the world is false, but this idea is against the principle of *Bhagavad-gītā*. The supreme abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called the *aprākṛta-jagat*, or the transcendental world, and it is eternal and blissful. Living entities who attain that abode never fall from there.

VERSE 34

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तत्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ

mat-manāḥ – absorbed in thoughts of Me; *bhava* – be; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – My devotee; *mad-yāji* – as My worshipper; *mām* – before Me; *namaskuru* – bow down; *mām* – Me; *eva* – certainly; *eṣyasi* – you will attain; *yuktvā* – having engaged; *evam* – in this way; *ātmānam* – your body and mind; *mat-parāyaṇaḥ* – and devoted to Me.

Always absorb your mind in Me, become My devotee, dedicate yourself to worship of Me and offer obeisances to Me. In this way, with mind and body fully devoted to Me in My service, you will certainly achieve Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ; With the words *man-manāḥ*, Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter by explaining the process of *bhajana*. *Ātmānam* means, ‘engage your mind and body in Me and perform *bhajana* of Me’. The mere contact of *bhakti* purifies everyone, whether they are qualified or not. This is described in this Ninth Chapter, which is entitled *rāja-guhyāḥ*.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Ninth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The supreme goal of every *jīva* is to attain pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The only means to achieve this purpose is to perform exclusive devotion, or *ananyā-bhakti*. Only pure living entities are qualified to perform *bhajana* of Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*). The *svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest object of worship for the pure *jīvas*. Unless one perfectly understands this *siddhānta*, or philosophical conclusion, one’s endeavour for the supreme goal cannot be executed perfectly.

Pure *bhakti*, which is completely free from *jñāna*, *karma* and *yoga*, has been explained in Chapters Seven and Eight. In the Ninth Chapter, the most supremely worshipable *tattva* has been described. In order to establish this *tattva*, it is necessary to describe the defects coming from the worship of demigods and goddesses, who may also appear to be the worshipable Reality. Therefore, the eternally perfect

nature of the supremely pure and conscious *svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been established scientifically. The *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and the performers of sacrifices worship only the impersonal *brahma* and also Paramātmā, which are partial manifestations of Bhagavān, who has an eternal form. A pure *bhakta*, however, does not worship these partial manifestations of the Absolute; he only worships the eternal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It is due to extreme ignorance that a person worships demigods and goddesses separately from the eternal form of Kṛṣṇa, because by doing so, he can only partially attain his destination. In the *bhakti-yoga* process, one should completely give up the worship of other demigods and goddesses, and with no ulterior motives and with staunch faith, one should maintain one's body while engaging in the nine limbs of devotion, such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa only. Such *ananya-bhaktas*, or exclusive devotees, are superior to *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs*, even if those *ananya-bhaktas* are badly behaved in the preliminary stage. Thus they are indeed saintly because in a matter of days they become fixed exclusively upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and their character becomes pure in all respects.

Only pure *bhakti* to Bhagavān will produce the above-mentioned fruit of *prema*. The *śuddha-bhakta*, or pure devotee, of Bhagavān is never destroyed, nor can he ever fall, because Bhagavān personally maintains and protects him. Therefore, those who are intelligent maintain their body simply to perform pure *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān.

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛttī*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Ninth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Vibhūti-Yoga

Yoga Through Appreciating the Opulences
of the Supreme Lord

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

bhūya eva mahā-bāho śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ

yat te 'ham prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi hita-kāmyayā

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *bhūyaḥ* – again; *eva* – even; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed warrior; *śṛṇu* – hear; *me* – My; *paramam* – higher; *vacaḥ* – instruction; *yat* – by which; *te* – to you; *aham* – I; *prīyamāṇāya* – who have love (for Me); *vakṣyāmi* – shall speak; *hita-kāmyayā* – because I desire your welfare.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O mighty-armed one, again hear My instructions that are superior to what I have spoken previously. Desiring your ultimate welfare, I shall reveal this knowledge to you because of your love for Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the Seventh and previous chapters the *bhakti-tattva* that was spoken of was full of knowledge of Bhagavān's feature of opulence (*aiśvarya*). That same *bhakti-tattva*, also known as *bhagavad-vibhūti*, is being described in this Tenth Chapter along with its confidential meaning.

From Chapter Seven onwards, the opulence of the object of worship – Śrī Bhagavān – is being described. Knowledge of this same *aīśvarya* is now being given in detail for the pleasure of persons blessed with devotion to Him. Kṛṣṇa says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.21.35), “*parokṣa-vādā rṣayaḥ parokṣam ca mama priyam* – the statements of the ṛṣis are indirect (*parokṣa*) and I also enjoy speaking in this way.” According to this statement, Kṛṣṇa’s indirect manner of speaking may make these topics a little difficult to understand. For this reason, He is speaking this verse beginning with *bhūya* (again), which means that He is repeating the most confidential knowledge, *rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam idam*, for Arjuna’s better understanding. “O mighty-armed one, just as you have manifested the superior strength of your arms, you are also able to express the superior power of your intelligence. For you who are prepared to listen, the word *śṛṇu* (hear) is used to ensure that you fully retain what is being said to you.” The word *paramam* means that this knowledge is even superior to what was spoken previously.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Chapters, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains the opulence, or *aīśvarya*, of the highest worshipable Reality. In this Tenth Chapter, He describes His majestic opulences (*vibhūtis*). According to the Sandarbhas by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, *parokṣavāda* means ‘to keep hidden that thing which is most exalted and rare and which is not to be given to all, and then to explain it in an indirect way’. *Parokṣavāda* is the nature of the Vedas. It is also Śrī Bhagavān’s nature [to keep Himself hidden]. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā 3.88) states:

*āpanā lukāite kṛṣṇa nana yatna kare
tathāpi tānhāra bhakta jānaye tānhāre*

An ordinary person finds anything described in *parokṣavāda* difficult to comprehend. Kṛṣṇa tries to hide Himself in various ways, but He reveals Himself to His devotees.

It is therefore necessary to carefully deliberate upon *vibhūti-yoga* as described in this chapter by taking shelter of *bhakti*.

VERSE 2

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

*na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ prabhavam na maharṣayaḥ
aham ādir hi devānām maharṣīṇām ca sarvaśaḥ*

na – neither; *me* – My; *viduḥ* – they understand; *sura-gaṇāḥ* – the hosts of gods; *prabhavam* – the nature of My glorious appearance; *na* – nor; *mahā-ṛṣayaḥ* – the great sages; *aham* – I; *ādir* – the original cause; *hi* – because; *devānām* – of the gods; *mahā-ṛṣīṇām* – of the great sages; *ca* – and; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every respect.

I am the original cause in every respect. For this reason, even all the demigods and saintly *maharṣis* do not know the nature of My glorious appearance in this mundane world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “This *tattva* can be understood only by My special mercy, not by any other means.” Śrī Bhagavān therefore speaks this verse beginning with *na me*. *Mama-prabhāvam* means, “Even the demigods do not know the most extraordinary *tattva* concerning My birth from Devakī.” If one raises the question that perhaps the demigods cannot understand this *tattva* because they are absorbed in sense enjoyment, and that surely the saintly *ṛṣis* know it, the response is, “No, not even the *ṛṣis* have knowledge of this *tattva*, because I am their original cause in every respect. In the material world, the son does not know the facts of his father’s birth and similarly, the *ṛṣis* do not know the *tattva* concerning My transcendental appearance in this world.”

Bhagavad-gītā (10.14) states, “O Bhagavān, neither the demigods, the demoniac Dānavas, nor anyone else can understand the *tattva* of Your birth and appearance in this world.” Therefore, the word *prabhava* means ‘Your birth and appearance in this world’. There is no need to imagine any other meaning.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Kṛṣṇa’s mercy cannot be attained by any means other than *bhakti*. Without His mercy, a person

cannot understand the *tattva* of Bhagavān on the strength of his own endeavour, even if he tries in hundreds of ways. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.42–44):

*prajāpati-patiḥ sākṣād bhagavān giriśo manuḥ
dakṣādayaḥ prajādhyaḥ naiṣṭhikāḥ sanakādayaḥ
marīcir atry-aṅgirasau pulastyaḥ pulahaḥ kratuḥ
bhṛguḥ vasiṣṭha ity ete mad-antā brahma-vādināḥ
adyāpi vācas-patayaḥ tapo-vidyā-samādhibhiḥ
paśyanto 'pi na paśyanti paśyantam parameśvaram*

Many great personalities – including Brahmā, Śiva, the four Kumāras beginning with Sanaka, Bhṛgu and famous *brahmavādīs* (*jñānīs*) like Vasiṣṭha – desire to have *darśana* of Parameśvara. They endeavour for this by performing austerities, acquiring knowledge and entering *samādhi*, but still, to this day they have been unable to attain My *darśana*.

Moreover *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.29) states:

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

O Bhagavān, You are unfathomable. Who in the three worlds can understand where, why, when and how You perform Your pastimes? Still, O Bhagavān, You manifest Yourself in the hearts of Your devotees, who have received merely a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet. Thus they become blessed and are the only ones who can understand the *tattva* of the glory of Your transcendental form, composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss. Even after long-term enthusiastic endeavour in practices such as *jñāna* and *vairāgya* (knowledge and renunciation), a person can never actually know Your glories.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am the original cause of the demigods and the ṛṣis. That is why they can never understand the power of My pastimes on the strength of their own endeavours. That is, by their endeavours they cannot understand the reality of My

appearance in the material world in a human-like form. Everyone, including the demigods and great saintly personalities, searches for Me on the strength of their intelligence. Yet they can only partially realize Me, despite diligently endeavouring with their material intelligence. The aspect they can realize is *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, the formless negation of the mundane world. It is unmanifest, unvariegated and devoid of qualities. They consider this dry and tasteless *nirviśeṣa-brahma* to be the Absolute Truth, but it is not. I am that Supreme Absolute and the very embodiment of eternality, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). I always manifest Myself through My *acintya-śakti* (inconceivable potency). I am completely devoid of any material contamination and I possess all transcendental qualities. My *aparā-śakti* (internal potency) manifests a partial aspect of My *svarūpa* called Īśvara, or Paramātmā, who dwells within all *jīvas*. The impersonal *brahma* is one of My indistinct forms, beyond the conception of the conditioned souls who are deluded by My external potency. Therefore, only two of My manifestations, Īśvara (or Paramātmā) and *brahma*, are indicated directly and indirectly within created objects.

“Sometimes, by My inconceivable potency (the *acintya-śakti*) I manifest My own *svarūpa* in this material world. At that time, the aforementioned demigods and great sages, who cannot understand the glory of My *acintya-śakti* on the strength of their own intelligence, think that the appearance of My eternal, transcendental form has manifested from the above-mentioned Paramātmā, and they consider Me to be mortal. This is because they are bewildered by *māyā*. Thinking the dry nature of My impersonal, undifferentiated feature (*brahma-bhāva*) to be superior, they attempt to merge into it. My devotees, however, understand that My inconceivable potency is beyond the grasp of their limited human comprehension, and they simply engage in My *bhajana*. Upon seeing their attitude, I become compassionate and bestow pure intelligence upon them by which they can easily experience My *svarūpa*.”

VERSE 3

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असम्मूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

*yo mām ajam anādim ca vetti loka-maheśvaram
asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate*

yaḥ – who; *mām* – Me; *ajam* – as the unborn; *anādim* – without beginning; *ca* – and; *vetti* – knows; *loka* – of the worlds; *mahā-īśvaram* – the great controller; *asammūḍhaḥ* – unbewildered; *saḥ* – he; *martyeṣu* – among mortals; *sarva-pāpaiḥ* – from all sins; *pramucyate* – he is fully freed.

Only he who knows Me as unborn, beginningless and the Supreme Controller of all the worlds is free from illusion, among mortals, and fully freed from all sins.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The following question may be raised. “Do the demigods and saintly personalities know the facts about the birth of Your body, which is *para-brahma*, beyond the bounds of all time and space?”

Touching His chest with His forefinger, Śrī Kṛṣṇa responds by speaking this verse beginning with *yo mām*. “Only he who knows Me to be unborn knows Me in truth.”

“Does this mean that only You are the beginningless truth and that the great Grandsire Lord Brahmā is not? If Lord Brahmā is without beginning, then he must know You to be Paramātmā, without birth or cause.”

In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, *yo mām vetti*, etc. “Only he who knows Me to be without beginning or cause and to be unborn and yet born from Vasudeva, is the actual knower of the Truth.” Here, the word *mām* refers to Śrī Bhagavān, who is born from Vasudeva. “According to My statement (in *Gītā* 4.9), My birth and activities are divine. Because I am Paramātmā, My taking birth and remaining unborn are performed by My inconceivable potency and are absolutely true.” It is said in the *Gītā* (4.6), “Though I am unborn, I, who am eternal and unchanging, take birth.” Uddhava has also said:

*karmāṇy anīhasya bhavo 'bhavasya te
durgāśrayo 'thāri-bhayāt palāyanam
kālatmano yat pramadā-yutāśramah
svātman-rateḥ khidyati dhīr vidām iha*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.4.16)

O Prabhu, although You are desireless, You engage in action; although unborn, You take birth; although You are death personified, You run in fear of the enemy and hide in the fort of Dvārakā; and although You are self-satisfied, You enjoy with sixteen thousand women. Seeing these wonderful activities, the intelligence of even great scholars becomes bewildered.

In this regard, there is a verse by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the author of *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*: “Even though the scholars’ bewilderment in this case is not factual, it would still be better if it were absent. Therefore, the *acintya-śakti* is the cause of My variegated, or contradictory, nature which causes their bewilderment. In My *dāmodara-līlā*, I appeared to be limited, My belly bound by a small thread of jingling bells. And simultaneously, I appeared to be unlimited, because My belly could not be bound by the long ropes of Mother Yaśodā. This is beyond reasoning. In the same way, My taking birth and simultaneously not being born is also beyond reasoning.”

By use of the word *loka-maheśvaram*, which means the “Supreme Lord of the universe”, Bhagavān explains His *aiśvarya*, which is very difficult to understand. “O Arjuna, among human beings, only those who know your chariot driver to be the Supreme Lord of the universe (*loka-maheśvara*) are *asammūḍhāḥ*, freed from all sins or obstacles to *bhakti*. Those who think that I am unborn, without beginning, and that have the nature of the Supreme Controller, etc., but who think that I only pretend to take birth, are *sammūḍhāḥ* (bewildered) and are not liberated from sin.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here it is stated that Śrī Bhagavān is unborn, *ajāḥ*. In the Second Chapter, the *jīvas* are also described as unborn. Although they are unborn, they are *vibhinnāmśa*, separated parts of Bhagavān (*Gītā* 15:7, *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke*). The *jīva* is an atomic conscious entity, *aṇucit*, but Bhagavān is the complete conscious entity, *pūrṇacit*. The *jīvas* are under the control of Bhagavān’s *māyā*, whereas Bhagavān is the master of *māyā*. The shackled *jīvas*’ gross body is mutable, but Kṛṣṇa’s body is *sac-cid-ānanda*, immutable and eternal. When He descends into the material world, He comes in His own eternal *svarūpa* through the medium of His *yogamāyā-śakti*.

He existed before the creation, He exists now, and He will continue to exist in the future. The following *mantras* from the Vedas substantiate this conclusion: “*aham evāsam evāgre* – only I was existing before creation, when there was nothing but Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.33); “*bhagavān eka āsedam* – Śrī Bhagavān existed prior to the creation as one without a second” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.23); “*anādir ādir govindah* – that Original Person is Lord Govinda, who is without beginning” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1); “*eko ha vai nārāyaṇa āsī* – in the beginning, only Nārāyaṇa existed” (*Mahā Upaniṣad* 1).

The present verse describes that although Bhagavān is unborn, by the influence of His *acintya-śakti* He is simultaneously the eternal son of Vasudeva and Devakī, and of Nanda and Yaśodā. His *svarūpa* can only be understood by exclusive, one-pointed devotion and not by any other *sādhana*, or practice.

One should not consider Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary person, but if it is said that He is famous as the son of Devakī or Yaśodā, then how can He be without birth? The answer to this is given in scriptures such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not take birth like an ordinary baby. In the prison house of Kāmsa, He appeared before Vasudeva and Devakī in His youthful form, carrying a conch, disc, club and lotus flower, decorated with various types of ornaments, and with beautiful hair on His head. Later, at the request of Vasudeva and Devakī, He became a small baby.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not openly exhibit His pastime of being born in His two-armed form as Yaśodā-nandana from the womb of Mother Yaśodā in Gokula. Still, while only an infant, He killed very fearsome and powerful demons such as Pūtanā and Śakaṭāsura and thus liberated them. He displayed the whole universe within His child-like mouth and performed many other amazing activities not possible for an ordinary baby. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān, the controller of all other controllers, the source of everyone and without cause.

VERSES 4–5

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसम्मोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥४॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत् एव पृथग्विधाः ॥५॥

*buddhir jñānam asammohaḥ kṣamā satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo 'bhāvo bhayaṁ cābhayaṁ eva ca
ahiṁsā samatā tuṣṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśo 'yaśaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ*

buddhiḥ – the ability to discern subtle meanings; *jñānam* – the knowledge to distinguish between matter and spirit; *asammohaḥ* – absence of perturbation; *kṣamā* – tolerance; *satyaṁ* – speaking the truth; *damaḥ* – control over the external organs; *śamaḥ* – control of the mind; *sukhaṁ* – happiness; *duḥkhaṁ* – unhappiness; *bhavaḥ* – birth; *abhāvaḥ* – death; *bhayaṁ* – fear; *ca abhayaṁ* – and fearlessness; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *ahiṁsā* – non-violence; *samatā* – equanimity; *tuṣṭiḥ* – satisfaction; *tapo* – accepting bodily austerities as directed in the Vedas and their corollary literatures; *dānaṁ* – charity; *yaśaḥ* – fame; *ayaśaḥ* – infamy; *bhavanti* – exist; *bhāvāḥ* – states of being; *bhūtānām* – of the living beings; *mattaḥ* – from Me; *eva* – solely; *pṛthag-vidhāḥ* – various kinds.

Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from anxiety, tolerance, truthfulness, control of the senses, control of the mind, happiness, distress, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and criticism – all these diverse qualities of the living beings originate from Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Those with knowledge of the Vedic scriptures are unable to comprehend Me simply on the strength of their own intelligence. Intelligence comes from Me alone, and it is produced from the mode of goodness, *sattva-guṇa*, which is within My material energy. It has no independent qualification to penetrate and understand *tattva* of Me which is *guṇātīta*, beyond the modes.”

It is for this reason that Śrī Bhagavān says, “There are three qualities that could indirectly cause one to acquire knowledge of Me: the ability to ascertain subtle meanings (*buddhi*), discrimination between conscious and unconscious objects (*jñānam*) and the absence of anxiety (*asammohaḥ*). But these three are not the direct cause of

acquiring knowledge of Me. And in this context, the other qualities seen in people are also not independent of Me.”

Śrī Bhagavān further states, “Tolerance (*kṣamā*), truthfulness (*satya*), control of the external senses (*dama*) and control of the mind (*śama*) all arise from the mode of goodness. Happiness (*sukha*) is in the mode of goodness and misery (*duḥkha*) is in the mode of ignorance. Birth and death (*bhavo ’bhāvo*) are a special type of misery, and fear is in the mode of ignorance. Fearlessness arising from knowledge is in the mode of goodness, but if it is born from the mode of passion (*rajo-guṇa*) then it is *rājasika*. *Samatā* means ‘to see equally the happiness and distress of others as one’s own’. Equanimity (*samatā*) and non-violence (*ahimsā*) are born from the mode of goodness. Satisfaction (*tuṣṭi*) is *sāttvika*, in the mode of goodness, if it is free from illusion. If not, then it is the mode of passion. When a person is free from illusion, or the feeling that he is the doer, his performance of austerity (*tapa*) and charity (*dāna*) are in the mode of goodness. If performed by one who is under illusion, they are in the mode of passion. Fame (*yaśaḥ*) and infamy (*ayaśaḥ*) should be understood in the same manner. They have all originated from My illusory potency called *māyā*, but since *śakti* (the energy) and *śaktimān* (the energetic) are non-different, it should be understood that they are created by Me alone.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here it is being established that Bhagavān alone is the primeval, original cause and the controller of everyone. Everything inert or conscious is related to Him by dint of the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* – the fundamental principle of inconceivable oneness and difference between Bhagavān and His multifarious potencies.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Even those people of fine intelligence who know the *śāstra* cannot comprehend My *tattva*. The reason why is as follows: The characteristics of the living entities include intelligence, which has the ability to grasp subtle subjects, the ability to discriminate between that which is conscious and that which is not, freedom from anxiety, tolerance, truthfulness, control of the senses and the mind, happiness, distress, birth, death, non-violence, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity,

fame and infamy. I am aloof from them all, although I am their original cause. After knowing My *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, the fundamental principle of inconceivable oneness and difference between Bhagavān and His multifarious potencies, nothing remains to be known. *Śakti* (energy) and *śaktimān* (the energetic) are both non-different and different. Similarly I, *śaktimān*, and everything in this ever-changing world, which has emanated from My energy, are different yet eternally non-different.”

VERSE 6

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥६॥
maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve catvāro manavaḥ tathā
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā yeṣāṃ loka imāḥ prajāḥ

mahā-ṛṣayaḥ – great sages; *sapta* – the seven; *pūrve* – before; *catvāraḥ* – the four Kumāras headed by Sanaka; *manavaḥ* – the Manus headed by Svāyambhuva Manu; *tathā* – and; *mat-bhāvāḥ* – are born from Me; *mānasāḥ* – from My mind; *jātāḥ* – born; *yeṣāṃ* – from whom (come); *loke* – within this world; *imāḥ* – these *brāhmaṇas*, etc.; *prajāḥ* – sons and grandsons and so forth.

The seven *maharṣis* such as Marīci, before them, the four *brahmarṣis* such as Sanaka, and the fourteen Manus such as Svāyambhuva are all born from My form of Hiranyagarbha (Viṣṇu) through My mind. This human race has been populated by *brāhmaṇas* and others who became their progeny or disciples, and by the disciples of their disciples.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After explaining that those with attributes such as intelligence, knowledge and freedom from anxiety are incapable of comprehending knowledge of His *tattva*, Śrī Bhagavān again explains their deficiencies. In other words, these qualities come from Kṛṣṇa alone. Kṛṣṇa is speaking this verse beginning with *maharṣayaḥ*. “The seven *maharṣis* such as Marīci and before them, the four Kumāras and the fourteen Manus such as Svāyambhuva are all born from Me,

that is, from My form of Hiranyagarbha. They are born from My mind and so forth. The Earth is populated with *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*, who are the sons, grandsons, disciples and grand-disciples of Marīci, Sanaka and so on.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is giving the genealogical synopsis of the universe, which is born from Him. Brahmā, who was born from the energy of Mahā-Viṣṇu known as Hiranyagarbha, was the first living entity in this universe. The four Kumāras – Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra – were the first to come from Brahmā. Then came the seven sages – Bhṛgu, Marīci, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha – and after them the fourteen Manus – (1) Svāyambhuva, (2) Svārociṣa, (3) Uttama, (4) Tāmasa, (5) Raivata, (6) Cākṣuṣa, (7) Vaivasvata, (8) Sāvārṇi, (9) Dakṣasāvārṇi, (10) Brahmasāvārṇi, (11) Dharmasāvārṇi, (12) Rudra-putra (Sāvārṇi), (13) Rocya (Devasāvārṇi) and (14) Bhautyaka (Indrasāvārṇi). They were all born from Hiranyagarbha, who is endowed with Kṛṣṇa’s energy. Their progeny, a chain of disciples and grand-disciples such as *brāhmaṇas*, populated the entire world.

VERSE 7

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकल्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥७॥

*etām vibhūtiṁ yogam ca mama yo vetti tattvataḥ
so ’vikalpena yogena yujyate nātra saṁśayaḥ*

etām – all of this; *vibhūtiṁ* – opulence; *yogam* – the *yoga* of devotional service; *ca* – and; *mama* – of Mine; *yaḥ* – who; *vetti* – knows; *tattvataḥ* – factually; *saḥ* – he; *avikalpena* – undeviatingly; *yogena* – with *jñāna-yoga* (knowledge of Kṛṣṇa’s *tattvas*); *yujyate* – becomes endowed; *na atra* – not on this point; *saṁśayaḥ* – doubt.

He who factually knows all of My opulences and the principles of *bhakti-yoga* becomes endowed with unwavering knowledge of Me. Of this there is no doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.21) states “*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am achieved only by *aikāntikī-bhakti*, one-pointed devotion.” Only My one-pointed devotees, who by My mercy have strong theistic faith in My statements become aware of My *tattva*. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *etām*. Those who know the *tattva* of the opulences described earlier and the principles of *bhakti-yoga* are fixed in the understanding that these are the words of their Master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thus the Supreme Truth. “They become endowed with *yoga* characterized by fixed knowledge of My *tattva*.” There is no doubt about this.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: There are many demigods on different planets who are appointed to maintain this universe. Among them, Brahmā, the four Kumāras, the seven sages and the progenitors are prominent. Since they were all originally born from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He is the grandfather of all grandfathers. With knowledge of Kṛṣṇa’s opulence, one should engage in *bhajana* of Him with fixed faith and without any doubt. Without proper knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s greatness, it is not possible to perform exclusive devotion to Him.

VERSE 8

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥८॥

aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ

aham – I; *sarvasya* – of all creation; *prabhavaḥ* – the source of creation; *mattaḥ* – from Me; *sarvaṁ* – everything; *pravartate* – emanates; *iti* – thus; *matvā* – having comprehended; *bhajante* – worship; *mām* – Me; *budhāḥ* – learned persons; *bhāva-samanvitāḥ* – endowed with transcendental emotion.

I am the source of both mundane and spiritual worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this well engage in *bhajana* of Me, with transcendental emotion in their hearts.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: While explaining His majestic features (*vibhūti*), which are characterized by great opulences (*aiśvarya*), Śrī Bhagavān says, “I am the original cause and the source of everything material and spiritual. Inspired by My *svarūpa* as the indwelling Supersoul, the whole universe engages in work, and by the inspiration coming from My *avatāras* such as Nārada, all become engaged in the practice of devotional service (*bhakti*), knowledge (*jñāna*), austerity (*tapasya*), fruitive activity (*karma*), and so forth, for the attainment of their respective goals.” In defining *aikāntika bhakti-yoga*, Śrī Bhagavān says, “*iti matvā*.” “Being fixed in this type of theistic knowledge and endowed with emotions (*bhāvas*) such as servitorship and friendship to Me, those who perform *bhajana* of Me are *paṇḍitas*, who know the essence of the Vedas.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin of both mundane and spiritual creations. Such knowledge of the essential Truth (*tattva-jñāna*) is undoubtedly attainable from the instructions and mercy of Vaiṣṇavas who are fully conversant with *tattva*. Only with the help of such transcendental knowledge can the thoughts of *sādhus* become fixed in pure devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One cannot acquire pure *tattva-jñāna* if one receives instruction from modern concocted commentaries, which are devoid of *bhakti*, by hearing from bewildered so-called *gurus*, who are bereft of *tattva-jñāna*. Nor can they benefit by receiving the instructions of so-called devotees. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.7.50):

*aham brahmā ca śarvaś ca jagataḥ kāraṇam param
ātmeśvara upadraṣṭā svayaṁ-dṛg aviśeṣaṇaḥ*

Lord Viṣṇu replied: Brahmā, Śiva and I are the supreme cause of the material manifestation. I am the Supersoul and the self-sufficient witness. But in one sense, we are non-different because everything rests in Me.

The *Varāha Purāṇa* also states:

*nārāyaṇaḥ paro devas tasmāj jātaś caturmukhaḥ
tasmād rudro bhavad devaḥ sa ca sarva-jñatām gataḥ*

Śrī Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Lord, and from Him alone Brahmā, Rudra, etc., are born. Śrī Nārāyaṇa is omniscient.

This Nārāyaṇa is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vaibhāva-vilāsa*, or pastime expansion of opulence. Elsewhere in the Vedas, Kṛṣṇa is also described as the son of Devakī: *brahmaṇyo devakī-putrāḥ* (*Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 4).

VERSE 9

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम्।
 कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च॥९॥
mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityam tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

mat-cittāḥ – those whose hearts are offered to Me; *mat-gata-prāṇāḥ* – whose every life breath is dedicated to Me; *bodhayantaḥ* – enlightening; *parasparam* – each other; *kathayantaḥ* – chanting My names, forms, etc.; *ca* – and; *mām* – My *tattva*; *nityam* – continuously; *tuṣyanti* – they always experience satisfaction; *ca* – and; *ramanti* – take delight; *ca* – also.

Those whose minds are absorbed in Me and whose lives are wholeheartedly devoted to My service derive great satisfaction and bliss from constantly enlightening one another with the fundamental truth about Me and performing *kīrtana* of My name, form, qualities and pastimes.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “By My mercy, only exclusive devotees attain *buddhi-yoga* and, although *tattva-jñāna*, which is enriched by the above-mentioned characteristics, is difficult to conceive, they attain it. *Mac-cittāḥ* refers to those whose minds are attracted to tasting the sweetness of My name, form, qualities and pastimes. *Mad-gata-prāṇāḥ* refers to those who cannot maintain their lives without Me, just as a person cannot maintain his life without food. *Bodhayantaḥ* means that such people lovingly enlighten each other about the nature and varieties of *bhakti*. *Mām* means ‘My names, qualities and pastimes are a great ocean of sweetness’. They attain bliss while describing and

loudly chanting them.” Therefore, hearing, chanting and remembering (*śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa*) are superior to all other processes of *bhakti*. Such exclusive devotees attain satisfaction and bliss by performing this type of *bhakti*. This is the secret. In other words, by good fortune, they also attain satisfaction, and even during the stage of *sādhana*, they perform unobstructed *bhajana*, contemplating their future stage of perfection (*sādhya-daśā*) of sporting with Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Bhagavān’s statements here describe *rāgānugā-bhakti* only.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining the nature of His exclusive devotees and the varieties of *bhakti*. Here the word *mad-gata-prāṇāḥ* means, “My *bhaktas* are unable to maintain their lives without Me, just as fish cannot remain alive without water.” If a fish comes out of the water and on to the beach with a desire to achieve happiness, it will certainly die quickly. In the same way, the living entities who are adverse to Śrī Hari are as good as dead, even while living.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The character of those whose minds are exclusively devoted to Me is as follows. By completely offering their minds and lives to Me, they mutually exchange their devotional sentiments, *bhāvas*, and remain engaged in glorifying My pastimes and so forth. In this way, during the stage of *sādhana*, they attain the happiness of *bhakti* by performing *śravaṇam* and *kīrtana*, hearing and chanting about Me. Having attained their goal (*sādhya*), that is, after attaining *prema* through practising the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāgānugā-bhakti*), they experience the pleasure of directly enjoying with Me in Vraja in *madhura-rasa*, the mellow of sweetness.”

VERSE 10

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥१०॥

teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ yena mām upayānti te

teṣām – for those; *satata-yuktānām* – who always hanker for My eternal association; *bhajatām* – who worship Me; *prīti-pūrvakam* – with love; *dadāmi* – I bestow; *buddhi-yogam* – transcendental knowledge; *tam* – that; *yena* – by which; *mām* – Me; *upayānti* – approach; *te* – they.

To those who worship Me with love and yearn for My eternal association, I give that transcendental knowledge by which they attain Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “So, they attain satisfaction and bliss. According to Your statement, Your devotees attain supreme bliss only by performing *bhakti* to You. It is therefore clear that they are beyond the modes of material nature, the *guṇas*. But how do they get direct realization of You, and from whom do they learn the process to achieve it?” Anticipating this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *teṣām*. “I personally inspire all the natural tendencies within the hearts of those who desire My eternal association. This *buddhi-yoga* cannot be achieved by individual effort, nor can it be obtained from someone else. It is bestowed by Me alone, and only such loving *bhaktas* are qualified to receive it. After being equipped with this *buddhi-yoga*, they achieve Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse explains how *ananya-bhaktas* attain direct realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa says, “To those who continuously perform *bhajana* of Me with love, I personally grant *buddhi-yoga* by which they easily attain direct realization of Me.” It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.28.41):

*sākṣād bhagavatoktena guruṇā hariṇā nṛpa
viśuddha-jñāna-dīpena sphuratā viśvato-mukham*

O King, Bhagavān Himself, as the *guru* of Malayadhvaja, illuminated his heart with the light of knowledge.

This is also explained in *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.8.48): “*viśeṣānugrahaś ca* – one can only see Kṛṣṇa by His mercy.”

VERSE II

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

*teṣām evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

teṣām – for them; *eva* – only; *anukampa-artham* – out of compassion; *aham* – I; *ajñāna-jam* – born of ignorance; *tamaḥ* – darkness (in the form of material existence); *nāśayāmi* – I destroy; *ātma-bhāva-sthaḥ* – situated within the intelligence (of the *jīvātmā*); *jñāna-dīpena* – with the lamp of transcendental knowledge; *bhāsvatā* – with the blazing.

Only out of compassion for devotees who are exclusively devoted to Me do I, dwelling within their intelligence, destroy with the blazing lamp of transcendental knowledge the darkness of material existence, which is born of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may ask, “Surely, You cannot be achieved by a person who has not acquired real knowledge. That is why one will endeavour for *vidyā*.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “No, no. I am explaining how I bless only My *ananya-bhaktas*, not *yogīs* or others. I Myself am always enthusiastic to give My mercy to them so they need not undergo any anxiety to achieve it. Entering the core of their intelligence (*ātma-bhāvastha*), I dispel the darkness of their hearts with the lamp of knowledge. That knowledge, which enlightens one about Me, is not in the material mode of goodness; rather it is transcendental (*nirguṇa*). And because this knowledge is born from *bhakti*, it is special, even when compared to other forms of transcendental knowledge. Only with the lamp of this particular knowledge do I destroy the darkness in their hearts. Therefore, why should they endeavour for this? For those who are exclusively devoted to Me, I carry responsibility for their maintenance and fulfil their requirements.” In accordance with this statement of the *Gītā* (9.22), Śrī Bhagavān accepts the burden of satisfying all of the material and spiritual needs of His exclusive devotees.

The above four verses, known as *catuḥ-slokī gītā*, constitute the essence of the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā*. They are celebrated as all-auspicious and they dispel the misery of all living entities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Although *jñānīs* and *yogīs* try to attain knowledge by the power of their own intelligence, they remain unsuccessful. Only the *ananya-bhaktas*, the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who take exclusive shelter of Him, easily attain knowledge of Him by His mercy. And since the *bhaktas* cannot maintain their lives without Kṛṣṇa, they are the supreme object of His mercy. Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying: “Being pleased by their mood of exclusive devotion, I bestow upon them My complete mercy, and I also inspire their intelligence, just as I provide their necessities and maintain what they have. The full responsibility for their maintenance is solely Mine. They do not need to endeavour for anything.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “In this way, ignorance cannot remain within those who engage in the process of *bhakti-yoga*. Some think that only those who try to search after the Absolute Reality by sequentially eliminating that which is non-real according to the principle of negation, attain true knowledge, and that those who simply cultivate the process of *bhakti* are unable to attain such rare *jñāna*. O Arjuna, the basic idea is that the insignificant *jīva* can never attain real knowledge of the unlimited Reality merely on the strength of his own intelligence. No matter how much he deliberates, he can never achieve even a particle of pure knowledge. But if I bless him, then the minute living entity can easily acquire complete and thorough transcendental knowledge by the influence of My inconceivable potencies. Simply by dwelling within the hearts of My *ananya-bhaktas*, I easily enlighten them with the lamp of transcendental knowledge. By special mercy, I become situated in their hearts and completely destroy the darkness born of ignorance, which arises from mundane association. It is the right of the living entity to acquire pure knowledge, which only appears by the process of *bhakti-yoga*, not by reasoning.”

Just as the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is contained within four verses (2.9.33–36) spoken directly by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, so the above four verses (10.8–11) are the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā*. For

this reason, they are popularly known as *catuḥ-śloki gītā*. The essence of the *Gītā*, as described in these four verses, is *bhakti*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is personally explaining the nature of *ananyā-bhakti*, exclusive devotion, to Arjuna. When the *sādhaka* takes shelter of *ananyā-bhakti*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestows His mercy upon him so that he can easily cross the ocean of material existence and become eligible to enter *bhakti* characterized by five primary mellows (*rasa-mayī bhakti*) in the land of Vraja.

VERSES 12–13

अर्जुन उवाच—

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ १२ ॥

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिनारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*param brahma param dhāma pavitram paramam bhavān
puruṣam śāśvatam divyam ādi-devam ajam vibhum*

*āhus tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣir nāradaś tathā
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayam caiva bravīṣi me*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *param brahma* – the supreme spirit; *param dhāma* – the supreme abode; *pavitram paramam* – the supremely pure; *bhavān* – Your Lordship; *puruṣam* – personal form; *śāśvatam* – the eternal; *divyam* – divine; *ādi-devam* – the original Lord; *ajam* – unborn; *vibhum* – all-pervasive; *āhuḥ* – speak; *tvām* – of You; *ṛṣayaḥ* – the sages; *sarve* – all; *deva-ṛṣiḥ* – sage among the gods; *nāradaḥ* – Nārada, the giver (*da*) of Nāra (Bhagavān); *tathā* – in this way; *asitaḥ* – Asita; *devalaḥ* – Devala; *vyāsaḥ* – Vedavyāsa; *svayam* – You Yourself; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *bravīṣi* – are speaking it; *me* – to me.

Arjuna said: I know that You are the Supreme Absolute Truth and the Supreme Abode. You are supremely pure and the destroyer of the impurity of ignorance. The great ṛṣis such as Devarṣi Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa also glorify You as the eternal

Personality, the transcendental and primeval Lord, who is unborn and omnipresent. Now You personally are saying this to me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Arjuna now speaks this verse beginning with *param*. He does so with a desire to hear in detail the meaning of what was previously described in brief. *Param* means ‘the highest’ and *dhāma* means ‘You are *parama-brahma*, possessing the beautiful form of Śyāmasundara’. According to the *Amara-koṣa*, *gṛha* (home), *deha* (body), *tviṣ* (complexion), *prabhāva* (glory) and *dhāma* (abode) are all synonymous. “You are that very *dhāma*. Unlike the living entities, there is no difference between You and Your body.” What is the *svarūpa* of that *dhāma*? In response Śrī Bhagavān says, “*pavitram-paramam* – whoever sees the *svarūpa* of this form becomes free from the impurity of ignorance.”

“Therefore, the sages call You *śāsvatām puruṣam āhuḥ* (the eternal person) and glorify the eternal nature of Your human form.”

VERSE 14

सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।
न हि ते भगवन् व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४ ॥

*sarvam etad ṛtam manye yan mām vadasi keśava
na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur devā na dānavāḥ*

sarvam – all; *etat* – that; *ṛtam* – truth; *manye* – I consider; *yat* – which; *mām* – to me; *vadasi* – You are saying; *keśava* – O Keśava; *na* – neither; *hi* – because; *te* – Your; *bhagavan* – O all-opulent Lord; *vyaktim* – *tattva*, or birth; *viduḥ* – comprehend; *devāḥ* – the gods; *na* – nor; *dānavāḥ* – the demons.

O Keśava, I accept all that You have told me to be true, for neither the demigods nor the demons comprehends the essential truth of You and Your birth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Arjuna says, “I have no doubt about this. Other sages consider You, who are the Supreme Absolute Truth, to be

unborn, but they do not know about Your birth. They do not know how it is possible for You, *parabrahma*, to simultaneously take birth and not take birth. You say, ‘The demigods and the great saints do not know about My appearance’ (*Gītā* 10.2), but I accept everything You tell me as truth, O Keśava. *Ka* refers to Brahmā and *īśa* refers to Rudra. Since, in regard to Your *tattva* and appearance, You have even bound these two personalities in ignorance, it is not surprising that the other demigods and the demons also cannot know You.”

VERSE 15

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ १५ ॥

svayam evātmanātmānaṁ vettha tvam puruṣottama
bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate

svayam – Yourself; *eva* – only; *ātmanā* – by Yourself; *ātmanam* – Yourself; *vettha* – know; *tvam* – You; *puruṣa-uttama* – O Supreme Person; *bhūta-bhāvana* – the father of all living beings; *bhūta-īśa* – Lord of all created beings; *deva-deva* – God of gods; *jagat-pate* – Master of the cosmic manifestation.

O Puruṣottama, Supreme Person! O Bhūta-bhāvana, creator of beings! O Bhūteśa, father of all created beings! O Deva-deva, God of gods! O Jagat-pati, Master of the universe! You alone know Yourself by Your own potency.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Thus You alone know Yourself. The word *eva* establishes that Your devotees know the *tattva* of Your being unborn yet taking birth. This is inconceivable. Yet even they cannot say how this is accomplished. Only by Your internal potency, the *cit-śakti*, do You know Yourself, not by any other means. Therefore, *tvam puruṣottama*, You are the best of persons, superior even to the creator of the *mahā-tattva*, Mahā-Viṣṇu. You are not only the best, but You are *bhūta-bhāvana*, the controller of everyone, right up to the great Grandsire Brahmā. You are not only the Controller but also the

Lord of the demigods. In other words, You sport with the demigods such as Brahmā and Śiva, who are like instruments in Your pastimes. Furthermore, You are Jagat-pati, the Master of the universe. Out of Your unlimited compassion, You are the Master of all *jīvas* like me, who are living in this material world.

“The four invocations in this verse are merely explanations of the word *puruṣottama*. For example, ‘O Bhūta-bhāvana, You are the father of all living beings.’ Sometimes, someone may be a father but does not control his offspring. But, O Bhūteśa, You are the controller of all living beings. Someone may be the controller of living entities but not be worshipable, but You, O Deva-deva, God of gods, are worshipable even for the demigods. Someone may possess all of these qualities and still fail to maintain other living entities, but, O Jagat-pati, You maintain the entire universe.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Desiring to hear in detail the opulences of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna speaks in support of His statements: “Only You know the glory of Your inconceivable reality, the *acintya-tattva*. Nobody, including demigods, Dānavas or humans, can know even a particle of Your glories by their independent endeavour. Only Your exclusive devotees can know something of it by Your mercy. Therefore, please be merciful to me.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Arjuna as saying, “O Bhūta-bhāvana! O Bhūteśa! O Deva-deva! O Jagat-pati! O Puruṣottama! Only You, by Your own *cit-śakti*, know about Your own personality and the *tattva* of Your birth. Demigods and humans can never understand by their own intelligence how Your eternal form, the same form of eternality, knowledge and bliss, becomes manifest within this material world, while at the same time remaining independent from the laws of this world. Only those upon whom You bestow Your mercy can understand this.”

VERSE 16

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
याभिर्विभूतिभिलोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥१६॥

***vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa divyā hy ātma-vibhūṭayaḥ
yābhir vibhūtibhir lokān imāns tvam vyāpya tiṣṭhasi***

vaktum – to explain; *arhasi* – You are able; *aśeṣeṇa* – fully; *divyāḥ* – divine; *hi* – certainly; *ātma-vibhūṭayaḥ* – Your own opulences; *yābhiḥ* – with which; *vibhūtibhiḥ* – opulences; *lokān* – worlds; *imān* – these; *tvam* – You; *vyāpya* – pervading; *tiṣṭhasi* – reside.

Only You are able to fully describe Your divine majestic opulences by which You pervade and reside throughout the entire creation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Your *tattva* is very difficult to understand. I am now inquisitive to know about Your majestic opulences (*vibhūtis*). If you say that those divine opulences cannot be explained in full, at least please tell me about Your superior *vibhūtis*.”

VERSE 17

कथं विद्यामहं योगिस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ १७ ॥
*katham vidyām aham yogims tvām sadā paricintayan
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu cintyo 'si bhagavan mayā*

katham – how?; *vidyām aham* – may I know; *yogin* – O person possessed of the potency of *yogamāyā*; *tvām* – You; *sadā* – always; *paricintayan* – contemplate; *keṣu keṣu* – in what various; *ca* – and; *bhāveṣu* – aspects; *cintyaḥ* – to be contemplated; *asi* – are You; *bhagavan* – O all-opulent Personality; *mayā* – by me.

O Supreme Mystic, possessor of the *yogamāyā-śakti*, how shall I know You and constantly think of You? O Bhagavān, which of Your variegated aspects should I contemplate and in which moods am I to meditate?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna says, “O Yogin, by which means can I constantly know You while fully meditating on You? In the *Gītā* (18.55), You say, ‘Only by *bhakti* can one know the truth of My opulences and My

svarūpa. So now I would like to know my duty. In which forms do You reside, and with what vision should I devotedly meditate upon You?"

The word *yogin* (the abode of *yogamāyā*) is likened to the word *vanamālī* (He who wears a forest-flower garland). [This is a qualifying adjective used only for a special person. For example, it is not that each and every person who wears a forest-flower garland can be called *vanamālī*. Similarly, one who possesses the *yogamāyā-śakti* is called *yogin*. This exclusively refers to Kṛṣṇa.]

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having requested Śrī Bhagavān in the previous verse to describe His majestic opulences, Arjuna specifically prays in this verse to understand in which objects and forms His opulences exist. *Yogamāyā*, the internal potency, who can make the impossible possible, is always residing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For this reason, Arjuna addresses Him as *yogin*, the abode of *yogamāyā*. Only Kṛṣṇa is able to personally describe His opulences. This is being indicated here.

VERSE 18

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥१८॥

vistareṇātmano yogam vibhūtim ca janārdana
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi śṛṇvato nāsti me 'mṛtam

vistareṇa – in a detailed manner; *ātmanaḥ* – of Your; *yogam* – mystic powers; *vibhūtim* – opulences; *ca* – and; *janārdana* – O Janārdana (who inspires the hearts of all people); *bhūyaḥ* – further; *kathaya* – speak; *tṛptiḥ* – a satiation point; *hi* – because; *śṛṇvataḥ* – while hearing; *na asti* – there is no; *me* – for me; *amṛtam* – nectar (of topics describing You).

O Janārdana, please tell me again in detail about Your mystic powers and opulences, for I am not satiated from hearing Your nectarean words.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In the *Gītā* (10.8), You say, ‘*ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate* – I am the source of all worlds,

both mundane and spiritual. Everything emanates from Me,' and 'iti matvā bhajante mām – knowing Me in this way, learned scholars who know the essence of the Vedas, render loving service to Me.' You say that everything in existence is Your opulence and that learned personalities engage in service to You through *bhakti-yoga*. O Janārdana, the sweetness of Your beneficial instructions has created a greed in me, and now I yearn for a more detailed description (*vistareṇa*). In this regard, what can I do? Now that I have tasted the nectar of Your instructions through my ears, I am not satisfied. Therefore, please explain them again in detail.”

VERSE 19

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ १९ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

hanta te kathayiṣyāmi divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayah

prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha nāsty anto vistarasya me

śrī bhagavān – the resplendent and all-opulent Personality of Godhead; *uvāca* – said; *hanta* – yes; *te* – to you; *kathayiṣyāmi* – I shall describe; *divyāḥ* – My divine; *hi* – certainly; *ātma-vibhūtayah* – personal opulences; *prādhānyataḥ* – most prominent; *kuru-śreṣṭha* – O best of the Kurus; *na asti* – there is no; *antaḥ* – limit; *vastarasya* – extensive (glories); *me* – My.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O best of the Kurus, I shall certainly describe My divine opulences to you, but I will only describe those that are prominent, for there is no limit to My glories.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *hanta* in this verse indicates compassion. Śrī Bhagavān says, “I will only explain My prominent glories because actually, there is no end to them.” *Vibhūtayah* means ‘the host of opulences’. The word *divyā* signifies, “I will only speak of My superior glories, not insignificant ones such as blades of grass.” Here, the word *vibhūti* implies both material as well as spiritual

objects, all of which are generated from Bhagavān's energy and all of which should be meditated upon in relation to His form, according to their degree of relative importance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having heard Arjuna's request for a description of *vibhūti-yoga*, Bhagavān answers with the word *hanta*, or 'yes', thus showing him great compassion and indicating that it is impossible to describe His unlimited opulences, or *vibhūtis*. He says that He will explain the most prominent among them for Arjuna's sake. Because these opulences directly originate from His *śakti*, they should be understood in relation to Bhagavān. He is eternally present in His two-armed Śyāmasundara form as the source of all these *vibhūtis*, although He is distinct from them. After describing these opulences, Śrī Kṛṣṇa concludes by saying, "Only by one of My portions (an *aṁśa*) do I pervade this whole universe of moving and non-moving beings. I do not pervade it by My complete Self."

Whatever glorious object or quality that exists in this world has emanated from His power. One should understand this topic in this way.

It is clear from the above statements of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān exists independently of these opulences, and that this *svarūpa* is indeed Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

VERSE 20

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥२०॥

aham ātmā guḍākeśa sarva-bhūtāśaya-sthitah
aham ādiḥ ca madhyam ca bhūtānām anta eva ca

aham – I; *ātmā* – the Supersoul; *guḍāka-īśa* – O controller of sleep; *sarva-bhūta* – of all beings; *āśaya* – in the hearts; *sthitah* – seated; *aham* – I; *ādiḥ* – the cause of creation; *ca* – also; *madhyam* – the cause of maintenance; *ca* – and; *bhūtānām* – of all beings; *antaḥ* – the cause of destruction; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – also.

O Guḍākeśa, I am the indwelling witness, who resides within the heart of every living entity, and I alone am the cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of all beings.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Arjuna, you should understand that it is only one of My portions that is the cause of all *vibhūti*s.” Here the word *ātmā* refers to the Supersoul and witness of material nature (*prakṛti*), the *puruṣa-avatāra* Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who creates the *mahat-tattva*. *Guḍākeśa* means ‘one who has control over sleep’. By using this word, Śrī Bhagavān indicates that Arjuna is capable of meditating. “I am also the Supersoul of the complete creation, *sarva-bhūtāśaya-sthitaḥ*.” *Sarva-bhūta* means ‘Vairāja’ or ‘Lord Brahmā’. “I am the Supersoul (*Antaryāmī*) situated within the heart of Vairāja, or Brahmā. In other words, I am Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of the complete creation, and because I am also situated within the heart of every living entity, I am also the individual Supersoul, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. I alone am the beginning (birth), middle (existence) and end (the cause of annihilation) of the *jīvas*.”

VERSE 21

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ २१ ॥

ādityānām aham viṣṇur jyotiṣām ravir amśumān
marīcir marutām asmi nakṣatrāṇām aham śaśī

ādityānām – of the Ādityas; *aham* – I; *viṣṇu* – Viṣṇu, the all-pervasive one; *jyotiṣām* – of luminaries; *raviḥ* – sun; *amśumān* – the greatly radiant; *marīciḥ* – Marīci; *marutām* – of the Maruts (wind-gods); *asmi* – I am; *nakṣatrāṇām* – of the stars; *aham* – I; *śaśī* – the moon.

Of the twelve Ādityas I am Viṣṇu, who is My opulence. Among luminaries I am the radiant sun, of the Maruts (wind-gods) I am Marīci, and among stars I am the moon.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Among the twelve Ādityas I am the sun named Viṣṇu. Among the luminaries everywhere I am the radiant sun. And I am Marīci, a special variety of wind.”

VERSE 22

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।
 इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ २२ ॥
vedānām sāma-vedo 'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ
indriyāṇām manaś cāsmi bhūtānām asmi cetanā

vedānām – of the Vedas; *sāma-vedaḥ* – the *Sāma Veda*; *asmi* – I am; *devānām* – of gods; *asmi* – I am; *vāsavaḥ* – Indra; *indriyāṇām* – of the senses; *manaḥ* – the mind; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *bhūtānām* – in living beings; *asmi* – I am; *cetanā* – consciousness.

Of the Vedas I am the *Sāma Veda*, among the demigods I am Indra, of the senses I am the mind, and among living beings I am consciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *vāsavaḥ* means ‘Indra’. *Bhūtānām* means ‘that which is related to the living entities’ and *cetanā* means ‘consciousness’ or ‘knowledge potency’.

VERSE 23

रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।
 वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ २३ ॥
rudrāṇām śaṅkaraś cāsmi vittaśo yakṣa-rakṣasām
vasūnām pāvakaś cāsmi meruḥ śikhariṇām aham

rudrāṇām – of Rudras; *śaṅkaraḥ* – Śaṅkara; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *vitta-īśaḥ* – the lord of wealth, Kuvera; *yakṣa-rakṣasām* – of *yakṣas* and *rakṣasas*; *vasūnām* – of the Vasus; *pāvakaḥ* – fire; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *meruḥ* – Mount Sumeru; *śikhariṇām* – of peaked mountains; *aham* – I.

Of all the Rudras I am Śaṅkara, of the Yakṣas and Rakṣasas I am Kuvera, of the eight Vasus I am Agni, and among mountains I am Sumeru.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *vitta-iśah* means 'Kuvera, the lord of wealth'.

VERSE 24

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥ २४ ॥

*purodhasām ca mukhyam mām viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim
senānīnām aham skandaḥ sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ*

purodhasām – of priests; *ca* – and; *mukhyam* – the chief; *mām* – Me; *viddhi* – know; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *bṛhaspatim* – Bṛhaspati; *senānīnām* – of generals; *aham* – I; *skandaḥ* – Kārttikeya; *sarasām* – of reservoirs of water; *asmi* – I am; *sāgaraḥ* – the ocean.

O Pārtha, of priests know Me to be Bṛhaspati, the chief. Of generals I am Kārttikeya, and among reservoirs of water I am the ocean.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *skandaḥ* refers to Kārttikeya.

VERSE 25

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५ ॥

*maharṣīṇām bhṛgur aham girām asmy ekam akṣaram
yajñānām japa-yajño 'smi sthāvarāṇām himālayaḥ*

mahā-rṣīṇām – of great sages; *bhṛguḥ* – Bhṛgu; *aham* – I; *girām* – of utterances; *asmi* – I am; *ekam akṣaram* – the one all-encompassing syllable (encompassing all reality) *om*; *yajñānām* – of sacrifices; *japa-yajñaḥ* – the sacrifice of meditative chanting of Śrī Bhagavān's holy name; *asmi* – am; *sthāvarāṇām* – of non-moving things; *himālayaḥ* – the Himālayan mountains.

Among great sages I am Bṛḡu, among utterances I am the all-encompassing syllable *om*, of sacrifices I am the meditative chanting of the holy name, and among non-moving entities I am the Himālayan mountains.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The words *ekam akṣaram* mean *praṇava om*.

VERSE 26

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ २६ ॥

aśvatthaḥ sarva-vṛkṣāṇāṃ devarṣīṇāṃ ca nāradaḥ
gandharvāṇāṃ citrarathaḥ siddhānāṃ kapilo muniḥ

aśvatthaḥ – the sacred fig tree (*pīpala*); *sarva-vṛkṣāṇāṃ* – of all trees; *deva-ṛṣīṇāṃ* – of celestial sages; *ca* – and; *nāradaḥ* – Nārada Ṛṣi; *gandharvāṇāṃ* – of Gandharvas; *citrarathaḥ* – Citraratha; *siddhānāṃ* – of perfected beings; *kapilaḥ* – Kapila; *muniḥ* – the ascetic.

Of trees I am the *pīpala*, of celestial sages I am Nārada, of Gandharvas I am Citraratha, and among perfected beings I am Kapila Muni.

VERSE 27

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ २७ ॥

uccaiḥśravasam aśvānāṃ viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam
airāvataṃ gajendrāṇāṃ narāṇāṃ ca narādhipam

uccaiḥśravasam – as Uccaiḥśravā; *aśvānāṃ* – of horses; *viddhi* – know; *mām* – Me; *amṛta-udbhavam* – born from the churning of the ocean of nectar; *airāvataṃ* – Airāvata; *gajendrāṇāṃ* – of elephants; *narāṇāṃ* – of men; *ca* – and; *nara-adhipam* – the lord of men (the king).

Of horses know Me to be Uccaiḥśravā, born from the churning of the ocean to extract nectar. Among elephants I am Airāvata, and among men I am the king.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Amṛtodbhavam* means ‘born from the churning of the ocean to extract nectar’.

VERSE 28

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ २८ ॥

*āyudhānām aham vajraṁ dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk
prajanaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ sarpāṇām asmi vāsukiḥ*

āyudhānām – of weapons; *aham* – I; *vajram* – the thunderbolt; *dhenūnām* – of cows; *asmi* – am; *kāmadhuk* – the wish-fulfilling cow; *prajanaḥ* – the (famed) progenitor; *ca* – and; *asmi* – I am; *kandarpaḥ* – Cupid; *sarpāṇām* – of snakes; *asmi* – I am; *vāsukiḥ* – Vāsuki.

Among weapons I am the thunderbolt, and of cows I am Kāmadhenu, the wish-fulfilling cow. I am the god of love, Kandarpa, who causes procreation, and among snakes I am Vāsuki.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *kāmadhuk* means *kāmadhenu*, the wish-fulfilling cow. Among procreators I am indeed Kandarpa (Cupid), who causes the birth of the living beings.

VERSE 29

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितृणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९ ॥

*anantaś cāsmi nāgānām varuṇo yādasām aham
pitṛṇām aryamā cāsmi yamaḥ saṁyamatām aham*

anantaḥ – Ananta; *ca* – and; *asmi* – am; *nāgānām* – of divine serpents; *varuṇaḥ* – Varuṇa, lord of the waters; *yādasām* – of aquatics; *aham* – I; *pitṛṇām* – of ancestors; *aryamā* – Aryamā; *ca* – and; *asmi* – am; *yamaḥ* – Yamarāja; *saṁyamatām* – of chastisers; *aham* – I.

Of Nāgas I am the divine serpent Ananta, among aquatics I am Varuṇa, lord of the waters, of the ancestors I am Aryamā, and of chastisers I am Yamarāja.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here *yādasām* means 'of the aquatics'. *Samyamatām* means 'of those who give punishment'.

VERSE 30

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनेतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३० ॥

prahlādaś cāsmi daityānām kālah kalayatām aham
mṛgāṇām ca mṛgendro 'haṁ vainateyaś ca pakṣiṇām

prahlādaḥ – the fearless *jñānī-bhakta* (Prahlaḍa); *ca* – and; *asmi* – am; *daityānām* – of *daityas* (the demoniac descendants of Diti); *kālah* – time; *kalayatām* – of controllers; *aham* – I; *mṛgāṇām* – of beasts; *ca* – and; *mṛga-indraḥ* – the chief of beasts, the lion; *aham* – I; *vainateyaḥ* – the son of Vinatā, Garuḍa; *ca* – and; *pakṣiṇām* – of birds.

Among the *daityas* I am Prahlaḍa, and of controllers I am time. Of beasts I am the lion, and among birds I am Garuḍa.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *kalayatām* means 'among the controllers', *mṛga-indraḥ* means 'lion', and *vainateyaḥ* means 'Garuḍa'.

VERSE 31

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

pavanaḥ pavatām asmi rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām aham
jhaṣāṇām makaraś cāsmi srotasām asmi jāhnavī

pavanaḥ – the wind; *pavatām* – of purifiers; *asmi* – am; *rāmaḥ* – Paraśurāma; *śastra-bhṛtām* – of wielders of weapons; *aham* – I; *jhaṣāṇām* – of aquatic creatures; *makaraḥ* – the *makara*, a fabulous marine creature, half alligator half shark; *ca* – and; *asmi* – am; *srotasām* – of rivers; *asmi* – am; *jāhnavī* – the Gaṅgā (born from the thigh of the sage Jahnu).

Among that which is swift and purifying I am the wind, of wielders of weapons I am the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* Paraśurāma.

Among the aquatics I am the *makara*, and among all the rivers, I am the Gaṅgā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṄĪ: *Pavatām* means ‘among the fast-moving and purifying, I am the wind.’ Here, the word *rāmaḥ* refers to Lord Paraśurāma. Because he is an *āveśa-avatāra*, a special *jīva* empowered by Śrī Bhagavān and endowed with Bhagavān’s *śakti*, he is included among the *vibhūtis*, or opulences, of Bhagavān. In *Bhāgavatāmṛtam* the following statement from the *Padma Purāṇa* has been cited: “O Devī, I have explained to you the entire history of the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, Jāmadagnya (Paraśurāma, the son of Jamadagni), the carrier of the axe.” Furthermore, Śrī Bhagavān empowered Paraśurāma with His potency. The book *Bhāgavatāmṛtam* describes the characteristic of an *āveśa-avatāra*: “When Śrī Janārdana empowers an exalted living entity with one of His potencies such as *jñāna*, that living entity is counted as an *āveśa-avatāra*.”

“Among aquatics (*jhaṣāṇām*) I am the exalted *makara*, and of rivers (*srotasām*) I am the Gaṅgā.”

VERSE 32

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

sargāṇām ādir antaś ca madhyam caivāham arjuna
adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām vādaḥ pravadatām aham

sargāṇām – of created objects such as the sky, etc.; *ādiḥ* – the creator (beginning); *antaḥ* – the dissolution (end); *ca* – and; *madhyam* – the maintainer (middle); *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *aham* – I; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *adhyātma-vidyā* – knowledge of the self; *vidyānām* – of processes of knowledge; *vādaḥ* – the philosophical conclusion; *pravadatām* – of logical arguments; *aham* – I.

O Arjuna, I am the creator, maintainer and destroyer of all created objects, such as the sky. Of all knowledge I am knowledge of the self, and in logical debate I am *vāda*, the philosophical principle that asserts the conclusive truth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “That which is created, such as the sky, is called *sarga*. I am the creator (*ādi* – the beginning), annihilator (*anta* – the end) and maintainer (*madhya* – middle) of these. Therefore, since creation, maintenance and annihilation are My opulences, one should meditate upon them.” The statement, “I am the beginning, middle and end,” establishes that Śrī Bhagavān is the original doer (*karttā*) behind all creation. “Of Vedic knowledge, I am *ātma-jñāna*, knowledge of the self. Within logical debate (*pravadatām*), consisting of *jalpa*, *vitaṇḍā* and *vāda*, which establish one’s own point and refute the opponent’s assertion, I am *vāda*, by which the correct *siddhānta* and *tattva* are established.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Bhagavān has explained that of the various aspects of knowledge, His opulence is *adhyātma-vidyā*, spiritual knowledge of the self. *Vidyā* (knowledge) is the education a person acquires in relation to knowable subjects by using his own intelligence. The scriptures describe eighteen types of *vidyās*. Among them, fourteen are prominent:

*aṅgāni vedaś catvāro mīmāṃsā nyāya-vistarahaḥ
dharma-śāstraṃ purāṇaṅ ca vidyā hy etāṃ caturdaśaḥ
āyur-vedo dhanur-vedo gāndharvās ceti te trayahaḥ
artha-śāstraṃ caturthaṅ ca vidyā hy aṣṭādaśaiva tāḥ
Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

Śikṣā (phonetics), *kalpa* (ritual), *vyākaraṇa* (Sanskrit grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *jyotiṣa* (astrology) and *chanda* (metre) are the six types of knowledge known as *vedāṅga* (the limbs of the Vedas). *R̥g*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva* are the four Vedas. All these combined with *mīmāṃsā* (the science of fruitive action), *nyāya* (the study of logic), *dharma-śāstra* (morality) and the Purāṇas comprise the fourteen chief branches of knowledge called *vidyā*.

Practice of these *vidyās* sharpens a person’s intelligence and increases his knowledge of various subjects. This knowledge not only helps him to maintain his livelihood, but it also guides him on the path of righteous conduct, or *dharma*. However, transcendental knowledge (*adhyātma-vidyā*) gives human beings immortality, liberating them

from their bondage to the material world. It gives them complete knowledge of Parabrahma, the Supreme Lord and it allows them to realize the supreme eternal reality. Thus it is superior to all the above-mentioned *vidyās*. This transcendental knowledge (*adhyātma-vidyā*) is Kṛṣṇa's opulence, or *vibhūti*. *Bhagavad-gītā* and the Upaniṣads are included within the category of *adhyātma-vidyā*. The *rasa*-filled *bhakti* of the residents of Vraja, as described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is millions of times superior to the *adhyātma-vidyā*, transcendental knowledge, of Uddhava. Since this *rasamayī-bhakti* is the essence of the pleasure-giving and cognizance potencies (*hlādinī*- and *saṁvit-śaktis*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*, it is truly the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa. Knowledge of the soul, or *adhyātma-vidyā*, on the other hand, is a partial opulence of *prema-bhakti*. This is also confirmed in the dialogue between Rāya Rāmānanda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 8.245):

prabhu kahe,—“kon vidyā vidyā-madhye sāra?”
rāya kahe,—“kṛṣṇa-bhakti vinā vidyā nāhi āra”

Mahāprabhu inquired, “Among all types of knowledge, which is the best?” Rāya Rāmānanda replied, “Besides *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* there is no other type of knowledge.”

A similar statement is made in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.49): “*sā vidyā tan-matir yayā... – that by which one's intelligence becomes fixed on the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān is the only real knowledge.*”

Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3) states:

jñāne prayāsam udapāśya namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām
sthāne sthītāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām

Bhagavān is unconquerable by anyone within this world. Yet if someone faithfully hears *hari-kathā*, even while remaining within his established social position, then the disease of lust and all impediments to spiritual advancement (*anarthas*) will vanish from his heart and he will overpower that unconquerable Bhagavān. Such is the potency of *līlā-kathā*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has explained the confidential meaning of the statement *jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā* in this verse. “There are three types of knowledge that are opposed to *bhakti*: *nirviśeṣa* (knowledge of a Truth devoid of variety), *nirākāra* (knowledge of a Truth devoid of form) and *jīva-brahma-aikyavāda jñāna* (knowledge of the oneness of the *jīva* and *Bhagavān*). What is more, *Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* is replete with six opulences: *jñāna-tvadiya-svarūpa-aiśvarya-mahimā-vicāre*. From a portion of a portion of His plenary portion, this material world is created, maintained and annihilated. Even if one does not try to understand all these subject matters, or even if one does not make the effort to travel to the holy places, merely by listening with love to *Kṛṣṇa*’s beautiful pastimes, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, who cannot be conquered by anybody, becomes controlled.”

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has also said [regarding various topics of debate] that He is *vāda*, the conclusive truth (*tattva*) ascertained by proper deliberation, logic and argument. In the field of argument and logic, *vāda*, *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā* are quite well known. When, for the sake of establishing one’s own opinion, one continuously finds fault with the opponent’s statements, it is called *jalpa*. Keeping the truth aside and avoiding proper deliberation and logic while finding fault in an opponent’s statement is called *vitaṇḍā*. The purpose of such arguments is not to ascertain Reality, it is only to display one’s scholarship, and it is seen when the desire to defeat the opponent is very strong. That deliberation which ascertains the Absolute Reality is called *vāda*. This *vāda* is superior to all other forms of discussion.

When a self-realized *guru* and a disciple who is hankering for transcendental knowledge have a positive dialogue about the Absolute Truth, the conclusion they reach is called *vāda*. The pride of scholarship does not exist within such exchanges, as neither *guru* nor disciple has the desire to defeat the other.

VERSE 33

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३ ॥

*akṣarāṇām a-kāro 'smi dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca
aham evākṣayaḥ kālo dhātāham viśvato-mukhaḥ*

akṣarāṇām – of letters; *a-kāraḥ* – the letter A; *asmi* – I am; *dvandvaḥ* – the dual compound; *sāmāsikasya* – of compound words in Sanskrit verse; *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *eva* – certainly; *akṣayaḥ* – unchanging; *kālaḥ* – time; *dhātā* – the creator, Brahmā; *aham* – I; *viśvataḥ* – are on all sides; *mukhaḥ* – whose faces.

Of letters I am the letter A, and of compound words I am *dvandva*, the dual compound. Among annihilators I am all-powerful time in the form of Mahākāla Rudra, and of creators I am Lord Brahmā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Among compound words I am *dvandva*, or the dual compound. Because both syllables are prominent, *dvandva* is the best. Among the annihilators, I am Mahākāla Rudra (*akṣayaḥ kālaḥ*), inexhaustible time. Among creators, I am *viśvato-mukhaḥ*, the four-headed Brahmā.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Among letters, I am *a-kāra*. *A-kāra* is the first letter [of the Sanskrit alphabet] and because it is part of all other Sanskrit letters, it is the best. This is also stated in the Śruti: “*akṣarāṇām a-kāro 'smi* – among letters I am the first letter, A” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.16.12). Bhagavān says that among compound words, He is *dvandva*, the dual compound. When, in the process of making one word, two or more other words give up their case endings and are combined together, it is called *samāsa*, and the resulting word is called *samāsa-pada*, or compound word. Primarily, there are six types of *samāsa*: (1) *dvandva*, (2) *bahuvrihi*, (3) *karmadhāraya*, (4) *tatpuruṣa*, (5) *dvigu* and (6) *avyayībhāva*. Among them *dvandva* is the best because in other compounds either the first or second part is prominent, or both words combined together give the meaning of another (third) object, but in the *dvandva-samāsa* both words remain prominent, such as Rāma-Kṛṣṇa or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said that the *dvandva-samāsa* (dual compound) is His *vibhūti*, or opulence.

VERSE 34

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक् च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४ ॥

mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś cāham udbhavaś ca bhaviṣyatām
kīrtiḥ śrīr vāk ca nārīṇāṃ smṛtir medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā

mṛtyuḥ – death; *sarva-haraḥ* – all-devouring; *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *udbhavaḥ* – birth; *ca* – and; *bhaviṣyatām* – of the six progressive transformations; *kīrtiḥ* – fame; *śrīḥ* – beauty; *vāk* – refined speech; *ca* – and; *nārīṇām* – among women; *smṛtiḥ* – memory; *medhā* – intelligence; *dhṛtiḥ* – fortitude; *kṣamā* – forgiveness.

I am all-devouring death, and of the six progressive transformations experienced by all living beings, I am birth. Among women I am fame, beauty, fine speech, memory, intelligence, forbearance and forgiveness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “For those who are dying at every moment, I am *sarva-haraḥ*, death, which takes away all memories.” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.39) states, “*mṛtyur atyanta-vismṛtiḥ* – complete forgetfulness is death.” “The word *bhaviṣyatām* means that of the future transformations of the living entities, I am birth, the first. Of women I am the three qualities of fame (*kīrtiḥ*), beauty (*śrī*) and cultured speech (*vāk*); as well as the four qualities of memory (*smṛtiḥ*), intelligence (*medhā*), forbearance (*dhṛtiḥ*) and forgiveness (*kṣamā*).” The word *ca* indicates that the wives of Dharma such as Mūrṭti, are also Him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here Śrī Bhagavān says that among women, He is *kīrtiḥ* (fame), *śrī* (beauty or fortune), *vāk* (fine speech), *smṛtiḥ* (memory), *medhā* (intelligence), *dhṛtiḥ* (fortitude or patience) and *kṣamā* (forgiveness). This can be understood in two ways:

(1) “The qualities that are found in women, such as fame, beauty, sweet speech, memory, sharp intelligence, fortitude and forgiveness, are

indeed Me.” The qualities of fame, beauty, sweet speech, memory, subtle thinking and forgiveness that are found in Sītā-devī, Umā, Rukmiṇī, Draupadī and specifically in the *vraja-gopīs*, are all opulences of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

- (2) Among the twenty-four daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa, Kīrti, Medhā, Dhṛti, Smṛti and Kṣamā are ideal women in all respects. Kīrti, Medhā and Dhṛti were married to Dharma, Smṛti was married to Aṅgirā and Kṣamā to the great sage Pulaha. Śrī, the daughter of the great sage Bhṛgu, was born from the womb of Khyāti, the daughter of Dakṣa. Śrī Viṣṇu accepted her as His wife. Vāk is the daughter of Brahmā. According to their respective names, these seven women are the presiding deities of the seven qualities mentioned above. They have been included among the most blessed women; therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that they are His opulences.

VERSE 35

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ ३५ ॥

*bṛhat-sāma tathā sāmnām gāyatrī chandasām aham
māsānām mārga-śīrṣo 'ham ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ*

bṛhat-sāma – the prayers to Indra in the *Bṛhat-sāma*; *tathā* – and; *sāmnām* – of the hymns of the *Sāma Veda*; *gāyatrī* – *gāyatrī*; *chandasām* – of Sanskrit metres; *aham* – I; *māsānām* – of months; *mārga-śīrṣaḥ* – November–December (*agrāhāyana*); *aham* – I; *ṛtūnām* – of seasons; *kusumākaraḥ* – flower-bearing spring.

Among the hymns of the *Sāma Veda* I am *Bṛhat-sāma*, the prayer to Indra. Of metres I am *gāyatrī*, of months I am *Mārga-śīrṣa*, and of seasons I am the flower-bearing spring.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān earlier said that of the Vedas, He is the *Sāma Veda*. Now He also says that within the *Sāma Veda* He is *Bṛhat-sāma*. The *Ṛg-mantra*, which is sung as *tvām ṛddhim havāmahe*,

indicates the *Bṛhat-sāma*. Among metres He is the metre called *gāyatrī*. Among seasons He is *kusuma-ākaraḥ*, the flower-bearing spring season, Vasanta.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān is non-different from His name, qualities, pastimes, narrations and the prayers (*stava* and *stuti*) to Him. The *Sāma Veda* contains prayers that are the very embodiment of the Lord. It is therefore accepted as the best of the Vedas and is known as His *vibhūti*, or opulence. *Gāyatrī* illuminates the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa and is therefore called the mother of the Vedas. Bhagavān has thus counted *gāyatrī* amongst His opulences. Of the twelve months, He says that the month of November–December (*Mārga-śirṣa*) is His opulence. That month is neither too hot nor too cold, and various Vedic activities are performed at that time. Just before it begins, Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā* is performed, which is the topmost of all His pastimes. In this month nature flourishes in full bloom and in the householders' fields new crops are planted. *Agrāhāyana* means 'the beginning of the year' and, therefore, Bhagavān says that it is His opulence. Of seasons spring is best. It is also known by the name *ṛtu-rāja*, the king of seasons. In this season, nature gives up her old ornaments and becomes adorned with fresh decorative coverings. Both inert and conscious beings are infused with new life. In this season Kṛṣṇa's swing pastime and other spring-time pastimes are performed. This season is especially supreme because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared at this time, having accepted the emotions and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the personification of *mahābhāva*. Thus Bhagavān has counted the spring season among His *vibhūtis*.

VERSE 36

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ३६ ॥

dyūtaṁ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham
jayo 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi sattvaṁ sattvavatām aham

dyūtam – gambling; *chalayātām* – of cheating processes; *asmi* – I am; *tejah* – the splendour; *tejasvinām* – of the splendid; *aham* – I; *jayah* – victory; *asmi* – I am; *vyavasāyah* – determination; *asmi* – I am; *sattvam* – the strength; *sattvatām* – of the strong; *aham* – I.

Of cheating practices I am gambling, and of the splendid I am splendour. I am victory among the victorious, the endeavour of the industrious and the might of the mighty.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Among those who are trying to deceive each other (*chalayātām*), I am gambling. Of those who become victorious, I am victory. Of industrious people, I am effort, and of those who are strong (*sattva-vatām*), I am strength.”

VERSE 37

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।
 मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ ३७ ॥
vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevo ’smi pāṇḍavānām dhanañjayaḥ
munīnām apy aham vyāsaḥ kavīnām uśanā kavīḥ

vṛṣṇīnām – of the Vṛṣṇis; *vāsudevaḥ* – Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa; *asmi* – I am; *pāṇḍavānām* – of the Pāṇḍavas; *dhanañjayaḥ* – Arjuna; *munīnām* – of sages; *api* – and; *aham* – I; *vyāsaḥ* – Vedavyāsa; *kavīnām* – of poets; *uśanā* – Śukrācārya; *kavīḥ* – the poet.

Of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva, of the Pāṇḍavas I am Arjuna, of the sages, I am Vyāsa, and among poets I am Śukrācārya.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva. This means that My father, Vasudeva, is My *vibhūti*.” Therefore, here the word Vāsudeva is formed by putting the suffix *aṅ* on the word Vasudeva. “Of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva” is not acceptable because Śrī Bhagavān is describing His opulences, not His own *svarūpa*. Vāsudeva is one of His *svarūpas*, not His opulence.

VERSE 38

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ ३८ ॥

*daṇḍo damayatām asmi nītir asmi jigīṣatām
maunam caivāsmi guhyānām jñānam jñānavatām aham*

daṇḍaḥ – the rod of chastisement; *damayatām* – of subduers; *asmi* – I am; *nītiḥ* – morality; *asmi* – I am; *jigīṣatām* – for those desiring victory; *maunam* – silence; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *asmi* – I am; *guhyānām* – of secrets; *jñānam* – wisdom; *jñānavatām* – of the wise; *aham* – I.

Among those who dispense justice, I am the rod of chastisement, and for those who seek victory, I am morality. Of secrets I am silence, and I am the wisdom of the wise.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “I am the lawful ruler’s rod of punishment.”

VERSE 39

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ३९ ॥

*yac cāpi sarva-bhūtānām bijam tad aham arjuna
na tad asti vinā yat syān mayā bhūtam carācaram*

yat – whatever; *ca* – and; *api* – there may be; *sarva-bhūtānām* – among all living beings; *bijam* – seed of generation; *tat* – that (seed); *aham* – Myself; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *na* – not; *tat* – that; *asti* – there exists; *vinā* – without; *yat* – whatever; *syāt* – may exist; *mayā* – by Me; *bhūtam* – being; *carācaram* – either moving or non-moving.

O Arjuna, I am the original cause, the generating seed of all existence. No entity, either moving or non-moving, can exist separately from Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *bija* implies the cause of origin. Śrī Bhagavān says that He is the cause of the birth of all beings. “Without

Me, who am the cause of appearance, the birth of any moving or non-moving body cannot take place.”

VERSE 40

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परन्तप ।
 एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥४०॥
nānto 'sti mama divyānām vibhūtīnām parantapa
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto vibhūter vistaro mayā

na – no; *antaḥ* – end; *asti* – there is; *mama* – My; *divyānām* – divine; *vibhūtīnām* – opulences; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the foe; *eṣaḥ* – this; *tu* – but; *uddeśataḥ* – is done just as an indication; *proktaḥ* – spoken; *vibhūteḥ* – about My opulence; *vistarāḥ* – elaborate description; *mayā* – by Me.

O Parantapa, My divine opulences are endless. What I have described to you is a mere indication of them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In concluding this chapter on His opulences, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *nānto 'sti*. “This is a brief description (*uddeśataḥ*) of My *vibhūtis*.”

VERSE 41

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
 तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशसम्भवम् ॥४१॥
yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagaccha tvam mama tejo-'mśa-sambhavam

yat yat – whatever; *vibhūtimat* – having opulence; *sattvam* – existence; *śrīmat* – beauty; *ūrjitam* – power; *eva* – indeed; *vā* – or; *tat tat* – all those; *eva* – certainly; *avagaccha* – should understand; *tvam* – you; *mama* – of My; *tejah* – power; *aṁśa-sambhavam* – generated from a part.

Know for certain that everything in existence that is opulent, majestic and endowed with power springs from but a part of My potency.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: To simultaneously describe all the unmentioned majestic opulences past, present and future, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yad yad*. The word *vibhūtimat* means ‘majestic’, *śrīmat* means ‘possessed of wealth’, *ūrji* means ‘endowed with vast power and influence’, and *sattva* means ‘anything that exists’.

VERSE 42

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥४२॥

athavā bahunaitena kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idam kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat

athavā – however; *bahunā* – by multi-faceted description; *etena* – by this; *kim* – of what use?; *jñātena tava* – can be understood by you; *ārjuna* – O Arjuna; *viṣṭabhya* – maintain and pervade; *aham* – I; *idam* – this; *kṛtsnam* – whole; *eka-aṁśena* – by My single plenary portion, the Supersoul; *sthitah* – situated; *jagat* – the cosmic manifestation.

Of what use to you, Arjuna, is all this detailed knowledge? Just understand this: merely by My single plenary portion do I pervade and sustain this entire universe.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What need is there for you to know all this (*bahunā*) in separate detail? You should understand the essence. I, by My partial aspect as the indwelling witness of material nature, support the entire universe. As the substratum, I support it. As the presiding authority, I preside over it, and as the controller I control it. Being all-pervasive, I pervade it, and as the creator, I am its cause.”

When one understands, with the pure intelligence bestowed by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that He Himself supports the entire universe, it is one’s duty to render service to Him exclusively and relish His *mādhurya* (sweetness). This is stated in the Tenth Chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Tenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “In the previous chapter, pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* was instructed. A person deliberating on that may have a doubt and think that perhaps service to Kṛṣṇa can be rendered by worshipping the demigods. To remove this doubt, Kṛṣṇa says in this chapter that demigods such as Brahmā and Rudra are nothing but His opulences. ‘I am the cause of everything. I am without birth, beginningless and the Supreme Controller. When one understands *vibhūti-tattva*, the truths regarding My opulences, by proper deliberation, there remains no other impediment to exclusive devotion. I pervade this entire universe by My partial aspect as Paramātmā and have manifested all these opulences. After understanding My *vibhūti-tattva*, devotees attain knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva*, the Truth of Śrī Bhagavān, and with pure devotion, they engage in *bhajana* of My form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.’

In the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh verses of this chapter, pure devotion and its result have been described. Only *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the origin of all these opulences, can lead to *prema*, which is the eternal religion of the living entity. This is the essence of this chapter.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Tenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Viśvarūpa-Darśana-Yoga

Yoga Through Beholding
the Lord's Universal Form

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*mad-anugrahāya paramam guhyam adhyātma-samjñitam
yat tvayoktam vacas tena moho 'yam vigato mama*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *mat* – for me; *anugrahāya* – in order to show mercy; *paramam* – supreme; *guhyam* – confidential knowledge; *adhyātma-samjñitam* – concerning Your opulences; *yat* – which are; *tvayā* – by You; *uktam* – spoken; *vacaḥ* – the words; *tena* – by those words; *mohaḥ* – delusion born from ignorance; *ayam* – this; *vigataḥ* – has been dispelled; *mama* – My.

Arjuna said: Now that I have heard the supremely confidential knowledge of Your opulences, which You revealed out of Your compassion for me, my delusion born of ignorance has been dispelled.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this Eleventh Chapter, Arjuna becomes fearful upon seeing Śrī Bhagavān's universal form (*viśvarūpa*), and his intelligence becomes perplexed. He thus begins praying to Him.

Thereafter, Śrī Hari bestows bliss upon Arjuna by again showing him His own two-armed form.

At the end of the last chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “With merely a single portion of Myself I pervade and support the whole universe.” When Arjuna heard of the opulences (*vibhūti*s) of his dear friend, who is the primeval person and the abode of all opulences, he became immersed in supreme bliss. With a desire to see that form, Arjuna now speaks three verses, the first beginning with *mad-anugrahāya*.

Arjuna’s ignorance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s feature of majesty was dispelled upon hearing the statements of Śrī Bhagavān, from whom all these opulences originate.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous chapter, when Arjuna heard Śrī Bhagavān speak the most confidential and supremely secret instructions on the science of the soul, *ātma-tattva*, his delusion was removed to a certain extent. He understood clearly that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān, the ultimate limit of the Absolute Truth. By a portion of Himself – Paramātmā – He enters and pervades this entire universe, manifesting unlimited opulences. Although He is the fountainhead of all majesty, He remains distinct from it in His eternal, two-armed Śyāmasundara form.

Arjuna rejoices upon hearing Bhagavān’s statements and wants to realize this knowledge. He therefore says, “Previously I doubted whether or not Your opulences are independent of You, but now this doubt, which was born of ignorance, has been dispelled.”

On a deeper level, this statement indicates that Arjuna now wants to see Kṛṣṇa’s universal form.

VERSE 2

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।

त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥२॥

bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānām śrutau vistaraśo mayā

tvattaḥ kamala-patrākṣa mātmyam api cāvya-yam

bhava-apyayau – the origin and dissolution; *hi* – indeed; *bhūtānām* – of the living beings; *śrutau* – have been heard; *vistarasaḥ* – extensively;

mayā – by me; *tvattaḥ* – from You; *kamala-patra-akṣa* – O lotus-eyed one; *māhātmyam* – glories; *api* – also; *ca* – and; *avyayam* – eternal.

O lotus-eyed Lord, I have heard from You in detail about the origin and dissolution of the living entities, and I have also heard of Your eternal glories.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The middle six chapters of the *Gītā* explain that Śrī Bhagavān is the root cause of everything, including creation and annihilation. As it is said in the *Gītā* (7.6), “I alone am the cause of the creation and destruction of the entire universe.” Śrī Bhagavān is unchangeable and eternal (*avyaya*). That is, although He performs activities such as manifesting the creation, He remains free from any transformation and attachment. This is shown in verses such as “By Me this whole universe is pervaded” (*Gītā* 9.4), and “All these works cannot bind Me” (*Gītā* 9.9).

VERSE 3

एवमेतद् यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३ ॥

evam etad yathāttha tvam ātmānam parameśvara
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpam aiśvaram puruṣottama

evam – I accept; *etat* – this; *yathā* – as; *āttha* – have spoken; *tvam* – You; *ātmānam* – of Yourself; *parameśvara* – O Supreme Controller; *draṣṭum* – to see; *icchāmi* – I wish; *te* – Your; *rūpam* – form; *aiśvaram* – of opulence; *puruṣa-uttama* – O Supreme Person.

O Parameśvara, I accept all that You have spoken about Yourself as true. Still, O Puruṣottama, I now wish to see Your form that is replete with majesty.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ātmānam tvam yathāttha*. “You said, ‘I am situated in this world by pervading it with but one portion of Myself’ (*Gītā* 10.42). This is indeed true; I have not even a trace of doubt about this. Yet I desire the satisfaction of beholding Your form of majesty (*aiśvarya*).

I want to see with my own eyes Your partial manifestation, Your *īśvara* form, by which You enter this world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: With a desire to see the form of Bhagavān that is full of *aiśvarya*, or opulence, Arjuna is saying, “O Parameśvara, I have heard about Your wonderful, unlimited opulences (*vibhūti*s) and I have not even the slightest doubt about them. Now, however, I am becoming eager to actually see Your form that is full of opulence. You are Antaryāmī, existing within everyone’s heart. Therefore, You also know my inner desire and You are capable of fulfilling it.”

Someone may raise the following doubt: If Arjuna is an eternal friend of Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of sweetness (*mādhurya-maya-vigraha*), why does he desire to see the universal form, which expresses Bhagavān’s majestic opulence? The answer is that, just as a person who is very fond of sweets sometimes desires to eat bitter and sour food (such as neem leaves or pickle), Arjuna, who is forever tasting Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness (*mādhurya*) also developed a desire to see His universal form, which is an expression of His majesty (*aiśvarya*).

This has another meaning. Although Arjuna does not doubt the reverential opulence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His super-excellence, he desires to see this *aiśvarya* feature simply for his own personal satisfaction.

VERSE 4

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥४॥

manyase yadi tac chakyaṁ mayā draṣṭum iti prabho
yogeshvara tato me tvam darśayātmānam avyayam

manyase – do think; *yadi* – if; *tat* – that; *śakyaṁ* – is possible; *mayā* – by me; *draṣṭum* – to be seen; *iti* – that; *prabho* – O Master; *yoga-īśvara* – O controller of all mystic power; *tataḥ* – then; *me* – me; *tvam* – You; *darśaya* – show; *ātmānam* – Yourself; *avyayam* – unchanging.

O my Master! If You think that it is possible for me to behold that imperishable, all-opulent form, then please, O controller of all mystic powers, reveal that form to me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna says, “Although I am not qualified to see that form, it is possible for me to see it by the influence of Your mystic power, because You are Yogeśvara, the Supreme Mystic.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Arjuna expressed his desire to see Śrī Bhagavān’s form of opulence (*aiśvarya*). In the present verse, he is seeking His approval. “O Lord! O Master of all! O Yogeśvara! I have expressed my internal desires to You. Although I am unqualified, if You consider me an object of Your mercy, then kindly reveal that universal form (*viśvarūpa*) to me.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “The *jīva* is an atomic conscious entity (*aṅu-caitanya*), and therefore, he cannot properly understand the activities of Śrī Bhagavān, who is the Supreme Infinite Consciousness (*vibhu-caitanya*). ‘I am a *jīva*, but even though You have mercifully bestowed upon me the qualification to understand Your form, I am still unable to comprehend Your infinite feature of majesty. This is because it is beyond the conception of the *jīva*. You are Yogeśvara, the master of all mystic power, and You are my master; therefore please show me Your mystic opulence, which is by nature imperishable and all-spiritual.’”

VERSE 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च॥५॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi śataśo ’tha sahasraśaḥ
nānā-vidhāni divyāni nānā-varṇākṛtīni ca*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *paśya* – behold; *me* – My; *pārtha* – O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā; *rūpāṇi* – forms; *śataśaḥ* – by the hundreds; *atha* – and; *sahasraśaḥ* – thousands; *nānā-vidhāni* – variegated; *divyāni* – divine; *nānā* – various; *varṇa* – colours; *ākṛtīni* – and shapes; *ca* – and.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Pārtha, behold My hundreds and thousands of various multi-coloured divine forms.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Initially, I will reveal to Arjuna the first *puruṣa* – Kāraṇodakaśāyī – who is My *aṁśa*, or partial expansion, and who is the indwelling witness of material nature. He is described in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* as having thousands of heads, eyes and feet. I will then make Arjuna understand My *svāṁśa*, or My own expansion, whose feature of all-devouring time is relevant to the present context.” Thinking like this, Śrī Bhagavān instructs Arjuna, “Be attentive.” In saying this, He directs Arjuna’s attention toward Himself. By using the two words *paśya* and *rūpāṇi*, Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “In this one *svarūpa* of Mine, there are hundreds of forms (hosts of opulences). Behold them.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān, understanding Arjuna’s internal desire, is commanding Arjuna’s attention so He can show him His form as Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness of material nature. This form has hundreds of heads, eyes and forms as described in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, and it is Śrī Bhagavān’s personal expansion (*svāṁśa-rūpa*). He also wants Arjuna’s attention so that He can show him the unlimited opulences existing in just one of His *aṁśas*, or plenary portions. In other words, on the pretext of drawing Arjuna’s attention, Bhagavān is blessing him to be qualified to see this form. Kṛṣṇa also addresses Arjuna as Pārtha, to indicate His personal relationship with him.

VERSE 6

पश्यादित्यान् वसून् रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६ ॥

paśyādityān vasūn rudrān aśvinau marutas tathā
bahūny adṛṣṭa-pūrvāṇi paśyāścaryāṇi bhārata

paśya – see; *ādityān* – the twelve Ādityas; *vasūn* – the eight Vasus; *rudrān* – the eleven Rudras; *aśvinau* – the twin Aśvinīs; *marutaḥ* – the forty-nine Maruts; *tathā* – and; *bahūni* – many; *adṛṣṭa-pūrvāṇi* – that you have never seen before; *paśya* – behold; *aścaryāṇi* – astonishing forms; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata.

O Bhārata, behold the twelve Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the two Aśvinī-kumāras, the forty-nine Maruts and so many other astonishing forms that no one has ever witnessed before.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Bhagavān's addressing Arjuna as Bhārata is significant, because Arjuna was born in the dynasty of the great saintly King Bharata, who who is highly pious and a pure devotee of the Lord. Arjuna is therefore extremely religious and one-pointed in his devotion to Bhagavān. Thus he is qualified to see this form of Bhagavān, heretofore unseen.

VERSE 7

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद् द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥७॥

*ihaika-stham jagat kṛtsnam paśyādya sa-carācaram
mama dehe guḍākeśa yac cānyad draṣṭum icchasi*

iha – here; *eka-stham* – in one place; *jagat* – universe; *kṛtsnam* – the entire; *paśya* – behold; *adya* – now; *sa-cara-acaram* – together with all moving and non-moving beings; *mama dehe* – in My body; *guḍākeśa* – O conqueror of sleep; *yac* – whatever; *ca* – and; *anyat* – else; *draṣṭum* – to see; *icchasi* – you desire.

O Guḍākeśa, now behold the entire universe, including all moving and non-moving beings, assembled together in one place within this body of Mine. Whatever else you wish to see is also visible within this universal form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “That whole universe, which you will not be able to see even by wandering for millions of years, is situated in just one part of My body.” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *ihaika-stham jagat*. “Your victory or defeat, whatever it may be, exists in this body, which is the shelter of the universe.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is again saying, “Within My universal form, you will behold the entire world of

moving and non-moving entities. This universal form cannot be seen by performing hard labour for millions of years. It can only be seen by My mercy. In this universal form, you will see Me and the entire world, as well as your victory or defeat in this battle of Kūrukṣetra. Moreover, you will also see whatever else you want to see.” Here, the word Guḍākeśa is used. *Guḍākā* means ‘sleep’, or ‘ignorance’, and *īśa* means ‘master’. In this way, Bhagavān indicates that Arjuna should behold this form with focused attention, and his doubts about victory or defeat will be dispelled. Arjuna will then be able to understand that in this universe, the performance of every activity is pre-arranged by destiny. Neither Arjuna nor anyone else is able to change this arrangement in any way.

VERSE 8

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥८॥

*na tu mām śakyase draṣṭum anenaiva sva-cakṣuṣā
divyam dadāmi te cakṣuḥ paśya me yogam aiśvaram*

na – not; *tu* – but; *mām* – Me; *śakyase* – are able; *draṣṭum* – to see; *anena* – with these; *eva* – certainly; *sva-cakṣuṣā* – by these material eyes of yours; *divyam* – divine; *dadāmi* – I am giving; *te* – to you; *cakṣuḥ* – eyes; *paśya* – now see; *me* – My; *yogam* – mystic power; *aiśvaram* – opulence.

However, you are certainly unable to see Me with the material eyes you have now. Therefore, I confer upon you divine eyes to behold My mystic opulence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “Arjuna, do not consider this form to be illusory, or composed of matter (*māyā*); rather, know it to be *sac-cid-ānanda*, composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss. My *svarūpa*, in which the whole universe exists, is beyond the perception of the material senses.” To give Arjuna this faith, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *na tu*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “You will not be able to see Me, the embodiment of concentrated spirit (*cit*) with

your material eyes. Therefore, I am granting you spiritual eyes by which you will see Me.”

The above statement is spoken just to astonish Arjuna – who identifies himself as being an ordinary, mortal human being – because Arjuna is a prominent, eternal associate of Śrī Bhagavān and has descended to this material world as a human being. His eyes are not actually material like those of an ordinary person. Moreover, Arjuna, who directly experiences Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, or *mādhurya*, will not be able to see His portion (*aṁśa*), the universal form, with those same eyes. For this reason he has to accept divine eyes.

What kind of logic is this? Some say that the supremely fortunate eyes of an *ananya-bhakta* see the great sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s human-like pastimes and do not see the opulence of His Godly pastimes. This is compared to a tongue that is used to tasting rock-sugar and does not appreciate the taste of simple unprocessed sugar. Therefore, on the request of Arjuna, and to give him the especially wondrous vision of His divine majestic feature, Śrī Bhagavān gives him supra-human eyes, appropriate for savouring this particular loving exchange. Another purpose for giving him supra-mundane vision will become clear at the end of this chapter.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Arjuna is an eternally perfect associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. With eyes full of *prema*, he always sees and relishes the ever-sweet form of Kṛṣṇa. However, because he has a desire to see the universal form, Bhagavān’s giving him divine eyes is discussed herein. Transcendental eyes are superior to ordinary, gross material eyes, yet these divine eyes are quite insignificant and inferior to the eyes of Arjuna that are full of unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa. The universal form of Śrī Bhagavān cannot be seen with gross material eyes; it is only visible by divine vision attained by His mercy. Still, the sweetness, or *mādhurya*, of Śrī Bhagavān cannot be seen with ordinary eyes or even with divine eyes.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa further clarifies this point in his commentary on this verse. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave Arjuna divine eyes, which were needed to witness His divine universal form, but He did not give him a corresponding divine mind. If He had given him a divine

mind, Arjuna would have developed interest in actually relishing the universal form, but upon seeing it, he became disinterested. This is evident by Arjuna's words in his state of astonishment upon seeing the universal form. He prayed that Śrī Kṛṣṇa only show him His natural, *sac-cid-ānanda*, two-armed form." This sentiment is also found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.7.34-37):

*ekadārbhakam ādāya svāṅkam āropya bhāminī
 prasnutam pāyayām āsa stanam sneha-pariplutā
 pīta-prāyasya janani sutasya rucira-smitam
 mukham lālayati rājan jṛmbhato dadṛṣe idam
 kham rodasī jyotir-anīkam āśāḥ
 sūryendu-vahni-śvasanāmbudhimś ca
 dvīpān nagāms tad-duhitṛ vanāni
 bhūtāni yāni sthira-jaṅgamāni
 sā vīkṣya viśvam sahasā rājan sanjāta-vepathuḥ
 sammīlya mṛgaśāvākṣī netre āsit suvismitā*

One day, baby Kṛṣṇa was on Mother Yaśodā's lap. She was breast-feeding Him and kissing His captivating cheeks, which were enhanced by His mild smile. The child then yawned and showed her His universal form, within His mouth. The sudden sight of this form in the mouth of her baby greatly astonished her. Her body started to tremble and she closed her eyes. "Alas!" she thought, "what is this I have seen?" Fearful that somebody may have cast an evil-eye, or spell, on Kṛṣṇa, she called the family priest and had him chant *mantras* for Kṛṣṇa's protection. She felt relief only after she had given Kṛṣṇa a purifying bath.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains a deep secret. "How is it that Mother Yaśodā was able to see the universal form of Kṛṣṇa if she did not have divine vision? For the nourishment of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the maidservant of Lakṣmī-devī (the pleasure potency) is making Yaśodā's love ever-new and ever-fresh by allowing her to taste *vismaya-rasa* (the nectar of astonishment) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *aīśvarya-sakti*."

The hidden meaning of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on this section of the story from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is as follows: "This *aiśvarya-śakti* could not slacken Mother Yaśodā's parental affection. This *śakti* of Śrī Hari appeared in order to test Prema-devī, the goddess of love, but upon seeing Prema-devī's immeasurable power, she accepted the position as her servant. Here Mother Yaśodā's *vātsalya-prema* is Prema-devī."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.32–39) describes the following pastime:

Another day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was playing at Brahmāṇḍa-ghaṭa with Śrīdāma, Subala, Balarāma and some other cowherd boys. Child Kṛṣṇa secretly ate some mud, but somehow the cowherd boys saw Him doing this and complained to Mother Yaśodā. Yaśodā came running and, catching hold of Kṛṣṇa's hand, she began to chastise Him. Trembling with fear, Kṛṣṇa said, "Mother, I have not eaten any mud. All these boys are telling lies. If you do not believe Me, then you can look in My mouth and see for yourself." Saying this, Kṛṣṇa opened His mouth and showed her the whole universe, containing all moving and non-moving entities, the sky, etc., as well as His own abode (*dhāma*).

Although the *aiśvarya* feature is not acknowledged in *mādhurya-līlā*, it manifests itself at appropriate times. That is, although Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *aiśvarya* (majesty) remains unmanifest in His *mādhurya-līlā*, it is still fully present. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all *aiśvarya* and *mādhurya*. In some specific pastimes, when both majesty and sweetness are needed, the majesty manifests itself. Being inspired by the potency called *satya-saṅkalpa* (in which one's words manifest as truth), the *aiśvarya-śakti* manifested and drowned Mother Yaśodā in astonishment (*vismaya-rasa*) by showing her Kṛṣṇa's universal form. This made her forget her anger towards Him. In this way, the *aiśvarya-śakti* rendered service to Prema-devī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sporting as a human boy, and therefore, to nourish His pastimes and to increase the *prema* of His *bhaktas*, He sometimes manifests His opulence.

Śrī Caitanya-*caritāmṛta* describes how Advaita Ācārya asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to show Him that universal form that is described in *Bhagavad-gītā*. On His request, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed

Him all the incidents that took place in the battle of Mahābhārata, along with His universal form. Upon seeing the universal form, Advaita Ācārya closed His eyes. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, making that form unmanifest, again showed His natural form, thereby restoring Advaita Ācārya to His normal state.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “You are My devotee. With the eyes of unalloyed *prema*, you can see My form as Kṛṣṇa. My form that is composed of mystic opulence (*yogaiśvarya*) is related to the phenomenal material world, so it is not necessary for those with eyes of unalloyed *prema* to see it, nor is it even visible to them. Gross material eyes also cannot behold My form of majesty. But those eyes that are not filled with pure love, due to having some relationship with this world, yet at the same time are not material, are called supra-mundane. I am bestowing upon you this transcendental vision by which you will be able to see My form of opulence. Those who are endowed with divine eyes and also with the ability to reason, naturally become attached to this form rather than to My transcendental form as Kṛṣṇa. This is because their eyes of unalloyed *prema* remain closed.”

VERSE 9

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन् महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥९॥

sañjaya uvāca –

*evam uktvā tato rājan mahā-yogeśvaro hariḥ
darśayām āsa pārthāya paramam rūpam aiśvaram*

sañjaya uvāca – Sañjaya said; *evam* – thus; *uktvā* – having spoken; *tataḥ* – then; *rājan* – O King; *mahā-yogeśvaraḥ* – the great Master of all mystic power; *hariḥ* – Śrī Hari; *darśayām āsa* – displayed; *pārthāya* – to Pārtha (Arjuna); *paramam* – of supreme; *rūpam* – His form; *aiśvaram* – opulence.

Sañjaya said: O King, so saying, Śrī Hari, the master of all mystic potency, revealed to Arjuna His supreme majestic form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After saying this, Śrī Bhagavān showed Arjuna His universal form. Sañjaya is describing this subject to blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra in six verses, while saying that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not only great but that He is the ultimate mystic, Yogeśvara. In order to show His universal form to Arjuna, He has given him divine eyes. This means that Arjuna is very dear to Him. The purport to this is that for Arjuna, victory in this battle appears to be a simple matter of course. Now there is no doubt that by the mercy of Bhagavān, both material and spiritual auspiciousness will come to Arjuna. By this, Sañjaya also indicates that Dhṛtarāṣṭra's hopes for his sons' victory have been completely destroyed.

VERSES 10-11

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ १० ॥

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ११ ॥

aneka-vaktra-nayanam anekādbhuta-darśanam
aneka-divyābharaṇam divyānekodyatāyudham

divya-mālyāmbara-dharam divya-gandhānulepanam
sarvāścarya-mayam devam anantam viśvato-mukham

aneka – many; *vaktra-nayanam* – mouths and eyes; *aneka* – many; *adbhuta-darśanam* – wonderful aspects; *aneka* – many; *divya-abharaṇam* – divine ornaments; *divya* – divine; *aneka* – many; *udyata-ayudham* – raised weapons; *divya-mālya* – divine garlands; *ambara* – and beautiful garments; *dharam* – He wore; *divya-gandha* – with divine scents; *anulepanam* – smeared; *sarva* – in every way; *aścarya-mayam* – astonishing; *devam* – brilliant; *anantam* – limitless; *viśvataḥ* – on all sides; *mukham* – faces.

Arjuna saw the universal form of Śrī Bhagavān, possessing limitless mouths and eyes and all varieties of astonishing features. Countless divine ornaments and heavenly garlands bedecked that form, in whose hands numerous celestial weapons were raised. He was dressed in lavish garments, anointed with divine fragrances

and was astonishing in every way. His unlimited resplendent faces gazed in all directions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Viśvato-mukham* means ‘whose face is everywhere’.

VERSE 12

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद् युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥
divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsaḥ tasya mahātmanaḥ

divi – into the sky; *sūrya-sahasrasya* – of a thousand suns; *bhaved* – there were; *yugapat* – simultaneously; *utthitā* – arising; *yadi* – if; *bhāḥ* – light; *sadṛśī* – such; *sāḥ* – that; *syāt* – could be; *bhāsaḥ* – the splendour; *tasya* – of that; *mahā-ātmanaḥ* – great personality, the universal form.

If a thousand suns rose in the sky simultaneously, such splendour might approach the effulgence of that Supreme Person in His radiant universal form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: If the splendour of a thousand suns were to appear simultaneously, then to some extent it could be compared to the effulgence of this universal form of the Lord.

VERSE 13

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३ ॥
tatraika-stham jagat kṛtsnam pravibhaktam anekadhā
apaśyad deva-devasya śarīre pāṇḍavas tadā

tatra – there; *eka-stham* – in one place; *jagat* – universe; *kṛtsnam* – the entire; *pravibhaktam* – divided; *anekadhā* – into many forms; *apaśyat* – saw; *deva-devasya* – of the God of gods; *śarīre* – within the enormous body; *pāṇḍavaḥ* – Arjuna, the son of Pāṇḍu; *tadā* – at that time.

At that time, Arjuna could see the totality of the entire universe situated in many separate forms within that gigantic body of Viśvarūpa, the God of gods.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: On that very battlefield, Arjuna saw uncountable universes within the body of *deva-devasya*, the God of gods. With their various distinctive features, they were situated in one part of His body, in every pore and in each belly. The word *anekadhā* means that some of these forms were made of earth, some of gold and some of gems. Some were fifty *yojanas* in measurement [one *yojana* equals eight miles], some a hundred, some hundreds of thousands of *yojanas*, and some were millions of *yojanas* in size.

VERSE 14

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनञ्जयः ।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥ १४ ॥

tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo hr̥ṣṭa-romā dhanāñjayaḥ
praṇamya śirasā devaṁ kṛtāñjalir abhāṣata

tataḥ – then; *saḥ* – he; *vismaya-āviṣṭaḥ* – overwhelmed by wonder; *hr̥ṣṭa-romāḥ* – his hairs stood erect; *dhanāñjayaḥ* – the winner of wealth (Arjuna); *praṇamya* – bowing down; *śirasā* – his head; *devaṁ* – the Lord (who had manifested His universal form); *kṛta-āñjalir* – and folding his hands; *abhāṣata* – he addressed.

Struck by wonder, his hair standing on end, Arjuna bowed his head to offer respects, and with folded hands, he spoke the following words to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who had assumed His universal form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The universal form, which the Supreme Mystic Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed to Arjuna, was most astonishing, supremely resplendent, wonderful to behold and decorated with various types of celestial ornaments. It was unlimited and all-pervading. In the body of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna saw the entire universe situated in one place and divided into various forms. To remove Dhṛtarāṣṭra's doubt that Arjuna may have run away

in fear after seeing that terrifying form, Sañjaya said, “Arjuna is a great devotee who knows *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, the fundamental spiritual principles regarding Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he is endowed with *sattva-guṇa*, the mode of goodness. He did not become fearful upon seeing that thousand-headed form of Kṛṣṇa, but instead he experienced *adbhuta-rasa* (devotional feelings of astonishment). Arjuna was endowed with natural fortitude, but because he was absorbed in astonishment, he fell into ecstasy. His hairs stood on end and his body trembled. Offering obeisances by bowing his head and folding his hands, he began to speak.”

Arjuna’s eyes were not closed out of fear but out of experiencing *adbhuta-rasa*. The universal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the object (*viṣaya-ālambana*) of this *rasa*, and Arjuna is the receptacle (*āśraya-ālambana*). To repeatedly witness that form is an *uddīpana*, or stimulus for remembrance of the Lord. Paying obeisances and folding hands are *anubhāvas*, the physical manifestations of ecstasy while relishing the mellow of astonishment, and his hairs standing on end, etc., are bodily transformations due to spiritual rapture (*sāttvika-bhāvas*). Agitation of mind, fortitude, exhilaration and so forth are *sañcārī-bhāvas*, transitory emotions that swell up from the ocean of the *sthāyī-bhāva*. Here the prominent emotion (*sthāyī-bhāva*) is wonder (*vismaya*). All these ingredients combined with Arjuna’s *sthāyī-bhāva* to manifest *vismaya-rasa*. Regarding the mellow of astonishment, *adbhuta-rasa*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (4.2.1):

*ātmocitair vibhāvādyaiḥ svādyatvaṃ bhakta-cetasi
sā vismaya-ratir nitād-bhuto-bhakti-raso bhavet*

When *vismaya-rati* (the mood of astonishment) becomes relishable within the heart of a devotee by mixing with the appropriate elements of *vibhāva* (cause, or stimulus) and so forth, which are proper and favourable to one’s own mood, it is called *adbhuta-rasa* (the mellow of wonder).

VERSE 15

अर्जुन उवाच—

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान्।
ब्रह्माण्मीशं कमलासनस्थमृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५ ॥

arjuna uvāca –
paśyāmi devāms tava deva dehe
sarvāms tathā bhūta-viśeṣa-saṅghān
brahmāṇam īśam kamalāsana-stham
ṛṣīmś ca sarvān uragāmś ca divyān

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *paśyāmi* – I perceive; *devān* – the demigods; *tava* – Your; *deva* – O Lord; *dehe* – within the body; *sarvān* – all; *tathā* – as well as; *bhūta-viśeṣa* – of the various living beings; *saṅghān* – the groups; *brahmāṇam* – Lord Brahmā; *īśam* – Lord Śiva; *kamala-āsana-stham* – seated on the lotus; *ṛṣīn* – the sages; *ca* – and; *sarvān* – all; *uragān* – snakes; *ca* – and; *divyān* – divine.

Arjuna said: O My Lord, within Your divine body I see the demigods and the hosts of living beings. I see Lord Brahmā seated upon his lotus-flower seat, and I see Lord Śiva and all the divine sages and serpents.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The phrase *bhūta-viśeṣāṇām* means ‘all those living entities born from the womb, from eggs and from perspiration’. The words *kamalāsana-stham* indicates ‘Lord Brahmā, who is situated on Mount Sumeru, which is like the lotus-whorl of the universe’.

VERSE 16

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं
 पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
 नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
 पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

aneka-bāhūdara-vaktra-netraṁ
paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato 'nanta-rūpam
nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punas tavādiṁ
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśva-rūpa

aneka – limitless; *bāhu* – arms; *udara* – bellies; *vaktra* – mouths; *netraṁ* – eyes; *paśyāmi* – I see; *tvām* – You; *sarvataḥ* – on all sides; *ananta-rūpam* – Your limitless forms; *na* – no; *antaṁ* – end; *na* – no; *madhyam* – middle; *na* – no;

punaḥ – again; *tava* – Your; *ādim* – beginning; *paśyāmi* – I see; *viśveśvara* – O Lord of the universe; *viśva-rūpa* – O form of the universe.

O Viśveśvara – Lord of the universe! O Viśvarūpa – form of the universe! On all sides I behold Your innumerable forms with unlimited hands, bellies, mouths and eyes. Moreover, I cannot see in You any beginning, middle or end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *viśveśvara* means ‘the original, or primeval, Person’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Arjuna says, “O Viśvarūpa! I am seeing all-pervading, unlimited forms in Your body with unlimited hands, bellies, mouths and eyes, but I am unable to ascertain Your beginning, middle or end.”

VERSE 17

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च
 तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
 पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरिक्ष्यं समन्ताद्
 दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७ ॥

kirīṭinam *gadinam* *cakriṇam* *ca*
tejo-rāśim *sarvato* *dīptimantam*
paśyāmi *tvām* *durnirīkṣyam* *samantād*
dīptānalārka-dyutim *aprameyam*

kirīṭinam – wearing crowns; *gadinam* – bearing clubs; *cakriṇam* – with discs; *ca* – and; *tejah-rāśim* – mass of splendour; *sarvataḥ* – on every side; *dīptimantam* – brilliant; *paśyāmi* – I am seeing; *tvām* – You; *durnirīkṣyam* – difficult to behold; *samantāt* – everywhere; *dīpta* – with a blazing radiance; *anala* – like fire; *arka-dyutim* – an effulgence like the sun; *aprameyam* – immeasurable.

I am seeing Your form as the supremely brilliant, all-pervading abode of splendour, adorned with crowns and bearing clubs and discs on all sides. It is very difficult to look upon You, due to the

blazing fire of Your immeasurable effulgence, which radiates like the sun in all directions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After seeing the universal form, Arjuna says, “O Lord of the universe! I am seeing Your bodily limbs, heads, crowns, clubs, discs and so forth to be like the effulgence of millions of suns. It is difficult for me to behold them any longer. I am seeing them on all sides and am unable to ascertain their beginning or end.”

If one asks how Arjuna was easily able to see this form, the answer is that Bhagavān mercifully endowed him with divine eyes.

VERSE 18

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
 त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
 त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
 सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥१८॥
tvam akṣaram paramam veditavyam
tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam
tvam avyayaḥ śāśvata-dharma-goptā
sanātanas tvam puruṣo mato me

tvam—You; *akṣaram*—*brahma* (Viṣṇu); *paramam*—the supreme; *veditavyam*—worthy to be known (by liberated souls); *tvam* – You; *asya* – of this; *viśvasya* – universe; *param* – the supreme; *nidhānam* – resting place, or shelter; *tvam* – You; *avyayaḥ* – the indestructible; *śāśvata-dharma* – of *sanātana-dharma*; *goptā* – protector; *sanātanaḥ* – primeval and eternal; *tvam* – You; *puruṣaḥ* – person; *mataḥ* – opinion; *me* – my.

You are Parabrahma, the supreme knowable object for all liberated persons. You are the supreme resting place of this universe. You are indestructible, the protector of the eternal religion and the primeval eternal Person. This is my opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *veditavyam* means ‘known by liberated persons’. *Yad akṣaram* means *brahma-tattva*, and *nidhānam* means ‘the place of dissolution’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Upon seeing the inconceivable, completely opulent form of Bhagavān, Arjuna concluded that He is indeed the supreme object of knowledge, that He is the imperishable Reality (*akṣara-tattva*) and that He can be known only by transcendental knowledge. He is the resting place of everyone, He is immutable, and He is the imperishable Person. He is also the source of *dharma*, or eternal religious principles, and He is its protector.

*sa kāraṇaṁ karaṇādhipādhipo
na cāsya kaścijanitā na cādhipaḥ
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.9)*

The eternal primeval Person and cause of all causes, as described in this *mantra*, is also Him.

VERSE 19

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्य-
मनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं
स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९ ॥

*anādi-madhyāntam ananta-vīryam
ananta-bāhum śaśi-sūrya-netram
paśyāmi tvāṁ dīpta-hutāśa-vaktram
sva-tejasā viśvam idaṁ tapantam*

anādi-madhyā-antam – without beginning, middle or end; *ananta-vīryam* – having infinite prowess; *ananta-bāhum* – infinite arms; *śaśi-sūrya-netram* – eyes like the sun and moon; *paśyāmi* – I see; *tvām* – You; *dīpta-hutāśa* – the blazing fire of the *agni-hotra-yajña* emanating from; *vaktram* – Your mouths; *sva-tejasā* – by Your radiance; *viśvam* – universe; *idaṁ* – this; *tapantam* – is scorched.

I see that You are without beginning, middle or end. You possess infinite prowess and innumerable arms, and Your eyes are like the sun and the moon. I see fire blazing from Your mouths and the whole universe being scorched by Your radiance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Since Arjuna is absorbed in an ocean of great wonder, repetition of this statement beginning with *anādi* is not a defect. It is said that if one repeats a subject twice or thrice inadvertently out of bewilderment, surprise or happiness, it is not incorrect.

VERSE 20

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
 व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
 दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमिदं तवोग्रं
 लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २० ॥

dyāv ā-prthivyor idam antaram hi
vyāptam tvayaikena diśaś ca sarvāḥ
dṛṣṭvādbhutaṁ rūpam idam tavograṁ
loka-trayaṁ pravyathitaṁ mahātman

dyau-ā-prthivyoḥ – between heaven and Earth; *idam* – this (space); *antaram* – in between; *hi* – indeed; *vyāptam* – pervaded; *tvayā* – by You; *ekena* – alone; *diśaḥ* – directions; *ca* – and; *sarvāḥ* – all; *dṛṣṭvā* – seeing; *adbhutam* – astonishing; *rūpam* – form; *idam* – this; *tava* – of Yours; *ugram* – terrible; *loka-trayaṁ* – the three worlds; *pravyathitam* – are very fearful and perturbed; *mahā-ātman* – O great personality.

You alone pervade all directions and all the space between Earth and the heavens. O Great Soul! Seeing this wondrous and terrible form of Yours, all the inhabitants of the three worlds are becoming most fearful and perturbed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with *dyau*, Śrī Bhagavān is displaying, as part of that universal form, His feature as all-devouring time, because it has a purpose in the present context. This continues into the next nine verses.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After seeing Śrī Bhagavān's form as time (*kāla*), Arjuna says, “O resting place of everything, You are pervading the whole Earth, the firmament, the sky and all

directions with Your universal form. You alone pervade the three worlds. Upon seeing this most wonderful divine form, the people of the three worlds become disturbed and agitated in fear.”

The point to be noted is that it was not only Arjuna who saw the universal form. The great battle of Kurukṣetra itself was also seen by demigods such as Lord Brahmā, by many demons, by the Pitṛs (forefathers), and by Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Kinnaras and human beings. All saw the battle according to their respective temperaments, such as friendship, enmity and indifference, but by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, only those who were devotees could see the universal form, having received divine vision.

It was not that only Arjuna saw the universal form, just as a person sleeping is the only one to see the chariots, horses and so on in his dream. Exalted personalities like Vyāsa, Sañjaya, Grandsire Bhīṣma, Lord Brahmā and many others also witnessed this majestic form of Śrī Bhagavān. This is the confidential meaning of this verse.

VERSE 21

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति
 केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
 स्वस्त्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः
 स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१ ॥

amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti
kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti
svastīty uktvā maharṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ
stuvanti tvām stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ

amī – these; *hi* – indeed; *tvām* – within You; *sura-saṅghāḥ* – the assemblies of demigods; *viśanti* – are entering; *kecid* – some; *bhītāḥ* – out of fear; *prāñjalayaḥ* – with hands clasped; *gṛṇanti* – they are offering prayers; *svasti* – let there be auspiciousness; *iti* – thus; *uktvā* – uttering; *maharṣi-siddha-saṅghāḥ* – the assembly of great sages and perfected beings; *stuvanti* – prasing; *tvām* – You; *stutibhiḥ* – with Vedic hymns; *puṣkalābhiḥ* – with resounding utterances.

The hosts of demigods are taking shelter of You by entering into You. Some, out of fear, are eulogizing You with folded hands. The great sages and perfected beings are gazing upon You as they loudly utter Vedic hymns invoking auspiciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *tva* means *tvām*, ‘unto You’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: Upon seeing the time feature of the universal form, Arjuna became absorbed in it and again said, “All the demigods on the battlefield are taking shelter of You and entering into You. Some of them are ready to run in fear, but unable to do so, they are folding their hands and in a perplexed mood praying, ‘O Lord, please protect me!’ At the same time, the saints and perfected beings are seeing the terrible result of the battle and saying, ‘Let there be auspiciousness for the universe.’”

VERSE 22

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या
विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्घा
वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२ ॥

rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā
viśve ’śvinau marutaś coṣmapāś ca
gandharva-yakṣāsura-siddha-saṅghā
vīkṣante tvām viśmitāś caiva sarve

rudra – the Rudras; *ādityāḥ* – the twelve children of Aditi, headed by Āditya the sun; *vasavaḥ ye* – the eight Vasus, or bright gods, the deities of water, the pole star, the moon, the Earth, the wind, fire, dawn and splendour; *ca* – and; *sādhyāḥ* – the Sādhyā demigods; *viśve* – the universal demigods; *aśvinau* – the twin celestial physicians; *marutaḥ* – the forty-nine wind-gods; *ca* – and; *uṣma-pāḥ* – the forefathers; *ca* – and; *gandharva* – the celestial musicians; *yakṣa* – the servants of Kuvera, the celestial treasurer; *asura* – demons; *siddha-saṅghāḥ* – the assembly of perfected beings, or Siddhas; *vīkṣante* – are beholding; *tvām* – You; *viśmitāḥ* – in great wonder; *ca* – and; *eva* – verily; *sarve* – all.

The eleven Rudras, the twelve Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the Sādhyas demigods, the Viśva demigods, the twin Aśvinī-kumāras, the Maruts, Piṭṛs, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and the Siddhas are all beholding You in wonder.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who accept offerings of hot food are known as *uṣma-pāḥ*. In the Śrūtis also it is stated, “*uṣma bhāgā hi pitarāḥ* – the portion given to the forefathers (Piṭṛs) is *uṣma* (hot).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Not only Arjuna but also the Rudras, the twelve Ādityas, the eight Vasus, the Sādhyas, the universal demigods, the two Aśvinī-kumāras, the Maruts, the Piṭṛs headed by Uṣmapā, the Gandharvas such as Citraratha, the Yakṣas such as Kuvera, the Daityas such as Virocana, and the Siddhas (perfected beings) such as Kapila, are all looking at the majestic form of Śrī Bhagavān with amazement. Here the word *uṣma-pāḥ* means ‘the forefathers who accept offerings of hot food’.

VERSE 23

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं
 महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम् ।
 बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं
 दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ २३ ॥

rūpaṁ mahat te bahu-vaktra-netraṁ
mahā-bāho bahu-bāhūru-pādam
bahūdaraṁ bahu-damṣṭrā-karālaṁ
dr̥ṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitās tathāham

rūpaṁ – form; *mahat* – gigantic; *te* – Your; *bahu* – many; *vaktra* – faces; *netraṁ* – eyes; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed one; *bahu* – many; *bāhu* – arms; *uru* – thighs; *pādam* – and feet; *bahu* – many; *udaram* – bellies; *bahu* – many; *damṣṭrā* – teeth; *karālam* – terrible; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – seeing; *lokāḥ* – all the people; *pravyathitāḥ* – are very fearful; *tathā* – as also; *aham* – I.

O mighty-armed Lord, upon beholding Your gigantic form, with its unlimited mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies and fearsome teeth, everyone is becoming greatly fearful, as I am.

VERSE 24

नभःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं
 व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।
 दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा
 धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४ ॥

nabhaḥ-spr̥śam dīptam aneka-varṇam
vyāttānanam dīpta-viśāla-netram
dr̥ṣṭvā hi tvāṁ pravayathitāntar-ātmā
dhṛtim na vindāmi śamam ca viṣṇo

nabhaḥ-spr̥śam – pervading the sky; *dīptam* – blazing; *aneka-varṇam* – multi-coloured; *vyātta-ānanam* – with wide-open mouths; *dīpta-viśāla-netram* – with vast fiery eyes; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – seeing; *hi* – indeed; *tvām* – Your form; *pravayathita* – is very disturbed; *antar-ātmā* – my mind; *dhṛtim* – steadiness of mind; *na vindāmi* – I do not find; *śamam* – peace; *ca* – or; *viṣṇo* – O Lord Viṣṇu.

O Viṣṇu! Seeing Your blazing, multi-coloured form pervade the sky, with Your great fiery eyes and wide-open mouths, my mind is overpowered by fear and I am neither steady in mind nor peaceful.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *śamam* means ‘peace’.

VERSE 25

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि
 दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।
 दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
 प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५ ॥

*damṣṭrā-karālāni ca te mukhāni
 dṛṣṭvaiva kālānala-sannibhāni
 diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma
 prasīda deveśa jagat-nivāsa*

damṣṭrā-karālāni – dreadful because of fearsome teeth; *ca* – and; *te* – Your; *mukhāni* – mouths; *dṛṣṭvā* – seeing; *eva* – indeed; *kāla* – at the time of devastation; *anala* – the fire; *sannibhāni* – resembling; *diśaḥ* – the four directions; *na jāne* – I am unable to ascertain; *na labhe* – I do not obtain; *ca* – and; *śarma* – happiness; *prasīda* – be pleased; *deva-īśa* – O Lord of the demigods; *jagat-nivāsa* – O shelter of the universe.

Seeing all those dreadful mouths filled with fearsome teeth and blazing like the fire of annihilation, I am unable to ascertain the four directions or feel any kind of happiness. O Lord of the demigods! O shelter of the universe! Kindly be merciful to me.

VERSES 26–27

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः
 सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।
 भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ
 सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति
 दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
 केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु
 सन्दृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

*amī ca tvāṁ dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ
 sarve sahaivāvani-pāla-saṅghaiḥ
 bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathāsau
 sahāsmadīyair api yodha-mukhyaiḥ
 vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti
 damṣṭrā-karālāni bhayānakāni
 kecid vilagnā daśanāntareṣu
 sandṛśyante cūrṇitair uttamāṅgaiḥ*

amī – these; *ca* – and; *tvām* – Your; *dhṛtarāṣṭrasya* – of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; *putrāḥ* – sons; *sarve* – all; *saha* – together; *eva* – indeed; *avani-pālasaṅghaiḥ* – with the assembly of kings; *bhīṣmaḥ* – Bhīṣma; *droṇaḥ* – Droṇācārya; *sūta-putraḥ* – charioteer’s son, Karṇa; *tathā* – and also; *asau* – that; *saha* – together; *asmadīyaiḥ* – with our men; *api* – indeed; *yodhamukhyaiḥ* – chief soldiers; *vaktrāṇi* – mouths; *te* – they; *tvaramāṇāḥ* – speedily; *viśanti* – are entering; *daṁṣṭrā-karālāni* – frightful teeth; *bhayānakāni* – fearful; *kecit* – some; *vilagnāḥ* – stuck; *daśana-antareṣu* – between the teeth; *sandṛśyante* – are seen; *cūrṇitaiḥ* – crushed; *uttama-āṅgaiḥ* – with their heads.

All the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, along with their allied host of kings and Bhīṣma, Droṇa and Karṇa, as well as the leading warriors on our side, are rushing towards You with great speed and entering Your cave-like mouths, which are filled with frightful teeth. I see that some are also trapped there, their heads crushed between those teeth.

VERSE 28

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
 समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
 तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
 विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८ ॥

yathā nadīnām bahavo ’mbu-vegāḥ
samudram evābhimukhā dravanti
tathā tavāmī nara-loka-vīrā
viśanti vaktrāṇy abhivijvalanti

yathā – as; *nadīnām* – of the rivers; *bahavaḥ* – many; *ambu-vegāḥ* – the currents; *samudram* – the ocean; *eva* – indeed; *abhimukhāḥ* – toward; *dravanti* – rush; *tathā* – similarly; *tava* – Your; *amī* – these; *nara-loka* – of human society; *vīrā* – heroes; *viśanti* – enter; *vaktrāṇi* – mouths; *abhivijvalanti* – blazing.

As the waters of many rivers rush forcefully toward the ocean and enter it, similarly, all of these great heroes are entering Your blazing mouths.

VERSE 29

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा
 विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।
 तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका-
 स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ २९ ॥

*yathā pradīptam̐ jvalanam̐ pataṅgā
 viśanti nāśāya samṛddha-vegāḥ
 tathaiiva nāśāya viśanti lokāś
 tavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ*

yathā – just as; *pradīptam* – a blazing; *jvalanam* – fire; *pataṅgāḥ* – moths; *viśanti* – enter; *nāśāya* – for destruction; *samṛddha-vegāḥ* – with great speed; *tathā* – similarly; *eva* – indeed; *nāśāya* – to their destruction; *viśanti* – enter; *lokāḥ* – these people; *tava* – Your; *api* – also; *vaktrāṇi* – mouths; *samṛddha-vegāḥ* – with great speed.

As moths rush into a blazing fire and perish, these warriors are entering Your mouths with great speed, only to die.

VERSE 30

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता-
 ल्लोकान् समग्रान् वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।
 तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
 भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३० ॥

*lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl
 lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ
 tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagram̐
 bhāśas tavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo*

lelihyase – repeatedly licking them up; *grasamānaḥ* – devouring, or greedily consuming; *samantāt* – from all sides; *lokān* – people; *samagrān* – all; *vadanaiḥ* – mouths; *jvaladbhiḥ* – with blazing; *tejobhiḥ* – with Your rays; *āpūrya* – filling; *jagat* – universe; *samagram* – the entire; *bhāśaḥ* – light; *tava* – Your; *ugrāḥ* – terrible; *pratapanti* – are scorching; *viṣṇo* – O Viṣṇu.

O Viṣṇu, with Your fiery mouths, You are devouring the host of living beings, licking them up from all sides again and again. You are scorching the entire universe with the fierce, all-pervading rays of Your effulgence.

VERSE 31

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
 नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।
 विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
 न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१ ॥

*ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugra-rūpo
 namo 'stu te deva-vara prasīda
 vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam ādyam
 na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim*

ākhyāhi – tell; *me* – me; *kaḥ* – who;? *bhavān* – You; *ugra-rūpaḥ* – fierce form of the Lord; *namaḥ astu* – let my obeisances be; *te* – unto You; *deva-vara* – O best amongst the gods; *prasīda* – be pleased; *vijñātum* – to clearly understand; *icchāmi* – I wish; *bhavantam* – Your honour; *ādyam* – the primeval cause; *na* – not; *hi* – because; *prajānāmi* – understand; *tava* – Your; *pravṛttim* – activities.

O best among the gods, I offer my obeisances unto You. Kindly be pleased and tell me who You are in this ferocious form. I very much want to understand You, the primeval cause, because I do not comprehend Your activities.

VERSE 32

श्रीभगवानुवाच—
 कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
 लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।
 ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
 येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –
 kālo 'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho
 lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ
 rte 'pi tvām na bhaviṣyanti sarve
 ye 'vasthitāḥ pratyānīkeṣu yodhāḥ

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *kālaḥ* – time; *asmi* – I am; *loka-kṣaya-kṛt* – destroyer of the worlds; *pravṛddhaḥ* – mighty; *lokān* – the people; *samāhartum* – to destroy; *iha* – in this world; *pravṛttaḥ* – engaged; *rte* – without; *api* – even; *tvām* – you; *na bhaviṣyanti* – shall not remain; *sarve* – all; *ye* – who; *avasthitāḥ* – are present; *pratyānīkeṣu* – in either army; *yodhāḥ* – the soldiers.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I am time, the mighty destroyer of the worlds, and I am here to annihilate all these people. Even without your efforts, not one warrior in either army will survive.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is telling Arjuna, “I am all-destroying time, and at present I have accepted this gigantic form. I am here to annihilate Duryodhana and others. The result of My action in this form will be that except for you five Pāṇḍavas, no one on this battlefield will remain alive. Even without your endeavour or the efforts of other warriors like you, all will be devoured within the jaws of terrible time, because in My form as time, I have already taken their lives. Those heroes who are present on both sides will definitely enter the mouth of death, even without doing battle. Therefore, O Arjuna, if you remain aloof from the battle, you will fall from your *svadharma*, and still they will not be saved.”

VERSE 33

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
 जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
 मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
 निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३ ॥

*tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
 jītvā śatrūn bhukṣva rājyam samṛddham
 mayaiivāite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva
 nimitta-mātram bhava savya-sācin*

tasmāt – therefore; *tvam* – you; *uttiṣṭha* – arise; *yaśaḥ* – fame; *labhasva* – attain; *jītvā* – by conquering; *śatrūn* – enemies; *bhukṣva* – enjoy; *rājyam* – kingdom; *samṛddham* – a prosperous; *mayā* – by Me; *eva* – indeed; *ete* – these (soldiers); *nihatāḥ* – have been slain; *pūrvam* – already; *eva nimitta-mātram* – but an instrument; *bhava* – just be; *savya-sācin* – O expert bowman.

Rise up, therefore, to enter the battle and achieve glory by conquering your enemies, thereby enjoying an unrivalled kingdom. All these warriors are already slain by Me alone. O Savyasācī – expert bowman – just become My instrument.

VERSE 34

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
 कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
 मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
 युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान्॥ ३४॥

*droṇam ca bhīṣmam ca jayadratham ca
 karṇam tathānyān api yodha-vīrān
 mayā hatāns tvam jahi mā vyathiṣṭhā
 yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān*

droṇam – Droṇa; *ca* – and; *bhīṣmam* – Bhīṣma; *ca* – and; *jayadratham* – Jayadratha; *ca* – and; *karṇam* – Karṇa; *tathā* – also; *anyān* – other; *api* – although; *yodha-vīrān* – heroes among the fighters; *mayā* – by Me; *hatān* – already slain; *tvam* – you; *jahi* – you must slay; *mā vyathiṣṭhā* – do not be disturbed; *yudhyasva* – just fight; *jetāsi* – you shall vanquish; *raṇe* – in battle; *sapatnān* – enemies.

Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karṇa and many other great heroes have already been destroyed by Me, so simply kill them and

do not be disturbed. Your victory in battle is assured; therefore fight.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: There is a hidden meaning to the statement, “I have already killed Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Jayadratha, Karṇa and others.” Bhagavān is saying that when all the warriors on the side of the Kauravas were publicly insulting Draupadī by disrobing her, at that time they were all killed by Him because of their heinous offence to a great devotee. “I have made these people stand before you like puppets, only to give you fame. It is as if they are already lifeless. Just be the instrument in killing them.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had already taken the life force of all the heroes who were participating in the battle of Mahābhārata. Similarly, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhīṣma prayed as follows:

*sapadi sakhi-vaco nīsamya madhye
nija-parayor balayo ratham niveśya
sthitavati para-sainikāyur akṣṇā
hṛtavati pārtha-sakhe ratir mamāstu
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.9.35)*

Let my supreme attachment be to that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who, upon hearing the request of His friend Arjuna to situate his chariot between both armies, immediately brought the chariot to that spot. “There is Droṇa, there is Bhīṣma.” On the pretext of pointing out the warriors in the opposing party He shortened their life just with His glance.

VERSE 35

सञ्जय उवाच—
एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य
कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी ।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं
सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५ ॥

*sañjaya uvāca –
etac chrutvā vacanam keśavasya
kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirīṭī*

***namaskṛtvā bhūya evāha kṛṣṇam
sa-gadgadam bhīta-bhītaḥ praṇamya***

sāñjaya uvāca – Sañjaya said; *etat* – this; *śrutvā* – upon hearing; *vacanam* – statement; *keśavasya* – of Śrī Keśava; *kṛta-anjaliḥ* – with folded hands; *vepamānaḥ* – trembling; *kirīṭī* – Arjuna; *namaskṛtvā* – bowed down; *bhūyaḥ* – repeatedly; *eva* – indeed; *āha* – he addressed; *kṛṣṇam* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *sa-gadgadam* – with a choked voice; *bhīta-bhītaḥ* – very fearfully; *praṇamya* – with a bowed head.

Sañjaya said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra: Upon hearing these words of Śrī Keśava, Arjuna trembled. He offered repeated obeisances with folded hands and, being extremely frightened, began speaking to Kṛṣṇa in a faltering voice as follows.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After hearing this dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna from the mouth of Sañjaya, Dhṛtarāṣṭra Mahārāja undoubtedly understood that the great, unconquerable fighters headed by Bhīṣma and Droṇa would also be killed and that there was no possibility of Duryodhana's victory. The idea that they should try for a truce in such a situation came to his mind, but he did not openly express this.

The wise Sañjaya could understand his mind and immediately began to describe what happened next. On the other side, Arjuna trembled upon hearing the words of Kṛṣṇa. Paying obeisances again and again, with a disturbed mind and a faltering voice, he offered his supplication at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān.

VERSE 36

अर्जुन उवाच—

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या

जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।

रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति

सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६ ॥

*arjuna uvāca –
sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā
jagat prahṛṣyaty anurajyate ca
rakṣāmsi bhītāni diśo dravanti
sarve namasyanti ca siddha-saṅghāḥ*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *sthāne* – rightly; *hṛṣīka-īśa* – O Lord of the senses; *tava prakīrtyāḥ* – by Your glories; *jagat* – the world; *prahṛṣyati* – rejoices; *anurajyate* – becomes attached; *ca* – and; *rakṣāmsi* – fiends; *bhītāni* – the fearful; *diśaḥ* – all directions; *dravanti* – flee; *sarve* – all; *namasyanti* – bow down; *ca* – and; *siddha-saṅghāḥ* – the assembly of perfected beings.

Arjuna said: O Hṛṣīkeśa, by glorifying Your name, form and qualities, the entire universe becomes joyful and attains attachment to You. The demons scatter out of fear, while the hosts of perfected beings offer their obeisances to You. Indeed, all this is most appropriate.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna has knowledge of the following truth: the divine form of Bhagavān is pleasing to those who are devoted to Him, whereas Bhagavān displays His dreadful feature to those who are averse to Him. Arjuna explains this while offering prayers to Śrī Bhagavān. The word *sthāne* is not declinable and it means ‘appropriate’. It is used in all components of this verse. Arjuna has addressed Kṛṣṇa as Hṛṣīkeśa, meaning ‘one who turns the senses of His devotees toward Himself and repels the senses of His non-devotees’. “This entire world is being attracted to You by performing *saṅkīrtana* (chanting) of Your glories. This is appropriate, because this world is devoted to You. Rākṣasas, Asuras, Dānavas, Piśācas and so forth are running in all directions out of fear. This is also appropriate because they are averse to You. Hosts of beings who have become perfect by practising *bhakti* to You are paying obeisances to You. This is also appropriate because they are Your devotees.”

This verse is famous in the scriptures pertaining to the chanting of *mantras*, as the *rākṣoghṇa-mantra*, a *mantra* for destroying demoniac elements (Rākṣasas).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The transcendental form of Śrī Bhagavān has an extraordinary influence. Upon seeing it, devotees become greatly pleased. But this form appears like Yamarāja, the lord of death, to those who are demoniac by nature and who are not devoted to Him. In the wrestling arena of Mathurā, worshipful elders like Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa's friends and the Yādavas were very pleased to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is beautiful and eternally youthful, but that same Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as death personified to Kāṁsa, as hard as a thunderbolt to the wrestlers, as the enforcer of chastisement to the wicked kings, and as *para-tattva* (Paramātmā) to the *yogīs*. Therefore, upon hearing the glories of Kṛṣṇa, devoted souls feel joy and become attached to Him. The perfected beings (*siddhas*) surrender to Him, while the demons, who are averse to Him, run in fear. These reactions are appropriate for each of them.

VERSE 37

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्
 गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।
 अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
 त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman
garīyase brahmaṇo 'py ādi-kartre
ananta deveśa jagan-nivāsa
tvam akṣaram sad-asat tat param yat

kasmāt – why; *ca* – and; *te* – to You; *na nameran* – should they not offer obeisances; *mahātman* – O great person; *garīyase* – who are greater; *brahmaṇaḥ* – than Lord Brahmā; *api* – even; *ādi-kartre* – and who are the original creator; *ananta* – O unlimited person; *deva-īśa* – Lord of the gods; *jagan-nivāsa* – O refuge of the universe; *tvam* – You; *akṣaram* – the imperishable; *sat-asat* – to cause and effect; *tat* – that; *param* – transcendental; *yat* – which.

O Mahātma – great soul! O Deveśa – Lord of the demigods! O Ananta – unlimited one! O Jagan-nivāsa – refuge of the world! You

are even greater than Lord Brahmā. You are the original creator and You are the infinite spirit, *brahma*, the imperishable reality beyond both cause and effect. Why, then, should they not offer obeisances to You?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Arjuna said, “Why will they not offer obeisances to You? Certainly they will.” Here, the word *sat* means ‘effect’, and *asat* means ‘the cause’; thus, “That person who is superior to and beyond both *sat*, the effect, and *asat*, the cause, is You, the immutable, infinite spirit (*akṣara brahma*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Arjuna explained that Śrī Bhagavān is worshipful for Lord Brahmā and so forth. In this verse, he is establishing that Śrī Bhagavān is the soul of everyone. “Demigods, sages, Gandharvas and other beings like them will indeed pay obeisances to You. They cannot exist without doing so, because You are one without a second, inconceivable and endowed with wonderful potencies. You are the Supreme Person, superior to everyone. You are the origin of Lord Brahmā, who is the creator of the universe, and therefore, You are even superior to him.”

Arjuna also said, “Only Śrī Bhagavān is worshipable for all, but not only that, since He is the soul of everyone, He is also everything.” He is superior to and distinct from the imperishable *brahma-tattva*, *jīva-tattva* and *prakṛti-tattva*. Although He is different from all these, they manifest from His inconceivable potency, the *acintya-śakti*. Therefore, He also exists as everything.

All things are not Śrī Bhagavān, nor is anything equal to Him. Everything is the effect, or result, of His potency. From this point of view, He alone is everything, because no other object or reality exists independent of Him. Thus He is called the unparalleled Absolute Truth, or *parama-tattva*. The Śrutis state, “*sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma* – indeed, everything is *brahma*” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1). They also state *neha nānāsti kiñcana* (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.19 and *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.1.11). This means that everything, such as the *jīva* and the inert world, is *brahma*. There is nothing except *brahma*.

In contrast to this, the Śrutis state:

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.13)

Parabrahma is the prime eternal among all eternal beings and the prime conscious entity among all conscious entities.

According to this verse, the *jīvas* are eternal, conscious and unlimited in number, but Parabrahma is the one and only Supreme Eternal and the Supreme Conscious Being. Subsequently, the final conclusion of the Vedas is the principle of *acintya-bhedābheda* – the Supreme Lord’s inconceivable and simultaneous oneness and difference from His various potencies. This is the purest of all philosophical conclusions.

VERSE 38

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम्।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया तत विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८ ॥

*tvam ādi-devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas
tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam
vettāsi vedyam ca param ca dhāma
tvayā tataṁ viśvam ananta-rūpa*

tvam – You; *ādi-devaḥ* – the original God; *puruṣaḥ* – personality; *purāṇaḥ* – the most ancient; *tvam* – You; *asya* – of this; *viśvasya* – universe; *param nidhānam* – the sole resting place; *vettā* – the knower; *asi* – [You] are; *vedyam* – that which is worthy to be known; *ca* – and; *param* – the supreme; *ca* – and; *dhāma* – abode; *tvayā* – by You; *tataṁ* – is pervaded; *viśvam* – the universe; *ananta-rūpa* – O You who have unlimited forms.

You are the original Lord, the most ancient Person and the sole resting place of this universe. You are the supreme abode, the knower of everything and You are all that is to be known. O Ananta-rūpa, possessor of unlimited forms, You alone pervade the entire universe.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Nidhānam* means ‘resting place’ or ‘place of dissolution’, and *parama-dhāma* refers to that form which is beyond the material modes of nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original God. He is the supreme refuge of everyone and He is all-pervading. Because His abode, or *dhāma*, is a manifestation of His transcendental potency, He is non-different from that abode. This is established in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.7):

*tam īśvarāṇām paramaṁ maheśvaraṁ
tam devatānām paramaṁ ca daivatam
patim patinām paramaṁ parastād
vidāma devaṁ bhuvaneśam īdyaṁ*

We know the worshipable Lord, who is the master of all the worlds, to be supreme among all controllers, the supreme God of gods, and the supreme protector of those who can award protection. He transcends impersonal *brahma*.

And furthermore, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8) states:

*na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛṣyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāviki jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*

The Lord has no duty to perform nor is anyone seen to be equal to or greater than Him. We hear from realized souls that the Supreme Lord’s energy acts in manifold ways to make everything in His creation function systematically, as if taking place automatically.

VERSE 39

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः
प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः
पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

vāyur yamo 'gnir varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ
 prajāpatīs tvam prapitāmahaś ca
 namo namaś te 'stu sahasra-kṛtvaḥ
 punaś ca bhūyo 'pi namo namaś te

vāyuḥ – the wind-god; yamaḥ – the god of chastisement; agniḥ – the fire-god; varuṇaḥ – the ocean-god; śaśa-aṅkaḥ – the moon-god; prajā-patiḥ – the progenitor Brahmā; tvam – You; pra-pitā-mahaḥ – the father of the (universal) grandfather Brahmā; ca – and; namaḥ namaḥ – repeated obeisances; te – to You; astu – let there be; sahasra-kṛtvaḥ – a thousand times; punaḥ – again; ca – and; bhūyaḥ – further; api – and still; namaḥ namaḥ – repeated obeisances; te – unto You.

You are the wind-god, Vāyu, and You are Yama, the superintendent of universal chastisement. You are the fire-god Agni, the ocean-god Varuṇa, the moon-god Candra, the creator Brahmā and also the father of Brahmā. Therefore, I offer my obeisances to You thousands of times, again and again.

VERSE 40

नमःपुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
 नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।
 अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं
 सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥४०॥

namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhataś te
 namo 'stu te sarvata eva sarva
 ananta-vīryāmita-vikramas tvam
 sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato 'si sarvaḥ

namaḥ – obeisances; purastāt – from the front; atha – and then; pṛṣṭhataḥ – from behind; te – to You; namaḥ – obeisances; astu – let there be; te – to You; sarvataḥ – from all sides; eva – indeed; sarva – O original form of everything; ananta-vīrya – possessor of limitless valour; amita-vikramaḥ – You possess limitless prowess; tvam – You; sarvam – the entire creation; samāpnoṣi – pervade; tataḥ – hence; asi – You are; sarvaḥ – everything.

O Sarva-svarūpa – You who are everything! My obeisances to You from the front, behind and from all sides! Possessing infinite prowess and valour, You pervade the entire universe. Therefore, You are everything.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Just as gold is present in all golden ornaments, such as armour and earrings, similarly, You are present throughout this world, which is Your effect. In this way You are *sarva* (everything).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Upon understanding that Kṛṣṇa is everyone’s worshipable object, Arjuna paid his obeisances again and again to He who embodies everything. Out of deep faith and honour, not considering these prostrated obeisances enough, he bowed down to Kṛṣṇa from the front, back, left, right and all directions. That Śrī Kṛṣṇa has unlimited prowess and immeasurable strength. He is the soul of souls and *sarva-svarūpa*, the form of everything. This is also seen in the statement of Śukadeva Gosvāmī in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.56):

*vastuto jānatām atra kṛṣṇam sthāsnu cariṣṇu ca
bhagavad-rūpam akhilaṁ nānyad vastv iha kiñcana*

Those in this world who understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa as He is, perceive all things, either moving or non-moving, to be His manifestations. Such liberated souls see no other reality.

VERSES 41–42

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥ ४१ ॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि
विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं
तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२ ॥

*sakheti matvā prasabham yad uktam
 he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti
 ajānatā mahimānam tavedam
 mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi
 yat cāvahāsārtham asat-kṛto 'si
 vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu
 eko 'tha vāpy acyuta tat-samakṣam
 tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam*

sakhā – a friend; *iti* – as; *matvā* – thinking; *prasabham* – rashly; *yat* – what; *uktam* – was said; *he kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *he yādava* – O best of the Yādus; *he sakhā* – O friend; *iti* – thus; *ajānatā* – because of not knowing; *mahimānam* – glories; *tava* – Your; *idam* – these; *mayā* – by me; *pramādāt* – out of carelessness; *praṇayena* – out of affection; *vā api* – or else; *yat* – by which; *ca* – and; *avahāsa-artham* – with the purpose of jesting; *asat-kṛtaḥ* – dishonoured; *asi* – You were; *vihāra-śayyā-āsana-bhojaneṣu* – while sporting, relaxing, sitting and taking food; *ekaḥ* – alone; *atha* – or else; *vā api* – or else; *acyuta* – O Acyuta; *tat-samakṣam* – in the presence of friends; *tat* – for that; *kṣāmaye* – request forgiveness; *tvam* – you; *aham* – I; *aprimeyam* – immeasurable.

Not knowing Your glories, and either because I was careless, or because I affectionately considered You as my friend, I have rashly addressed You, “O Kṛṣṇa”, “O Yādava”, “O Sakhā” and so forth. O Acyuta, if in jest I have shown You any disrespect, either while alone with You or in the presence of friends while sporting, relaxing, sitting or eating, I beseech You unlimitedly to forgive me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Alas, Alas! I have committed unlimited offences to You, the possessor of supreme opulence (*aiśvarya*).” Lamenting like this, Arjuna spoke this verse beginning with *sakheti*. Arjuna says, “O Kṛṣṇa” and so forth, meaning ‘You, Kṛṣṇa, are famous as the son of Vasudeva, a human being who is not famous and who is even known as an *arddharathī* (one who needs assistance to defeat a single opponent). But I, Arjuna, am an *atirathī* (one who can fight alone against unlimited warriors), and I am celebrated as the son of King Pāṇḍu.’ “O Yādava”

means, ‘You were born in the Yadu dynasty and have no kingdom, whereas I was born in the dynasty of Puru and am therefore of royal lineage. Yet the friendly relationship I have with You is not because of the influence of Your ancestors or dynasty; it is because of You. It was with friendly intentions that I rashly spoke insulting words. For that reason, I am begging Your forgiveness.’ These words are related to the following statement.

“Due to madness, the affection I expressed while sporting and joking with You is an insult to the glory of Your universal form. In other words, either alone or in the presence of friends, I have insulted You with sarcastic words such as ‘You are truthful,’ or ‘You are free from cheating and very simple.’ I beg Your forgiveness for thousands of such offences. O Lord! Please forgive me. I implore You!”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: When Arjuna saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s supremely majestic universal form, which is a manifestation of His opulence, knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s opulence arose within him and he forgot his natural relationship with Him in friendship. Arjuna is lamenting for all the times he addressed Kṛṣṇa in friendship, “O Sakhā! O Yādava! O Kṛṣṇa!” and is begging His forgiveness again and again.

VERSE 43

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
 त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।
 न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
 लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३ ॥

*pitāsi lokasya carācarasya
 tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur garīyān
 na tvat-samo ’sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto ’nyo
 loka-traye ’py apratima-prabhāva*

pitā – the father; *asi* – You are; *lokasya* – of this world; *cara-acarasya* – of moving and non-moving beings; *tvam* – You; *asya* – of this world; *pūjyaḥ* – are worshipable; *ca* – and; *guruḥ* – the spiritual master; *garīyān* –

the most respectable person; *na* – not; *tvat-samaḥ* – equal to You; *asti* – there is; *abhyadhikaḥ* – greater; *kutaḥ* – where is; *anyaḥ* – another; *loka-traye api* – even within these three worlds; *apratima-prabhāva* – O possessor of unrivalled power.

O possessor of unrivalled power! You are the father, the most worshipful personality, the *guru* and the most honoured person in this entire world of moving and non-moving beings. No one in the three worlds is Your equal, so who could possibly be greater than You?

VERSE 44

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
 प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।
 पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
 प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४ ॥

tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyam
prasādaye tvām aham īśam īḍyam
pīteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ
priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum

tasmāt – thus; *praṇamya* – offering obeisances; *praṇidhāya* – prostrating (at Your feet); *kāyam* – my body; *prasādaye* – plead for grace; *tvām* – from You; *aham* – I; *īśam* – Lord; *īḍyam* – worthy of prayers; *pīṭā* – a father; *iva* – as; *putrasya* – with his son; *sakhā* – a friend; *iva* – as; *sakhyuḥ* – with his friend; *priyaḥ* – as a lover; *priyāyā* – with his beloved; *arhasi* – You ought; *deva* – O Lord; *soḍhum* – to forgive.

I therefore prostrate my body at Your lotus feet in obeisance. O adorable Supreme Lord, I entreat You to be gracious to me. O Lord, just as a father forgives his son, a friend tolerates a friend or a lover excuses his beloved, You should forgive my offences.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The phrase *kāyam praṇidhāya* means ‘falling to the ground like a stick’.

VERSE 45

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा
 भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
 तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं
 प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ ४५ ॥

adr̥ṣṭa-pūrvam hr̥ṣito 'smi dr̥ṣṭvā
bhayena ca pravryathitam mano me
tad eva me darśaya deva rūpam
prasīda deveśa jagan-nivāsa

adr̥ṣṭa-pūrvam – that which has not been seen before; *hr̥ṣitaḥ* – am overjoyed; *asmi* – I; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – having seen; *bhayena* – by fear; *ca* – but; *pravryathitam* – extremely perturbed; *manaḥ* – mind; *me* – my; *tad* – that (familiar); *eva* – verily; *me* – me; *darśaya* – show; *deva* – O Lord; *rūpam* – form; *prasīda* – please be gracious; *deva-iśa* – O Lord of the gods; *jagan-nivāsa* – O abode of the universe.

O Lord! Having seen this universal form of Yours, which has never been seen before, I am overjoyed, but my mind is also very much perturbed due to fear. O Deveśa – Lord of gods – please further display to me Your four-armed form. O Jagan-nivāsa – refuge of the entire universe – please be gracious to me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna says, “Upon seeing this universal form of Yours, which has never been seen before, I feel jubilant. At the same time, my mind is agitated with fear because of its terrible features. Therefore, please show me Your form as the son of Vasudeva, which is the pinnacle of sweetness and which is millions of times more dear to me than my own life. Please be gracious to me. I have seen enough of Your opulence. I acknowledge that You alone are Deveśa, the Lord and controller of all demigods, and Jagan-nivāsa, the abode of the whole universe.”

When Arjuna saw the universal form, he was unable to see Kṛṣṇa's original human form, even though Kṛṣṇa remained present before him. This is because that original form was covered by *yogamāyā*. This is understood here.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *asamorddhva-tattva*, meaning that nobody is equal to or greater than Him. In this regard Bhagavān Himself says, “*mamāham evābhirūpaḥ kaivalyād...* – I am *advitīya-puruṣa*, one without a second. Only I am equal to Myself. There is no one who is equal to Me, what to speak of being greater than Me” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.3.17). It is also said in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8), “*na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate* – no one is equal to the Lord, what to speak of being greater than Him.”

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.152) it is said:

*kṛṣṇera svarūpa-vicāra śuna, sanātana
advaya-jñāna-tattva, vraje vrajendra-nandana*

O Sanātana, please hear about Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal *svarūpa*. Although He is the Absolute Truth devoid of duality, He is eternally present in Vraja as the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s power is inconceivable. He is the adorable father and the original spiritual master of the entire moving and non-moving world. He alone is the supreme worshipable Reality and the *jīvas’* object of service. Considering this, Arjuna paid obeisances again and again and said, “In this world, a father does not take the faults of his son very seriously, a friend the faults of a friend, or a lover the faults of the beloved. You are Śrī Bhagavān, yet You mercifully deal with all devotees in the mellows of friendship, parenthood and amorous love on equal terms, which gives You happiness. Although my earlier behaviour with You was not proper from the perspective of Your supreme position, it was correct in terms of our eternal friendly relationship. Therefore, be pleased with me.

“Previously, I had not seen Your universal form. Now my curiosity is satisfied. Although by seeing it I feel happy, my mind is disturbed due to its ferocious features. Therefore, please again show me Your form as Vasudeva-nandana, the son of Vasudeva, which is the zenith of sweetness and which is millions of times more dear to me than my own life.” Although the human-like form of Vasudeva-nandana Kṛṣṇa was present before Arjuna while Arjuna beheld the universal form, it was covered by *yogamāyā*. Therefore, Arjuna was unable to see Him, and he requested Him to show him His four-armed form.

VERSE 46

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त-
 मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।
 तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन
 सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ ४६ ॥

kirīṭinam gadinam cakra-hastam
icchāmi tvām draṣṭum aham tathaiva
tenaiva rūpeṇa catur-bhujena
sahasra-bāho bhava viśva-mūrte

kirīṭinam – wearing a crown; *gadinam* – holding a club; *cakra-hastam* – disc in hand; *icchāmi* – wish; *tvām* – You; *draṣṭum* – to see; *aham* – I; *tathā eva* – like that; *tena* – in that; *eva* – verily; *rūpeṇa* – form; *catur-bhujena* – with four arms; *sahasra-bāho* – O thousand-armed One; *bhava* – be present; *viśva-mūrte* – O universal form.

I long to see You in that form, which is adorned with crown, mace and disc. O thousand-armed One, O form of the universe, kindly manifest Your four-armed form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In the future, whenever You show me Your *aiśvarya* feature, please only show me Your human-like form as the son of Vasudeva, which I was seeing before. Please show me that supremely relishable form which gives bliss to the eyes of my mind. That human-like form is not *adṛṣṭa-pūrva* (previously unseen) unlike this present universal form. The opulence of the universal form, which is part of Your divine pastimes, is not very appealing to me.”

With this intention, Arjuna says, “Please give me *darśana* of that form I saw previously, which bears a divine, precious helmet made of jewels. In other words, I want to see that form You showed Your parents at the time of Your birth. O *Viśvamūrte* – one who assumes the form of the universe; O *Sahasra-bāho* – one who has thousands of arms; please withdraw this present universal form, and appear in Your four-armed form.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa is that of a young boy (*nava-kīṣora*), a beautiful dancer dressed as a cowherd boy, with a flute in his hand. This is Kṛṣṇa's eternal form. Although He is the embodiment of all sweetness (*madhūrya*), still majestic opulence (*aiśvarya*) is also fully present in Him. *Aiśvarya* may be manifest or not, but if the activities appropriate for human-like pastimes are not transgressed, it is certainly called *mādhurya*. For example, the killing of Pūtanā occurred when Kṛṣṇa was a baby, but this manifestation of *aiśvarya* did not even slightly overstep His baby-like behaviour. *Aiśvarya* is when a mood of opulence overrides the activities of a human being. For example, at the time of His birth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared before Vasudeva and Devakī bedecked with attire and various ornaments, thus exceeding the activities of a human child. This is called *aiśvarya-mayī-līlā*.

Here, Arjuna's seeing the universal form is *aiśvarya-mayī-līlā*. Afterwards he prayed to see Kṛṣṇa's four-armed form, which was familiar to him, as this was appropriate for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's human-like activities. While performing His pastimes with the Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas in His two-armed form, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would sometimes manifest His four-armed form. The pastimes in Dvārakā contain some display of opulence (*aiśvarya-mayī*) but all pastimes in Vraja are full of sweetness (*mādhurya-mayī*); they are human-like (*naravat*).

When Arjuna tied Aśvatthāmā, the killer of Draupadī's five sons, with ropes and brought him to her feet, Draupadī forgave Aśvatthāmā. Bhīma, however, could not forgive him and wanted to kill him. At that time, to protect the vows of both of them and also to test the sharpness of Arjuna's intelligence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His four-armed form. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.52) states:

*niśamya bhīma-gaditam draupadyāś ca catur-bhujah
alokya vadanam sakhyur idam āha hasann iva*

Four-armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after hearing the arguments of Bhīma, Draupadī and others, turned towards His dear friend Arjuna and smiled.

Once, while Kṛṣṇa was joking with Rukmiṇī, she could not understand the meaning of His words and fell to the ground

unconscious. At that time, Kṛṣṇa manifested His four-armed form and lifted her up with two of His arms. With His other two arms, He fixed her dishevelled hair and cleaned her face. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.60.26):

*paryankād avaruhyāsu tām utthāpya catur-bhujah
keśān samuhya tad-vaktraṁ prāmṛjat padma-pāṇinā*

Arising swiftly from the couch, the Lord manifested a four-armed form, smoothed the hair of Rukmiṇī, and gently touched her face with His lotus hand.

Once, during His Vraja pastimes, Kṛṣṇa suddenly disappeared from the *rāsa-līlā*. Manifesting His four-armed form, He stood on the path of the *gopīs*, who were searching for Him. When they saw Him, they paid their obeisances and moved on in search of two-armed Śyāmasundara. In the meantime, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, arrived there. Upon seeing Her, Kṛṣṇa became overwhelmed and despite great endeavour, He was unable to maintain His four-armed form, which disappeared into His two-armed form.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Arjuna as saying, “Now I want to see Your four-armed form in which You wear a crown on Your head and carry a club, disc and other weapons in Your hands. You manifested this present universal form, possessed of thousands of arms, from Your four-armed form. O Kṛṣṇa, I have understood without a doubt that this two-armed Śyāmasundara form is completely transcendental and the highest Truth. It is eternal and it is this form that attracts all *jīvas*. The four-armed form of Lord Nārāyaṇa eternally exists as the opulent pastime manifestation (*aiśvarya-vilāsa*) of Your two-armed Śyāmasundara form. At the time of creation, this gigantic universal form manifests from that four-armed Nārāyaṇa form. By this supreme knowledge, my curiosity has been satisfied.”

VERSE 47

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥४७॥

*śrī bhagavān uvāca –
 mayā prasannena tavārjunedaṁ
 rūpaṁ paraṁ darśitam ātma-yogāt
 tejo-mayaṁ viśvam anantam ādyam
 yan me tvad anyena na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *mayā* – by Me; *prasannena* – being pleased; *tava* – with you; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *idaṁ* – this; *rūpaṁ* – form; *paraṁ* – supreme; *darśitam* – has been shown; *ātma-yogāt* – My personal mystic potency; *tejaḥ-mayaṁ* – resplendent; *viśvam* – universal; *anantam* – unlimited; *ādyam* – original; *yat* – which; *me* – Me; *tvad* – than you; *anyena* – by someone other; *na dṛṣṭa-pūrvam* – has not been seen previously.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Arjuna, because I am pleased with you, I have shown you My resplendent, unlimited and primeval universal form by means of My inconceivable *yogamāyā-śakti*. You are the only one who has ever seen this form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, you prayed to Me, ‘O Puruṣottama, I desire that You show me Your majestic and opulent form’ (*Gītā* 11.3), and thus I have shown you the personality of that universal form (*viśvarūpa puruṣa*), which is but a partial aspect of Me. Why has your mind become disturbed upon seeing it? Moreover, you now desire to see My human-like form and are entreating Me, ‘Be merciful, be merciful!’ Why do you speak in this surprising manner? I showed you and no one else My universal form because I was pleased with you. But for you, no one has ever seen it before. Why do you no longer wish to see it?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, “On your request, I showed you My partial aspect, My resplendent universal form, through My inconceivable potency. I did so because I was pleased with you.” In Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s commentary, he has compared this manifestation of Kṛṣṇa to a valuable gem and an expert theatre actor. Although a valuable gem is only one object, by displaying its various colours it satisfies many viewers.

Similarly, an expert actor entertains his audience by appearing in various roles. In the same way, although Kṛṣṇa is one, He manifested the universal form, which is present within Him. This is the hidden meaning of Kṛṣṇa's statement.

Kṛṣṇa again said, "Because of you, the demigods and many devotees also saw this form. No one had ever seen it before. When I went to the assembly of Duryodhana as a messenger of the Pāṇḍavas and in various ways tried to persuade the Kauravas to give half the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas, the wicked Duryodhana tried to arrest Me. I manifested my universal form at that time, in front of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the kings of various states and many other nobles, but Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all the ṛṣīs who were present in that assembly were unable to tolerate the effulgence of my form and so closed their eyes. On Dhṛtarāṣṭra's request, I gave him divine vision for just a moment so that he could see that form of Mine. But you, Arjuna, are My friend, and thus to you, I have revealed this form, which no one else has ever seen, because I am pleased with you."

VERSE 48

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानै-
 र्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
 एवरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके
 द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

*na veda-yajñādhyayanair na dānair
 na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ
 evam-rūpaḥ śakya aham nṛ-loke
 draṣṭum tvad anyena kuru-pravīra*

na – not; *veda* – the Vedas; *yajña* – through sacrificial performances; *adhyayanaiḥ* – through the study of; *na* – not; *dānaiḥ* – by acts of charity; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *kriyābhiḥ* – by ritualistic activities; *na* – not; *tapobhiḥ* – austerities; *ugraiḥ* – by severe; *evam-rūpaḥ* – in this way; *śakyaḥ* – possible; *aham* – I; *nṛ-loke* – in this world of men; *draṣṭum* – to be seen; *tvad anyena* – other than by you; *kuru-pravīra* – O supreme hero among the Kurus.

O great hero among the Kurus, but for you, no one in this world has beheld this universal form of Mine. This form cannot be seen by study of the Vedas nor through sacrifices, charity, rituals or severe penances.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “The ability to see the form I have shown you cannot even be achieved by processes such as study of the Vedas. I am unable to show this form to anyone other than you. Fix your determination on that most rare of forms only, thinking in your mind that you have achieved the most unattainable object. Why do you again wish to see My human form after seeing this most rare form?”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀSIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O best of the Kuru warriors, nobody in this world has ever seen this universal form, manifested by My *yogamāyā-śakti*, even by their study of the Vedas or their performance of sacrifices, charity, religious activities or severe austerities. You are the only one to have seen it. All those *jīvas* who have attained the position of demigods see and remember My universal form within their divine eyes and minds. In this mundane world, those who are bound by delusion and covered by ignorance cannot see this divine form, but My devotees, who are in *yoga* (union) with Me and always fixed in the eternal conscious Reality, transcend delusion as well as divinity. They, like you, do not feel comfortable with this form but hanker to see My eternal and transcendently beautiful human-like form.”

VERSE 49

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो
 दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्ममेदम् ।
 व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं
 तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍha-bhāvo
dr̥ṣṭvā rūpaṁ ghoram īdr̥ṅ mamedam

***vyapeta-bhīḥ prīta-manāḥ punas tvam
tad eva me rūpam idam prapaśya***

mā te – you should not be; *vyathā* – fearful; *mā* – do not; *ca* – and; *vimūḍha-bhāvaḥ* – bewildered; *dṛṣṭvā* – having seen; *rūpam* – form; *ghoram* – terrible; *īdrk* – such; *mama* – of Mine; *idam* – this; *vyapeta-bhīḥ* – free from fear; *prīta-manāḥ* – be of cheerful mind; *punaḥ* – again; *tvam* – you; *tat eva* – that very; *me* – of Mine; *rūpam* – (four-armed) form; *idam* – this; *prapaśya* – behold.

Do not be afraid or bewildered by seeing this terrible form. Again be free from fear and cheerful. Just behold My beautiful four-armed form to your complete satisfaction.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Supreme Lord, why are You not blessing me? You want to forcibly show me this form even though I am unwilling to see it. My body is becoming troubled and my mind perplexed by seeing Your form of majesty. I am repeatedly falling unconscious. I pay my obeisances from a distance to Your topmost form of opulence, and I will never again pray to You to show it to me. Please forgive me for this. Please forgive me! Please show me the moon-like face of Your human-like form, with which You shower the nectar of Your sweet smile. Please show me that!”

Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *mā te* to give solace to a disturbed Arjuna.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Arjuna became very fearful and agitated upon seeing the terrible universal form. Śrī Bhagavān pacified him, saying, “Be neither fearful nor agitated. When Draupadī was being insulted in Duryodhana’s assembly, Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya and others remained silent. Even Yudhiṣṭhira and the other Pāṇḍavas were unable to protect her and remained sitting with their heads lowered. Duryodhana, Karṇa and others ridiculed her with various sarcastic statements, and Duḥśāsana slapped his thigh and then pulled at Draupadī’s cloth with his full strength. In such a helpless situation, Draupadī fully surrendered to Me. At that time, I vowed to destroy the irreligious and wicked Duryodhana and all his followers. Therefore, I

will surely execute this massacre. You are just an instrument. I have shown you My wrathful, terrible, annihilating form just to give you faith in this. You are My eternal friend; therefore, I know that this form will not be pleasing to you. Now without fear, behold that form you have requested Me to show you.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Foolish persons do not believe in contemplating this *viśvarūpa*. By seeing this terrible form, you should be neither agitated nor bewildered. My devotees are peaceful, and they are partial to My transcendental, human-like form. I therefore bless you not to be agitated or bewildered in relation to My universal form. Those devotees who are attracted to My sweetness (*mādhurya*) have no purpose with this *viśvarūpa*. Since you are a friend in My pastimes, My *līlā-sakhā*, you are to be an instrument in all My pastimes. It is not proper for you to be disturbed like this. Now give up your fear and with a cheerful mind see My eternal, human-like form.”

VERSE 50

सञ्जय उवाच—

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा

स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।

आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं

भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥५०॥

sañjaya uvāca –

ity arjunam vāsudevas tathoktvā

svakam rūpam darśayām āsa bhūyaḥ

āśvāsayām āsa ca bhītam enam

bhūtvā punaḥ saumya-vapuḥ mahātmā

sañjaya uvāca – Sañjaya said; *iti* – thus; *arjunam* – to Arjuna; *vāsudevaḥ* – son of Vasudeva; *tathā* – and; *uktvā* – speaking; *svakam* – His personal; *rūpam* – (four-armed) form; *darśayām āsa* – showed; *bhūyaḥ* – further; *āśvāsayām āsa* – consoled; *ca* – and; *bhītam* – to the frightened (Arjuna); *enam* – that; *bhūtvā* – by becoming; *punaḥ* – again; *saumya-vapuḥ* – the gentle form; *mahā-ātmā* – the magnanimous.

Saṅjaya said: Having spoken thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supremely magnanimous son of Vasudeva, again showed His four-armed form. Thereafter, He consoled the frightened Arjuna by assuming His gentle two-armed form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In this way, after showing the extremely wrathful form of His partial expansion, Śrī Bhagavān displayed His four-armed form, a combination of both sweetness and opulence, decorated with helmet, mace, disk and so forth, being so requested by Arjuna. That magnanimous Supreme Personality again manifested His pleasing two-armed form, decorated with bracelets, earrings, turban, yellow *pītambara* and other ornaments, thus giving solace to the frightened Arjuna.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Saṅjaya is describing what happened next. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa withdrew His thousand-headed form and manifested His four-armed form, dark as the blue lotus. He had manifested this form as Devakī-nandana in the prison house of King Kamsa. Finally, He gave solace to the frightened Arjuna by manifesting His supremely pleasing two-armed form.

VERSE 51

अर्जुन उवाच—

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।

इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥५१॥

arjuna uvāca –

dṛṣṭvedam mānuṣam rūpaṁ tava saumyam janārdana

idānīm asmi samvṛttau sa-cetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *dṛṣṭvā* – seeing; *idam* – this; *mānuṣam* – human-like; *rūpaṁ* – form; *tava* – of Yours; *saumyam* – charming; *jana-ārdana* – O You who inspire the hearts of all beings; *idānīm* – now; *asmi samvṛttau* – I have become; *sa-cetāḥ* – conscious; *prakṛtiṁ* – to my previous nature; *gataḥ* – have returned.

Arjuna said: O Janārdana, my heart feels delight upon seeing Your charming human-like form, and I have returned to my normal condition.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Seeing the most sweet form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and feeling as if he were immersed in the ocean of bliss, Arjuna said, “My heart feels delight now that I have returned to my normal state (*prakṛtim*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: At that time Arjuna, who was now free from all fear, saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa, first in His extremely sweet four-armed form and then in His two-armed Śyāmasundara form. In great bliss Arjuna said, “O Janārdana, after seeing Your most pleasing human-like form, I have regained my composure and have come back to my natural condition.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa mostly performed His pastimes with the Yādavas and the Pāṇḍavas in His two-armed form (*dvibhuja-rūpa*), yet sometimes He performed them in His four-armed form also (*caturbhuja-rūpa*). Therefore, His four-armed form is also known as human-like. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.15.75), Nārada Muni describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s human form to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, “*gūḍham param brahma manuṣya-liṅgam* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth concealed within a human-like form.”

VERSE 52

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥५२॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

su-durdarśam idam rūpaṁ dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama

devā apy asya rūpasya nityam darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *su-durdarśam* – very rarely seen; *idam* – this; *rūpaṁ* – form; *dṛṣṭavān asi* – you have seen; *yat* – which; *mama* – of Mine; *devāḥ* – the gods; *api* – even; *asya* – of this; *rūpasya* – form; *nityam* – always; *darśana-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ* – hankering to behold.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This human form of Mine which you have seen is rarely seen by others. Even the gods forever hanker to have *darśana* of this form.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this and the next two verses, beginning with *su-durdarśam*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the glory of the *svarūpa*. He is now showing to Arjuna. “Even the demigods aspire to see this *svarūpa* but never can. However you, Arjuna, do not want to see My *viśvarūpa*. This is appropriate because you eternally taste the great sweetness (*mādhurya*) of My original human form. How, therefore, could this universal form attract your eyes? I blessed you with divine eyes, but I did not bless you with a corresponding divine mind. Therefore, you whose mind is fixed on My greatly sweet human form did not fully appreciate seeing My other [universal] form, even though I gave you divine vision. If I had given you an appropriate divine mind, then you would also have become attracted to My universal form, like the demigods have.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining the glory of His human-like form. Exhibiting the most exceptional aspect of His mercy to Arjuna, He says, “It is extremely rare to behold this human form that you are seeing. Even the demigods cannot see it. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto, the *Garbha-stotra* (prayers to the womb of Devakī) states that it is even difficult for the demigods to see this form. You are My eternal devotee who tastes the great sweetness of My human form. Therefore, the universal form was not pleasing to you. I gave you divine eyes but I did not give you a divine mind. If I had given you a divine mind, then, like the demigods, you would have been attracted to this universal form. Because you are My eternal friend, you can never give up your *sakhya-bhāva*, or friendship with Me, so this human form is very pleasing to you.”

Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, the form which you now see is most rare. Even demigods like Brahmā and Rudra always hanker to see this eternal form. If you wonder how this human form is so rare when it is seen by everyone, then I want to explain this *tattva* to you. Hear attentively.

“There are three types of perceptions related to My transcendental form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa: *avidvat-pratīti*, *yauktika-pratīti* and *vidvat-pratīti*. *Avidvat-pratīti* is the perception of the ignorant and it is based on empiric knowledge only. They see My eternal *svarūpa* as mundane and temporary. One cannot understand the supreme nature of this *svarūpa* by such perception. By reasoning, or *divya-pratīti* [*yauktika-pratīti*], the demigods and persons who are proud of their knowledge consider My *svarūpa* to be mundane and temporary. They accept the eternal reality of either My universal form, which pervades the whole universe, or My aspect that negates the universe, *nirviśeṣa-brahma*. They conclude that My human form is only a temporary means of worship. However, by perception that is based on transcendental knowledge (*vidvat-pratīti*), My devotees, who are endowed with spiritual vision, realize My human form to be directly the abode of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda-dhāma*). This type of realized vision is rare even for the demigods. Among the demigods, only Brahmā and Śiva, who are My pure devotees, forever long to see My human form. Having seen this universal form, you have been able to understand, by My mercy, the supremacy of My eternal form. This is because you are engaged in pure *bhakti* to Me in friendship.”

VERSE 53

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
 शक्य एवविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ॥५३॥
nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭum dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama

na – not; *aham* – I; *vedaiḥ* – by study of the Vedas; *na* – nor; *tapasā* – by austerities; *na* – not; *dānena* – by charitable acts; *na* – nor; *ca* – and; *ījyayā* – by sacrifice; *śakyaḥ* – possible; *evaṁ-vidhaḥ* – in this way; *draṣṭum* – to see; *dṛṣṭavān asi* – you have seen; *yan* – which; *mama* – My.

It is not possible to see this extremely rare form of Mine, which you now behold, merely by studying the Vedas, practising austerities, giving in charity or performing sacrifices.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “If, like you, someone wants to see My eternal two-armed human form, considering it to be the essence of human endeavour, they will not be able to know or see it, even if they perform such processes as studying the Vedas and executing austerities. Have faith in this.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One cannot obtain *darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His most pleasing eternal human-like form – which was seen by the *bhakta* Arjuna – by studying the Vedas or by performing austerities, charity, worship, etc. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.9):

*yam na yogena sāṅkhyena dāna-vrata-tapo-dhvaraiḥ
vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ prāpnuyād yatnavān api*

Even by practices performed with great endeavour, such as mystic *yoga*, philosophical speculation, charity, vows, austerities, performance of sacrifice, teaching Vedic *mantras*, study of the Vedic scriptures, or entering the renounced order of life, one cannot achieve Me.

And furthermore it is said:

*na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.20)*

My dear Uddhava, I am controlled only by the *bhakti* rendered to Me by My pure-hearted devotees. I can never be controlled by those who only study Sāṅkhya philosophy or other scriptures, or who perform mystic *yoga*, pious acts, austerity or renunciation.

VERSE 54

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥५४॥

*bhaktiyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evam-vidho 'rjuna
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum ca parantapa*

bhaktiyā – by devotional service; *tu* – only; *ananyayā* – by exclusive; *śakyaḥ* – possible; *aham* – I; *evam-vidhaḥ* – in this way (in this unique

human-like form); *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *jñātum* – to know; *draṣṭum* – to see; *ca* – and; *tattvena* – truly; *praveṣṭum* – to enter (into association with Me); *ca* – and; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the foe.

O Arjuna, conqueror of the foe, only by exclusive devotion can one actually know and see My exquisite human-like form and enter into association with Me in My abode.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Then by which means are You attainable?” Expecting this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *bhaktyā*.” Even if one has the desire to attain impersonal liberation, he can only enter into the impersonal *brahma-svarūpa* with the help of *bhakti*. There is no other way. After renouncing *jñāna*, or *guṇi-bhūtā-bhakti* (*bhakti* that is predominated by *jñāna*), the knowledge of the *jñānīs* finally develops to a slight degree. They achieve nothing more than this. By it, they attain impersonal liberation (*sāyujya-mukti*). Later they enter into Me, having known My *svarūpa* in truth.” This I will explain and establish later, in *Gītā* 18.55.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The vision of this pleasing human form is possible only to one with exclusive devotion (*ananya-bhakti*). In this regard, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.8) states:

*kevalena hi bhāvena gopyo gāvo nagā mṛgāḥ
ye 'nye mūḍha-dhiyo nāgāḥ siddhā mām īyur añjasā*

The residents of Vraja, such as the *gopīs*, the cows, the animals, the snakes such as Kāliya, the twin *arjuna* trees and other non-moving entities with covered consciousness, such as bushes and shrubs, all attained the perfection of life and came to Me simply because of their one-pointed devotion for Me.

And furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) states:

*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyāḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt*

I can only be attained through *bhakti* performed with full faith.
I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the exclusive

goal of their *bhajana*. Even the dog-eaters can purify themselves of their lower birth by performing *bhajana* to Me.

VERSE 55

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५ ॥

mat-karma-kṛn mat-paramo mad-bhaktah saṅga-varjitaḥ
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava

mat-karma-kṛt – dedicates his work to Me; *mat-paramah* – makes Me his ultimate shelter; *mat-bhaktah* – practises devotional service to Me (by the various limbs of *bhakti* such as hearing and chanting My glories); *saṅga-varjitaḥ* – free from (materialistic) attachments; *nirvairah* – without enmity; *sarva-bhūteṣu* – towards any living being; *yaḥ* – who; *saḥ* – he; *mām* – to Me; *eti* – comes; *pāṇḍava* – O son of Pāṇḍu.

O son of Pāṇḍu, he who exclusively dedicates his life to Me, considering Me alone to be his supreme goal, who engages in the various limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, who is devoid of mundane attachments, and who remains free from enmity towards any living being – he alone attains Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now in this verse beginning with *mat-karma-kṛt*, Śrī Bhagavān explains the characteristics of His exclusive devotees (*ananya-bhaktas*) to conclude the discussion on *bhakti* which began in Chapter Seven. *Saṅga-varjitaḥ* means ‘devoid of attachment to the results and free from poor association’.

The import of Chapter Eleven is that Arjuna has become firmly convinced about the great opulence (*mahā-aiśvarya*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that he will be victorious in battle.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣinī-tīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Eleventh Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining the limbs of *bhakti* that are to be followed by devotees who take shelter of exclusive devotion. “Those who become free from all mundane attachment and from envy towards all living entities, and who engage in My exclusive devotion by performing activities such as building temples for Me, cleaning them, offering service to Tulasī-devī, and hearing, chanting and remembering *hari-kathā*, they alone are My *bhaktas*.”

Similar statements are made in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.38–39):

*mamārcā-sthāpane śraddhā svataḥ saṁhatya codyamaḥ
udyānopavanākrīḍa-pura-mandira-karmaṇi
sammārjanopalepābhyāṁ seka-maṇḍala-vartanaih
gṛha-śuśrūṣaṇaṁ mahyaṁ dāsa-vad yad amāyayā*

One should faithfully install My deity form in the temples. If one is unable to perform this work alone, he should make the endeavour with the help of others. He should make flower and fruit gardens, cities and temples for Me, as well as places to celebrate My pastime festivals. Like a faithful and devoted servant, he should render service in the temple without duplicity, clean it, wash it, sprinkle it with fragrant water, and perform various services.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa writes, “My devotees are those who are *mat-paramaḥ*, who consider only Me to be the supreme goal and who do not aspire for other goals, such as residence in the heavenly planets. They are engaged in tasting the nectar of the nine types of *bhakti*, such as the hearing and chanting of My name, form and so forth. Those who are *saṅga-varjita*, free from the attachment to the results of their actions and free from poor association, and those who are *nirvaira*, free from enmity to all living beings, see that their miseries are the result of their own previous activities and feel no enmity for those who are inimical towards them. Rather, they feel compassion for them. Only such persons attain Me in this form of Kṛṣṇa, not others.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in his *Vidvat-rañjana* commentary, “In this chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s form (*rūpa*) has been established as the supreme refuge and the ultimate worshipful reality, as compared

to the universal form, His form as time and even His form as Lord Viṣṇu. Besides the eternal, all-attractive human form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, devotees have no attraction to the other manifestations of Bhagavān. This chapter concludes by affirming that the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the ocean of all nectarean mellows (*akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) and the only abode of supreme sweetness (*parama-mādhurya-bhāva*).”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Eleventh Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Bhakti-Yoga

Yoga Through Pure Devotional Service

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते।

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

evam satata-yuktā ye bhaktās tvām paryupāsate

ye cāpy akṣaram avyaktam teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *evam –* in this way; *satata-yuktāḥ –* continuously fixed in You; *ye –* who; *bhaktāḥ –* the devotees; *tvām –* You; *paryupāsate –* worship; *ye –* who; *ca –* and; *api –* also; *akṣaram –* the imperishable; *avyaktam –* unmanifest; *teṣām –* of them; *ke –* which?; *yoga-vittamāḥ –* the best of those who know *yoga*.

Arjuna said: According to Your earlier explanation, there are devotees endowed with *niṣṭhā*, who continuously engage in the worship of Your Śyāmasundara form, and there are also those who worship the impersonal feature. Of these two, who is superior in knowledge of *yoga*?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this Twelfth Chapter, Śrī Bhagavān confirms the superiority of all types of devotees over the *jñānīs*. And among the devotees, only those who possess qualities such as non-jealousness are glorified.

When the subject of *bhakti* was introduced, Arjuna heard that those who are endowed with faith and who engage in *bhajana* to Śrī Bhagavān, their hearts devoted to Him, are the best among all types of *yogīs*. This is the opinion of Śrī Bhagavān (*Gītā* 6.47). Arjuna heard about the supremacy of the devotees in introductory statements such as these, and as this section concludes, he inquires further, being desirous to hear more about that supremacy. “You explained that *satata-yuktāḥ* means ‘those who are devoted to performing work for You’. Those who possess the symptoms You previously described engage in service to Your Śyāmasundara form. Others worship the featureless, imperishable *brahma*, which is described in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Śruti*: ‘O Gārgī, the *brāhmaṇas* know this *akṣara-brahma*, or imperishable spirit, as *asthūla* (that which is not gross), *asūkṣma* (that which is not subtle), *ahrasva* (that which is not small) and so forth.’ Of these two types of persons who know *yoga*, which is superior? That is, which one is acquainted with the better means to know and achieve You?”

Here, in the original verse, the word *yoga-vittamāḥ* has been used. The word *yoga-vittara* is generally used to compare two types of worshippers, whereas the word *yoga-vittamāḥ* indicates the superlative degree and is used to decide the best of all types of people who perform worship. By using *vittamāḥ*, Arjuna not only compares the two but wants to know who the best is.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Of the various types of *sādhana* practised to quickly attain Bhagavān, pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) is the most simple, most easy and most natural to perform. Its influence is unailing. In this chapter, *śuddha-bhakti* is established as superior.

Up to this point, Arjuna has been listening to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions with rapt attention. In the Sixth Chapter, in the verse *yogīnām api sarveṣām* (6.47), Śrī Kṛṣṇa said that of all *yogīs* – such as the *karma-yogī*, or fruitive worker, the *dhyāna-yogī*, or meditator, and the *tapa-yogī*, or performer of severe austerities – the *bhakti-yogī* is superior. In the Seventh Chapter, in the verse *mayy āsakta-manāḥ* (7.1), He said that to take shelter of *bhakti-yoga* is best. In the Eighth Chapter, in the verse *prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena* (8.10), He described

the glory of the power of *yoga*. In the Ninth Chapter, in the verse *jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye* (9.15), He talked about *jñāna-yoga*, and at the end of the Eleventh Chapter, in the verse *mat-karma-kṛṇ mat-paramo* (11.55), He again described the excellence of *bhakti-yoga*. Having heard about these various types of *yoga*, Arjuna was unable to ascertain which is better: to worship the *saviśeṣa-svarūpa* (the personal form) of Yaśodā-nandana Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa or to worship *brahma*, which is devoid of energy (*nihśaktika*), formless (*nirākāra*), unmanifest (*avyakta-svarūpa*) and featureless (*nirviśeṣa*). Which of these two types of *yogīs* possesses superior knowledge of *yoga*? By saying *yoga-vittamāḥ*, Arjuna is inquiring who the best of all *yogīs* is.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Arjuna as saying, “O Kṛṣṇa, from all the instructions You have given so far, I have understood that there are two types of *yogīs*. One type, bound by exclusive devotion to You (*ananya-bhakti*), worships You by dedicating all bodily and social activities to You. The other type of *yogī* performs bodily and social activities only according to his needs by following the principles of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, and he takes shelter of Your imperishable and unmanifest impersonal feature by performing *yoga* related to *brahma* (*adhyātmika-yoga*). Of these two types of *yogīs*, who is superior?”

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥२॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

mayy āveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate

śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *mayi* – within Me; *āveśya* – absorbing; *manah* – minds; *ye* – who; *mām* – Me; *nitya-yuktāḥ* – always connected; *upāsate* – worship; *śraddhayā* – faith; *parayā* – with transcendental (free from the material modes of nature); *upetāḥ* – engaged; *te* – those; *me* – by Me; *yuktatamāḥ* – the best amongst those who know *yoga*; *matāḥ* – are considered.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Those *yogīs* whose faith is transcendental, or beyond the three binding influences of material nature, and who, fixing their mind on My Śyāmasundara form, constantly worship Me with exclusive devotion, are the best among those conversant with the science of *yoga*. This is My opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān responds to Arjuna's question in the previous verse by saying, "My devotees are the best of *yogīs* who, with faith that is free from the influence of the modes of material nature, fix their minds on My Śyāmasundara form, being ever-desirous to unite with Me." As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.27), "Faith that focuses upon the self (*ātmā*) is in the material mode of goodness, *sattva-guṇa*; faith that has *karma* (action) as its focus is in the material mode of passion, *rajo-guṇa*, and faith that has irreligious activities as its focus is in the material mode of ignorance, *tamo-guṇa*. But that faith that has service to Me as its object and focus is *nirguṇa*, completely free from the material modes of nature." The present verse states, "My exclusive devotees are *yuktatamāḥ*, the best of *yogīs*." From this it can be concluded that, compared to exclusive devotees, others, such as those whose *bhakti* is mixed with *jñāna* or *karma*, are only classified as being *yoga-vittara*, those who know *yoga*. They are not *yoga-vittamāḥ*, the best of those who know *yoga*. Thus, *bhakti* is superior to *jñāna*, and within *bhakti*, *ananya-bhakti*, or exclusive devotion, is supreme. This has been established here.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was greatly pleased to hear Arjuna's question and said, "I accept as the best of *yogīs* only those who constantly worship Me with transcendental faith and unalloyed devotion, who fix their minds on My Śyāmasundara form." In reality the topmost *yogīs* are the unalloyed devotees. The *yogīs* whose *bhakti* is mixed with *jñāna* and *karma* are a little inferior to them. *Bhakti-yoga* is therefore superior to *jñāna-yoga* because it is by *bhakti-yoga* alone that one performs pure and exclusive devotion. The word *śraddhā* mentioned in the original verse means 'staunch faith in the statements of *śāstra*, *guru* and Bhagavān'. As it is said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.62):

‘śraddhā’-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya

Śraddhā is the staunch faith that merely by the performance of bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa everything is accomplished.

Elsewhere it is also said, “śraddhā tv anyopāya-varjam kṛṣṇonmukhī citta-vṛtti-viśeṣaḥ – the tendency of the mind that is directed only towards Kṛṣṇa and that is free from any desire to follow other processes is called śraddhā.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.27) describes four types of faith:

sāttviky ādhyātmikī śraddhā
karma-śraddhā tu rājasī
tāmasy adharme yā śraddhā
mat-sevāyām tu nirguṇā

Faith in scriptures that deal with the science of the self is in the mode of goodness; faith related to fruitive activities is in the mode of passion; faith in sinful acts is in the mode of ignorance, and faith in service to Me is beyond the modes of material nature.

Here it should be understood that the word *nirguṇa* means ‘transcendental and beyond material qualities (*aprākṛta*)’. It does not mean ‘bereft of all qualities’. Therefore, a *bhakti-yogī* endowed with faith that is beyond the modes of nature is the best. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s intention is to give this understanding.

VERSES 3-4

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥३॥
सनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥४॥

ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate
sarvatra-gam acintyaṁ ca kūṭastham acalaṁ dhruvam

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

ye – those who; tu – but; akṣaram – the imperishable spirit; anirdeśyam – beyond description; avyaktam – without any material form and qualities; paryupāsate – they worship; sarvatra-gam – all-pervading; acintyam – beyond mundane logic; ca – and; kūṭa-stham – homogeneous, existent in all phases of time; acalam – unmoving, without the six symptoms of living beings such as growth; dhruvam – eternal; sanniyamya – controlling; indriya-grāmaṁ – the group of senses; sarvatra – in all situations; sama-buddhayaḥ – being equally disposed; te – they; prāpnuvanti – obtain; mām – Me; eva – certainly; sarva-bhūta – of all living beings; hite – to the welfare; ratāḥ – being attached.

But those who worship My indescribable, unmanifest, all-pervading, inconceivable, immutable, eternal and featureless *brahma-svarūpa*, while controlling their senses, maintaining equal vision in all situations and engaging in activities for the welfare of all beings, also attain Me alone.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Those who worship My impersonal feature (*nirviśeṣa-brahma-svarūpa*) are inferior to My devotees.” In order to establish this principle, Śrī Bhagavān speaks these two verses beginning with *ye tu*. *Akṣara* means that *brahma* cannot be described in words because it is unmanifest, formless (*avyaktam*), all-pervading (*sarvatra-ga*) and eternal (*dhruvam*). It is not subject to transformation (*acalam*), but it exists uniformly at all times (*kūṭa-stham*). And it cannot be comprehended by logic (*acintya*). The phrase *mām eva* means, “They attain Me alone. In other words, there is no difference between that imperishable (*akṣara*) *brahma* and Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān says, “Those who, with controlled senses and equal vision, engage in activities for the welfare of all *jīvas* and worship My imperishable, indescribable and unmanifest impersonal feature, ultimately attain Me only after performing troublesome *sādhana*.” From the verse *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* (*Gītā* 14.27), it is understood that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the very

foundation and shelter of *nirviṣeṣa-tattva*. Therefore, the worshippers of *nirviṣeṣa-brahma* also indirectly take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of all worshipable Realities (*upāśya-tattva*), and He Himself is the supreme worshipable object. Other worshipful *tattvas*, such as Śrī Rāmacandra, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Śrī Nṛsimhadeva and *nirviṣeṣa-brahma*, all depend on Kṛṣṇa for Their very existence. Those worshippers who have taken shelter of the other dependent worshipful Truths are certainly also under the shelter of Kṛṣṇa. All worshipable Realities are dependent on *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, having Him as Their origin.

Even so, among the worshipable Realities mentioned here, the first three are one in *tattva*, but from the perspective of *rasa*, there is a gradation. Similarly, there is also a gradation among the worshippers who have taken shelter of these subordinate Realities. *Brahma* is the effulgence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs, an incomplete manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's aspect of knowledge (*cid-amśa*). Therefore, those who achieve *nirviṣeṣa-brahma*, or impersonal liberation, are indirectly taking shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. They do not, however, experience the bliss of serving Him with love. For this reason, even if Śrī Kṛṣṇa offers His devotees the various types of liberation, such as merging with Him (*sāyujya*), they do not accept them. This is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.13):

*sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya-sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānaṁ na grhṇanti vinā mat-sevanāṁ janāḥ*

Without service to Me, My devotees will not accept the forms of liberation known as *sālokya* (living on the same planet as the Lord), *sārṣṭi* (having similar opulence to the Lord's), *sāmīpya* (always being near to the Lord) and *sārūpya* (having a similar form as the Lord) – what to speak of merging with Him in impersonal liberation – even if they are offered to them.

Some consider worship of the unmanifest Reality to be superior to the worshipping the form of Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss. However, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is personally explaining very clearly the superiority of His exclusive devotees over those who worship the formless *nirviṣeṣa-brahma*. Furthermore, some persons think, “How can worship of *brahma* not be superior, since it is full of difficulty and perfected over a long period of

time?” They consider that of the two types of *brahma* – one with features (*saguṇa*) and one without features (*nirguṇa*) – *nirguṇa-nirākāra-brahma* is the original and superior *tattva*. They think that common people are unable to perform worship of *nirguṇa-brahma* because it is troublesome, whereas the worship of the personal *saguṇa-brahma* is easily performed; anyone can do it.

It is necessary to understand that these conceptions are completely erroneous. Kṛṣṇa alone is the original *tattva*. *Brahma-tattva* is dependent on Him and is simply the effulgence of His bodily limbs. In the *Gītā* (15.18), Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has declared that as the Supreme Personality Himself, He is superior to *akṣara* (the fallible) and *kuṭastha* (the infallible).

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and other commentators on the *Gītā* explain *akṣara-svarūpa* (the imperishable entity) to mean *jīva-svarūpa* (the individual soul). Śrī Rāmānujācārya also explains it to mean ‘the individual soul’, but uses the expression *pratyag-ātma* (literally, ‘each soul’).

The Supreme Person, Parabrahma, has been clearly described as different from *akṣara-svarūpa* and *kuṭastha*. In this regard, one should refer to the *Gītā* (15.16–17), “*kūṭa-stho ’kṣara ucyate* – the immutable person (*kūṭa-stha*) is called *akṣara* (infallible)” and “*uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyah* – there is another transcendental personality.”

Moreover, worshippers of *brahma*, infinite spirit, also consider the *jīva* alone to be *brahma*: “*jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* – the *jīva* is none other than *brahma*”. They say that when the ignorance of the *jīva* is dispelled, the *brahma-jñānī* becomes *brahma*. It is not stated in any scripture that the *jīva*, even if he reaches the stage of *brahma*, attains the nature of Parabrahma, the Supreme Spirit. Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is Parabrahma. This has been established in various statements in Śruti and Smṛti. In the Vedānta, also, it is stated that the living entity never attains the stage of Parabrahma.

One should always keep in mind that the attributes of Bhagavān described in scripture, such as His possessing qualities (*saguṇa*), a form (*sākāra*) and complete uniqueness (*saviśeṣa*) are transcendental and fully conscious. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān is simultaneously both with features (*saguṇa*) and without material features (*nirguṇa*). *Saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* are not two separate *tattvas* but two aspects of the same *tattva*.

VERSE 5

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
 अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥५॥

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

kleśaḥ – trouble; *adhikataras* – more; *teṣām* – for those; *avyakta-āsakta* – are attached to the impersonal, unmanifest feature; *cetasām* – whose minds; *avyaktā* – the unmanifest; *hi* – because; *gatiḥ* – state; *duḥkham* – with difficulty; *dehavadbhiḥ* – by those who are embodied; *avāpyate* – is obtained.

Those whose minds are attached to the impersonal feature experience great difficulty, because for those who identify the body with the self, it is difficult to develop steadiness in something that is not manifest.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How, then, are the *jñānīs* inferior?” In response to Arjuna’s question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām*. “Those who desire to experience the unmanifest *brahma* (infinite spirit) must undergo extreme difficulty to attain it. It is troublesome for the *jīva* to try to perceive something that has no manifest existence. The senses are only able to gain knowledge from that which has attributes pertaining to the respective senses, such as sound. They are unable to attain knowledge of that which is devoid of qualities, or attributes.”

It is essential for those who desire *nirviśeṣa-jñāna*, knowledge of the impersonal aspect of the Absolute, to control the senses, but to do so is as difficult as suppressing the flow of a river. As Sanat Kumāra says to Pṛthu Mahārāja in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.22.39), “The devotees can easily cut the knot of the heart, which consists of fruitive desires, by remembering with devotion the effulgence of the petal-like toes of the lotus feet of Bhagavān. The *yogīs*, however, who are bereft of *bhakti*, are not able to cut the knot of the heart as devotees can, even though they are free from any mundane enjoying propensity and can control their senses. Therefore, give up the separate endeavour to

control the senses, etc., and engage in the worship of Śrī Vāsudeva. Those who practise *yoga* and other processes, desiring to cross this ocean of material existence, which is filled with the crocodiles of the senses, must face extreme difficulties if they fail to take shelter of Bhagavān. Therefore, O King, you should also accept the lotus feet of the most worshipable Bhagavān as the boat in which to cross this insurmountable ocean that is full of obstacles.”

Even if, after much trouble, one achieves *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, the featureless aspect of Absolute Spirit, it happens only with the help of *bhakti*. Without *bhakti* to Bhagavān, the worshipper of the impersonal *brahma* not only undergoes misery but also fails to attain *brahma*. As Lord Brahmā said, “The only gain of a person who beats an emptied husk of rice is the trouble he takes to beat it” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.4).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Worshipers of *nirviśeṣa-brahma* face misery, both during practice (*sādhana*) and in perfection (*siddha*). No method of practice can give perfection without the help of *bhakti*. By taking support of *bhakti* as a secondary process, those who worship the featureless aspect of the Absolute strive for knowledge of spirit, or *brahma-jñāna*. In turn, Bhakti-devī awards them the secondary result of *bhakti* – *brahma-jñāna* – and then disappears. Such persons thus remain bereft of relishing the supremely beneficial name, form, pastimes and qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They eternally submerge themselves in an ocean of great misery in the form of *sāyujya-mukti*. This is self-destructive. For this reason *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4) states:

*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhaye
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuśāvaghātīnām*

My dear Lord, worship of You is the best path to realize the self. One who gives it up to cultivate speculative knowledge will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve one’s desired ends. As one who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.

For the *nirviśeṣa-jñānīs*, the stages of both practice (*sādhana*) and perfection (*sādhya*) are described as troublesome. On the other hand, *bhakti* is supremely pleasurable and auspicious in both practice and perfection. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.22.39) states:

yat-pāda-paṅkaja-palāśa-vilāsa-bhaktyā
karmāśayaṁ grathitam udgrathayanti santaḥ
tadvan na rikta-matayo yatayo 'pi ruddha-
sroto-gaṅās tam arañam bhaja vāsudevam

Devotees of Śrī Bhagavān, who remain perpetually engaged in serving the toes of His lotus feet, can eliminate with ease the strong knot of yearning to enjoy the fruits of one's prescribed duties. This task cannot be performed by those who are not devoted to Him, such as *jñānīs* and *yogīs*, despite their attempt to put an end to the swelling waves of sense enjoyment. You are thus advised to perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.

And furthermore, in 12.4.40:

samsāra-sindhūm ati-dustaram uttīrṣor
nānyaḥ plavo bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya
līlā-kathā-rasa-niṣevānam antareṇa
pumso bhaved vividha-duḥkha-davārditasya

For those who are being scorched in the forest fire of material existence, which generates various types of miseries, and who desire to cross over the insurmountable ocean of material nescience, there is no other boat than serving the nectarean narrations of the pastimes of Bhagavān Śrī Hari.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “The difference between a *jñānī-yogī* and a *bhakti-yogī* is that in the stage of practice, a *bhakti-yogī* can easily cultivate the process to achieve the supreme objective, Śrī Bhagavān, and at the appropriate time, he attains the stage of perfection without fear. On the other hand, in the course of the *jñānī-yogī*'s practice, he becomes fixed in the unmanifest reality and has to suffer the trouble of practising a conception based on negating what he perceives. This process of negation requires one to think in a way that is

opposed to the natural aptitude to love, so it is a cause of unhappiness for the living entity. In this process, the stage of perfection is also not free from fear, because the eternal *svarūpa* of Bhagavān is not realized before the stage of practice is complete. Therefore, for the *jñāna-yogī*, even his supreme destination is miserable.

“The *jīva* is an eternal conscious entity. If the *jīva* becomes merged in the unmanifest state, then his constitutional nature, which he should accept, is destroyed. Because he has identified himself with *brahma*, he has cultivated deep impressions by which he considers himself to be the Supreme. Once he has arrived at this imperfect understanding of his real nature, it is difficult for him to give up this conditioned consciousness.

“For the embodied living entity, embarking upon meditation on the unmanifest only results in misery, both at the time of practice and upon attaining the goal. In reality, the living entity is conscious by nature and has a spiritual body. Therefore, this unmanifest, or impersonal, meditation is contrary to the living entity’s own eternal form and is simply a source of misery. *Bhakti-yoga* alone is the source of eternal auspiciousness for the *jīva*. *Jñāna-yoga*, when bereft of *bhakti* and practised independently, always becomes a source of inauspiciousness. Therefore, *adhyātma-yoga*, the process of self-realization that is performed by worshipping the formless, immutable and all-pervading *nirviśeṣa-svarūpa*, is not at all praiseworthy.”

VERSES 6–7

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥६॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि न चिरात् पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥७॥

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

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

ye – whoever; tu – but; sarvāṇi – all; karmāṇi – activities; mayi – unto Me; samnyasya – renouncing; mat-parāḥ – dedicated to achieve Me; ananyena – unwavering; eva – certainly; yogena – connection; mām – Me; dhyāyantaḥ – meditate on; upāsate – worship; teṣām – for those; aham – I; samuddhartā – the deliverer; mṛtyu-saṁsāra – death and rebirth; sāgarāt – from the ocean; bhavāmi – become; na cirāt – before long; pārtha – O Pārtha; mayi – in Me; āveśita-cetasām – whose minds are absorbed.

But to those who dedicate all their actions to Me in order to attain Me, O Pārtha, absorbing themselves exclusively in worship of Me with unalloyed devotion, I award swift deliverance from the ocean of birth and death.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “Simply by *bhakti* alone, without *jñāna*, My devotees are blissfully freed from material existence.” Here, the word *sannyāsa* means ‘to renounce’. “Whoever gives up all prescribed duties to attain Me, disregarding fruitive activities, empiric knowledge, austerities and other processes, and who engages in worship of Me with exclusive devotion, is easily and happily freed from the material world.” As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–33), “Whatever result one achieves by the performance of fruitive activities, austerities, empiric knowledge and renunciation, and also whatever My devotee may desire, be it the heavenly planets, liberation or even residence in My abode, can all be easily attained by performance of My *bhakti-yoga*.”

It is also said in the *Nārāyaṇīya-mokṣa-dharma*, “The fruits one receives by performing *sādhana* to attain the four human goals of life are attained by a person who has taken refuge in Śrī Nārāyaṇa without performing any extraneous endeavour.”

“If one asks, ‘By which *sādhana* do they cross over this material world?’ then listen. This question is improper in itself, because I personally deliver them, even if they do not perform any *sādhana*.” From this statement it is understood that Bhagavān exhibits His affection (*vātsalya-bhāva*) only to His devotees and not to the *jñānīs*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous two verses, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the glories of exclusive devotion to Him

(*ananyā-bhakti*) and the glories of His exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhakta*). By performing this one-pointed devotion and by receiving the mercy of Bhagavān, an unalloyed devotee can very easily cross over the ocean of material existence and attain supremely blissful loving service to Śrī Bhagavān.

Kṛṣṇa Himself is the shelter, or foundation, of the impersonal feature of *brahma*. This Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Svayam Bhagavān – that form of Godhead who has no source other than Himself – is also the source of Paramātmā and all divine incarnations (*avatāras*). A devotee who knows this reality takes shelter of exclusive, one-pointed devotion in the association of devotees. He does not have to undergo the difficulties experienced by those who worship the featureless and formless *brahma*, as described above, in either the stages of practice or perfection. In a short time, he easily attains service to Śrī Bhagavān that is filled with *prema*.

In introducing the devotees who take shelter of such exclusive pure devotion, Śrī Bhagavān says, “Such one-pointed devotees consider their prescribed duties of *varṇa* and *āśrama* to be obstacles to *bhakti* and completely give them up. They consider loving service to Me to be the one and only goal worth attaining, and with exclusive devotion they engage in worshipping Me by hearing, chanting and remembering My names, forms, qualities and pastimes. Even during the *sādhana* stage, while performing *śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting) and so forth, they become absorbed in Me. I very quickly deliver such devotees, whose hearts are attached to Me and who are fully absorbed in Me, from this ocean of material existence, which is very difficult to cross. They need not be in anxiety about traversing it, like the *jñānīs* and *yogīs* are. Furthermore, they are unable to tolerate any delay in achieving Me. Placing them on the back of My carrier Garuḍa, I quickly carry them to My abode. They do not attain *mukti* gradually, through the paths of *arci* (light) and so forth, as followed by *jñānīs* and *yogīs*. By My own will, I free them from this illusory world, bring them to My abode, and engage them in *prema*-filled devotional service to Me.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I very quickly deliver they who take shelter of My personal feature from the ocean of material existence, characterized by birth and death. Such

persons make all bodily and social activities completely subordinate to My *bhakti*, and they always meditate upon Me. By the process of exclusive devotion to Me, they worship My eternal, beautiful human-like form of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, their hearts become completely absorbed in Me. In other words, in their conditioned state, I give them liberation from the bondage of this illusory material existence. After their bondage to *māyā* has been cut, I protect them from the death of thinking that they are non-different from Me. This self-destructive conception of oneness is the cause of inauspiciousness for those who are attached to the unmanifest. My vow is *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham* (Gītā 4.11). From this it is understood that those who meditate on the unmanifest (*avyakta*) merge with My *avyakta-svarūpa*. Where is My loss in this? Having attained such a destination, the importance, or utility, of the *jīva*'s intrinsic form is withdrawn, or destroyed.”

VERSE 8

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥८॥

mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhim niveśaya
nivasiṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrddhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ

mayi – on Me (in the form of Śyāmasundara); *eva* – only; *manaḥ* – mind; *ādhatsva* – fix (or remember); *mayi* – in Me; *buddhim* – intelligence; *niveśaya* – offer, or repose; *nivasiṣyasi* – you shall reside; *mayi* – near Me; *eva* – certainly; *ataḥ ūrddhvaṁ* – thus at the last moment of quitting the body; *na saṁśayaḥ* – there is no doubt at all.

Fix your mind exclusively on My Śyāmasundara form and offer your intelligence to Me. Thus, upon leaving your body, you shall certainly come to reside with Me. Of this there is no doubt.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Since My *bhakti* is the topmost process, you should perform *bhakti* only.” To instruct Arjuna in this way, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking three verses, beginning here with *mayy eva*. By use of the

word *eva*, worship of the *nirviṣeṣa-svarūpa* has been prohibited. Śrī Bhagavān says *mayi*, meaning ‘upon Me’. “You should fix your mind exclusively on My Śyāmasundara form, which is decorated with yellow garments and a beautiful garland of forest flowers. In other words, remember Me and engage your discriminating intelligence in Me; that is, think only of Me. This thinking should be in accordance with the statements of scriptures that establish *dhyāna* (meditation). You will then come to live near Me only, who am described in the Vedas.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here in these few verses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining the practices adopted by His exclusive devotees. First, He said to Arjuna, “O Arjuna, I quickly deliver from the ocean of birth and death, My exclusive devotee who is dedicated to Me and who has given up *varṇāśrama-dharma*, and I bestow upon him loving devotional service to Me. Therefore, you should fix your mind exclusively on Me, Parabrahma, the Supreme Transcendental Reality. Remove all desires for sense gratification from your heart and absorb your heart in remembering Me alone.” The mind has the tendencies to accept (*saṅkalpa*) and reject (*vikalpa*). Therefore, to fix it on anything related to Bhagavān, it is necessary to surrender one’s intelligence to Him, after disengaging the mind from all sense objects. Upon acquiring knowledge of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* with one’s resolute intelligence, know Him alone to be the supreme worshipable Reality. Direct the functions of the pure intelligence toward Him by performing practices such as hearing (*śravaṇam*), chanting (*kīrtanam*) and remembering (*smaraṇam*). This will bring the mind under the control of such resolute intelligence and one will automatically become absorbed in thoughts of Him. In such a state, you will always be close to Him.

Therefore, by making Arjuna His instrument, Śrī Bhagavān is instructing all of us that *bhakti* alone is the best *sādhana* (practice) and the best *sādhya* (goal). Thus it is our one and only duty to constantly remember the eternal form of Śyāmasundara by fixing our mind on Him and surrendering our intelligence exclusively to Him. When this is done, one will attain the highest fruit of *sādhana-bhakti*: becoming His associate and attaining unalloyed *prema*. There is no doubt about this. Thus it is explained that the attainment of *bhakti-yoga* and the destination achieved by its practitioners are superior to all others.

VERSE 9

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम्।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥९॥

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

atha – and if; *cittam* – the mind; *samādhātum* – to fix; *na śaknoṣi* – you are unable; *mayi* – on Me; *sthiram* – steadily; *abhyāsa-yogena* – through the practice of yoga; *tataḥ* – then; *mām* – Me; *icchā* – intense eagerness; *āptum* – to attain; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth (Arjuna).

O Dhanañjaya, if you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me, then develop an eagerness to attain Me by practice (*abhyāsa-yoga*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: For those who cannot directly remember Him, Śrī Bhagavān explains the means whereby such remembrance can be achieved. He says, “By repeatedly controlling the mind, which darts from one place to another, one should practise concentrating it exclusively on My form. This is *yoga*. One should gradually fix the mind’s course on My most beautiful form, qualities and so forth by the practice of completely checking the mind, which flows like a river towards abominable mundane sense objects such as form and taste.”

The present verse emphasizes the word Dhanañjaya. Just as Arjuna has accumulated great *dhana* (wealth) by conquering many enemies, in the same way, he is also able to achieve the wealth of *dhyāna* (meditation on Bhagavān) by conquering and controlling his mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Śrī Bhagavān instructed everyone to become one-pointed in devotion to Him by fixing the mind and intelligence on Him. Thus the following question may be raised: just as the Gaṅgā flows towards the ocean, those whose mind is always running with great speed towards Śrī Bhagavān can very quickly attain Him; of this there is no doubt. By what means, however, can Bhagavān be achieved by those who are not strongly inclined to Him? In response, Śrī Bhagavān has given a second option. “Those who are unable to firmly and steadily fix their

mind on Me by the previously stated means should try to achieve Me by practice, or *abhyāsa-yoga*. This means that they should try to fix the mind on Me by gradually curbing the tendency of the mind to be attracted to various sense objects. Such endeavour is called *abhyāsa-yoga*. By this the mind slowly becomes attached to Me, after which it becomes easy to attain Me.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “That previously mentioned pure love, which is free from all motivation, is the eternal function of a mind devoted to Me. To achieve this requires constant practice. If you are unable to steadily fix your mind on Me, then it is better for you to engage in *abhyāsa-yoga*.”

VERSE 10

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन् सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

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

abhyāse – to perform (even) the practice of *sādhana-bhakti*; *api* – if, however; *asamarthaḥ* – unable; *asi* – you are; *mat-karma* – to activities related to Me; *paramaḥ* – devoted; *bhava* – just be; *mad-artham* – for My sake; *api* – also; *karmāṇi* – activities; *kurvan* – through performing; *siddhim* – perfection; *avāpsyasi* – you will obtain.

If you are unable to engage in this practice, then just devote yourself to those activities that are intrinsically related with Me, because by performing activities such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* for My pleasure, you will certainly attain perfection.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “O Arjuna, just as a person whose tongue is affected by jaundice does not desire to taste sugar candy, in the same way, a mind that is polluted by ignorance does not accept the sweetness of My form. Consequently, if you think that you are unable to engage in this constant practice because you cannot fight with this very

powerful, formidable mind, then listen. By performing virtuous and blessed activities for My pleasure, such as hearing and chanting about My pastimes, praying, worshipping, cleaning My temple, watering Tulasī, collecting flowers and performing various other services, you will achieve perfection and become My loving associate, even without remembering Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna to adopt *abhyāsa-yoga*, the practice of fixing the mind on Bhagavān. But with great humility, Arjuna said, “O Prabhu, because the mind is more flickering than the wind and very difficult to control, I will not have the strength to restrict it from sense objects by *abhyāsa-yoga*. I have previously submitted the same opinion at Your lotus feet (in the verse: *cañcalam hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham*, *Gītā* 6.34). Therefore, what shall I do?”

Smiling, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave a third option. “If a person is not even able to engage in *abhyāsa-yoga*, then he should perform activities that are favourable to *bhakti*.”

There are many ways to serve Śrī Bhagavān, all of which require very little effort: building, maintaining and cleaning His temple, making a flower garden for His deity, caring for Tulasī, etc. Such activities easily bring the mind under control and fix it in meditating on activities related to Bhagavān. Then, by practising the limbs of *śuddha-bhakti* such as *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam* and *smaraṇam* under the guidance of pure Vaiṣṇavas, one gradually attains the perfection of service to Bhagavān.

In this regard, it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.34):

*mal-līṅga-mad-bhakta-jana-darśana-sparśanārcanam
paricaryā stutiḥ prahva-guṇa-karmānukīrtanam*

O Uddhava, a *sādhaka* gradually attains the fruit of pure love for Bhagavān, which is to become My associate. This is achieved by engaging with great faith in activities such as looking upon, touching, worshipping, serving, glorifying and paying obeisances to My deity form and My devotees, and always chanting about their qualities and activities.

VERSE II

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुमद्योगमाश्रितः ।
 सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

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

atha – yet; *etat* – this; *api* – though; *aśaktaḥ* – unable; *asi* – you are; *karttum* – perform; *mat-yogam* – the process of connection with Me (in the form of offering all activities to Me); *āśritaḥ* – taking shelter; *sarva-karma* – all your activities; *phala-tyāgam* – renunciation of the fruits; *tataḥ* – then; *kuru* – perform; *yata-ātmavān* – with a controlled mind.

If, however, you are unable to perform this *abhyāsa-yoga*, then take shelter of the yoga of offering all your works to Me, and with a controlled mind renounce the results of all your actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “If you are unable to do this, then take shelter of My *bhakti-yoga* and renounce the results of your actions by offering them to Me” [as described in the first six chapters].

The first six chapters explain *niškāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly performed activities offered to Bhagavān, as the means to attain liberation. The second six chapters describe *bhakti-yoga* as the means to attain Bhagavān. This *bhakti-yoga* is of two types: (1) the actions of the internal senses that are steadily fixed on Bhagavān, and (2) the activities of the external senses.

The first type of *bhakti-yoga* is further divided into three stages: (1) remembrance (*smaraṇa*), (2) meditation (*manana*) and (3) regulated practice (*abhyāsa*), which is for those who are unable to constantly perform *smaraṇa* but who are attached to attaining such a stage. These three practices are indeed very difficult for those who are less intelligent, but they are easy for those who are free from offences and devoted to pure intelligence.

The second type of *bhakti-yoga*, however, which engages the activities of the external senses in hearing, chanting and so forth, is an easy method for everyone. Those who are engaged in either type of *bhakti-yoga* are superior to all others. This is described in the second six

chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who are unable to perform either of these and who cannot worship Śrī Bhagavān faithfully by controlling their senses and minds are qualified to perform *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* offered to Bhagavān, as described in the first six chapters. They are inferior to the above two types of *bhakti-yogis*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, with the statement *mat-karma-paramo bhava*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave instructions to clean His temple, water Tulasi and flower gardens, and perform other such services. Upon hearing this, Arjuna wondered what someone should do who considers these services to Bhagavān, which are simple, easy and happily performed, to be insignificant. They could also be unwilling to perform them on account of having taken birth in a high-class family or holding a respected position in society. In the present verse, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, understanding Arjuna's mind, gives a fourth option. "If one is unable to perform such simple services for Śrī Bhagavān, then it is appropriate that he adopt the process of *bhagavad-arpita niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly performing one's prescribed duties and offering them to Bhagavān."

It is not appropriate, however, to avoid services such as cleaning the temple because of one's material false ego. Although King Ambarīṣa was the lord of the Earth's seven islands, he constantly remained engaged in the service of Śrī Bhagavān by cleaning His temple with his own hands and performing other services. According to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, King Pratāparudra would sweep in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's chariot during the famous Ratha-yātrā festival in Jagannātha Purī. Upon seeing such a service attitude, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became very pleased with him. Therefore, according to the instructions of our worshipful disciplic succession, to perform even an insignificant service to Śrī Bhagavān creates auspiciousness for us. To consider oneself superior because of material false ego and to think services such as cleaning the temple to be insignificant causes a person to fall from his endeavour in attaining the transcendental goal.

If, because of such a superiority complex, someone is unable to engage in service as instructed by Bhagavān, then for him the most compassionate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is giving another option. He should

perform his prescribed duties according to *varṇāśrama-dharma*, without desiring to enjoy the fruits of his action, and he should offer the results to Bhagavān.

Śrī Bhagavān has given four sequential options in descending order for persons possessing four types of qualification:

- (1) Fixing one's mind on the form (*svarūpa*) of Bhagavān, one should try to achieve *prema* through the process of hearing, chanting and remembering the names, forms and qualities of Bhagavān. This is the path of spontaneous attachment, *rāgānugā-bhakti*.
- (2) For those who are unable to absorb the mind in Bhagavān through the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, it is better to take shelter of repeated practice (*abhyāsa-yoga*) by following the path of devotion according to Vedic regulations (*vaidhī-bhakti*).
- (3) For those who are even unable to perform this repeated practice in the form of *vaidhī-bhakti*, it is necessary to become devoted to performing work (service) for Bhagavān. In this way, while being devoted to working for Bhagavān, they will gradually attain perfection in *abhyāsa-yoga*, and eventually their minds will become fixed at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān.
- (4) For those who are even unable to perform *karma* (action) in service to Śrī Bhagavān, it is better to surrender to Him and simply perform *karma* as prescribed in the Vedas, without being attached to the fruits.

As a result of such actions, one will gradually attain the path leading to exclusive, uninterrupted, transcendental devotion (*parā-bhakti*), which imparts knowledge of one's own *svarūpa* and the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān.

VERSE 12

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

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

śreyaḥ—better; *hi*—because; *jñānam*—transcendental knowledge; *abhyāsāt*—than regulated practice; *jñānāt*—than knowledge; *dhyānam*—remembrance

of Me; *viśisyate* – better; *dhyānāt* – than remembrance; *karma-phala-tyāgaḥ* –renunciation of the fruits of action is better; *tyāgāt* – such renunciation; *śāntiḥ* – cessation (of the search of the senses for any object other than Me); *anantaram* – after.

Better than *sādhana*, devotional service in practice, is the attainment of transcendental knowledge (*jñāna*), for such knowledge gives rise to meditation upon Me (*dhyāna*). This leads to incessant contemplation of Me performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions (*manana*). Through such remembrance, a person easily abandons all attachment to the fruits of his actions, such as the delights of heaven and liberation from repeated birth and death. After such renunciation, one achieves peace of mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now, while explaining the successive superiority of regulated practice (*abhyāsa*), contemplation (*manana*) and finally remembrance (*smaraṇa*), Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *śreyah*. “*Jñāna* means to absorb your intelligence in Me, because such contemplation of Me is superior to regulated practice.” In the stage of regulated practice, meditation is achieved, but there are obstacles, so it requires great endeavour and is troublesome. But when one reaches the stage of contemplation (*manana*), meditation becomes easy.

Superior to *jñāna*, however, is meditation (*dhyāna*). If one asks why, the answer is that meditation leads to the renunciation of the desire to enjoy the fruits of actions, such as the pleasures of the heavenly planets and the attainment of liberation, which is the result of selflessly performed prescribed duty (*niṣkāma-karma*). Even if these results become available of their own accord, one neglects them. It has been observed that a person may not have achieved stability in meditation, and *rati* (*bhāva*) may not have awakened in his heart, but still he desires to give up liberation. However, those who have attained steadiness in meditation do not even have the desire to give up liberation, they disregard it naturally. Only *bhakti* of this type is called *mokṣa-laghutā-kāriṇī* – that which derides even *mokṣa*. It has been described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.17), in the verse beginning with the four words *kleśa-ghnī śubha-dā*, “Devotional service destroys miseries and bestows auspiciousness.”

It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.14):

*na pārameṣṭhyam na mahendra-dhiṣṇyam
na sārva-bhauṃyam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
mayy arpitātmecchati mad vinānyat*

Those who have surrendered their hearts to Me do not desire the positions of Brahmā or Indra, sovereignty over the whole Earth, the kingdom of the lower planets, mystic perfections such as *aṇimā*, or even the state of liberation. They desire nothing but Me.

Here, the phrase *mayy arpitātmecchati* means ‘to be steadfast in meditation upon Me’.

The word *tyāgāt* in the present *Gītā* verse means ‘a person becomes peaceful only when he is free from material desires. This means that besides being attracted to My form, qualities and so on, one’s senses become detached from all other sense objects’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Within these three types of *bhakti* – namely, remembrance (*smaraṇa*), contemplation (*manana*) and repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) – knowledge in the form of placing one’s intelligence in Śrī Bhagavān (*manana*) is superior to practice (*abhyāsa*).

Superior to knowledge in the form of contemplation (*jñāna*) is meditation (*dhyāna*), which is characterized by constant remembrance (*smaraṇa*). This is because in that knowledge, which is characterized by contemplation, meditation is only achieved with great endeavour and trouble. But when one attains perfection in contemplation, then it is easy to attain the stage of meditation in the form of constant remembrance. When one becomes perfect in meditation, his desires for the pleasures of liberation and the heavenly planets are dispelled, after which the mind becomes attached to the form, qualities, etc., of Bhagavān. In such a state, one becomes detached from all other sense objects, and thus one naturally attains peace. But if one has not attained perfection in meditation, then such a *sādhaka*, who is also unable to practise meditation, should engage in selflessly performing one’s prescribed duties and offering them to Bhagavān. This will gradually lead one to perform *bhakti* to Bhagavān with a peaceful mind.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, *sādhana-bhakti* is the only means to attain unalloyed *prema*. This *bhakti-yoga* is of two types: (1) the activities of the internal sense, the mind that is fixed on Bhagavān; and (2) the activities of the external senses. The activities of the internal sense are of three types: remembrance (*smaraṇa*), contemplation (*manana*) and repeated practice (*abhyāsa*). But for less intelligent people, these three types of activities are very difficult to perform. The second type of *bhakti*, the actions of the external senses in the form of hearing and chanting, is easily performed by everyone. Therefore, *manana*, intelligence related to Me, is the best form of *jñāna*, and it is better than repeated practice (*abhyāsa*).

“Here, *jñāna* does not refer to *jñāna-yoga*. During the stage of constant practice, one performs meditation with endeavour, but when one achieves the result of that practice, which is contemplation, then meditation is easily performed. Meditation is superior to mere *jñāna*, because when it becomes stable, one becomes free from the desire to enjoy the pleasures of the heavenly planets or the happiness of liberation. When both of these desires are dispelled, one achieves peace in the form of detachment from all sense objects, but one does not become detached from My transcendental name, form, qualities, etc.”

VERSES 13-14

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
 निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥
 सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
 मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī
santuṣṭaḥ satataṃ yogī yatātmā dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
maya arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ

adveṣṭā – non-envious; *sarva-bhūtānām* – towards all living beings; *maitraḥ* – has friendship for the devotees; *karuṇa eva ca* – and merciful (to the spiritually impoverished); *nirmamaḥ* – free from feelings of possessiveness (towards

children, relatives, etc.); *nir-aham-kārah* – free from false egoism (in relation to the body); *sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ* – even-minded in happiness and distress (considering them the fruits of past actions, *prārabdha-karma*); *kṣamā* – tolerant; *santuṣṭaḥ* – fully satisfied; *satatam* – always; *yogī* – who is linked-up in *bhakti-yoga*; *yata-ātmā* – sense-controlled; *ḍṛḍha-niścayaḥ* – firmly determined (to exclusive devotional service); *mayi* – to Me; *arpita* – offered; *mano-buddhiḥ* – mind and intelligence (remembering and contemplating); *yaḥ* – who; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – My devotee; *saḥ* – he; *me* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear.

My devotee, who is non-envious, compassionate and friendly toward all living beings, free from feelings of possessiveness for sons and family members, devoid of false ego and even-minded in both happiness and distress, who is forgiving, ever-content, endowed with *bhakti-yoga*, in control of his senses, resolute in determination and dedicated to Me in both mind and intelligence, is very dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What is the nature of the devotees who have attained the afore-mentioned stage of peace?” Expecting this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining in eight verses the various qualities of His different types of devotees, the first of which begins with the word *adveṣṭā*. A person who is not envious of one who envies him, but instead maintains a friendly attitude toward him, is called *adveṣṭā*. Desiring that such a discontented person should not become degraded or fall down due to his envious attitude, the devotee feels only compassion for him. If someone questions how and with what type of discrimination one can show friendship and compassion toward an envious person, the answer is that this happens without discrimination. “Because My devotee is *nirmamaḥ* – devoid of a feeling of possessiveness for son, wife and so forth, having no false identification with the body – he is free from envy of anyone.” Furthermore, why should he discriminate when he can avoid the misery arising from envy by not doing so? One may wonder if he would feel any bodily pain if another person ran at him to punch him or beat him with a shoe. In response Bhagavān says, “*sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ* – he remains even-minded both in happiness and in misery.”

As Candrārḍha Śekhara (Lord Śiva) says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.17.28): “*nārāyaṇa-parah sarve na...* – those who are devoted to Śrī Nārāyaṇa are never afraid in any circumstances, because they see the heavenly planets, liberation and hell as equal.” To see happiness and distress as equal is called *sama-darśitva*. Moreover, devotees of Śrī Nārāyaṇa think that any misery coming to them is the result of their past actions that are now manifesting (*prārabdha-karma*), so it must be faced. Becoming equipoised, they endure all misery with great tolerance. To convey this, Śrī Bhagavān says that they are forgiving (*kṣamī*). The root word *kṣam* is used in the sense of tolerance.

If the question is raised as to how such devotees maintain their lives, the response is *santuṣṭaḥ*; they remain satisfied with whatever eatables they get by the will of providence or with little endeavour. Arjuna asked, “But earlier You said that they are even-minded both in misery and happiness, satisfied even if they face the hardship of not getting any food, so how can it be that they feel satisfaction when attaining food for themselves? This seems contradictory.” In response Śrī Bhagavān says *satataṁ yogī*. “Being endowed with *bhakti-yoga*, they want to maintain their bodies simply to attain perfection in *bhakti*.”

It is said, “One must endeavour to acquire food to maintain one’s life. Such maintenance of the body is proper, because only by keeping the body healthy can one think of the Absolute, and by specific knowledge of the Absolute, one can attain *brahma* (Bhagavān).” If, by the will of providence, such devotees do not get anything to eat, they remain undisturbed (*yatātmā*). And even if they have to face a situation that disturbs their minds, they do not engage in the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* to pacify it. For this reason, they are known as *dṛḍha-niścayaḥ*, for they never deviate from their sole duty of engaging in exclusive devotion to Bhagavān. They remain devoted to remembering and contemplating Bhagavān. “Such devotees give Me great pleasure and are therefore dear to Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In previous verses, after explaining the various types of *sādhana* practised by one-pointed and steadfast devotees, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the qualities of those devotees in the next seven verses.

Here, the word *advēṣṭā* means that they do not even envy those who envy them. They think that such envy is the result of their currently fructifying reactions (*prārabdhā-karma*) as awarded by Parameśvara, and therefore they envy no one. Rather, they maintain a friendly attitude towards all, considering everyone as the dwelling place of Parameśvara. Upon seeing the misery of others, they try to remove it; therefore, they are compassionate. They consider the body and anything related to the body as transformations of material nature and different from their real self. Therefore, they feel no possessiveness, even for their own bodies, and while performing their activities, they remain free from bodily identification, which is a falsity. They are steady in both material happiness and distress, and so in either situation, they become neither elated nor disturbed. Because they are forgiving, they are also tolerant. Since they remain content in all situations – loss or gain, fame or infamy, and victory or defeat – they are *yogīs* and remain steadily fixed in the *sādhana* given to them by *śrī gurudeva*. The word *yatātmā* means ‘one who has control over the senses’. Since they cannot be disturbed by any logic based on falsity, their determination is firm. In this material world, no misery can make them deviate from devotion to the Supreme Lord. This is the special quality of exclusive devotees. They are endowed with the firm faith that ‘I am the servant of Bhagavān,’ and their mind, body and everything else is surrendered unto Śrī Bhagavān’s lotus feet. Therefore, such devotees are dear to Him. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.29–32), Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes these qualities to His devotee Uddhava:

*kṛpālur akṛta-drohas titikṣuḥ sarva-dehinām
satya-sāro ’navadyātmā samaḥ sarvopakārahāḥ
kāmair ahata-dhīr dānto mṛduḥ śucir akiñcanaḥ
aniho mita-bhuk śāntaḥ sthīro mac-charaṇo munīḥ
apramatto gabhirātmā dhṛtimān jita-śaḍ-guṇaḥ
amānī māna-daḥ kalyo maitraḥ kāruṇikaḥ kavīḥ
ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “O Uddhava, a saintly person is merciful and never harms others. Even if others are envious of him he is tolerant and

forgiving toward all. He is fixed in the truth, he is free from all envy and jealousy, and his mind is equal in material happiness and distress. He dedicates himself to the welfare of all. His intelligence is never bewildered by material desires or false logic, and he has control over all his senses. His behaviour is always pleasing and exemplary, and he is free from feelings of possessiveness even towards his wife and children. He never endeavours in worldly activities, and he strictly controls his eating. He is always peaceful and steady. A saintly person accepts Me as his only shelter. Such a person is very firm in the execution of his duties, because he is steady and noble, even in a distressing situation. He has conquered over the six material qualities – namely hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death. He is free from all desire for prestige and offers all honour to others. He is expert in bringing others to the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and therefore never cheats anyone. Rather, he is a well-wishing friend to all and is most merciful. Such a saintly person must be considered the most learned of men. He perfectly understands that the religious duties prescribed by Me in various Vedic scriptures possess the power to purify the performer, and he knows that neglect of such duties constitutes a fault in the development of the ordinary persons. Having taken complete shelter at My lotus feet, however, a saintly person ultimately renounces all materialistic duties such as *varṇāśrama* and worships Me alone. He is thus considered to be the best of all.” *

Such devotees are also described in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* (22.78–80).

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nirdoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci, akiñcana
sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, anīha, sthira, vijita-śaḍ-guṇa
mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī*

Devotees are always merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild and clean. They are without material

possessions, and they perform welfare work for everyone. They are peaceful, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and free from desire. They are indifferent to material acquisitions and are fixed in devotional service. They completely control the six bad qualities, such as lust, anger and greed. They eat only as much as required, and they are not inebriated. They are respectful, grave, compassionate and without false prestige. They are friendly, poetic, expert and silent. *

VERSE 15

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

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

yasmāt – by whom; *na udvijate* – are not disturbed; *lokaḥ* – people; *lokāt* – by (other) people; *na udvijate* – is not disturbed; *ca* – and; *yaḥ* – who; *harṣa* – from material elation; *amarṣa* – intolerance; *bhaya* – fear; *udvegaiḥ* – from anxiety; *muktaḥ* – liberated; *yaḥ* – who; *saḥ* – one; *ca* – also; *me* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear.

He who neither disturbs anyone nor is himself disturbed by others, and who is free from mundane happiness, intolerance, fear and anxiety, is certainly dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Moreover, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12) it is said, “The demigods, along with all their good qualities, only reside fully in those who perform *bhakti* to Bhagavān with the feeling that they possess absolutely nothing in this world.” Such statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also confirm that by continuous practice of *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān, all the good qualities that please Him arise naturally. “Now hear those qualities in five verses, the first beginning with *yasmāt*. My devotee is free from mundane elation, intolerance, etc.” While explaining the rarity of qualities like these, Śrī Bhagavān further says *yo na hr̥ṣyati...* (*Gītā* 12.17).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In these verses, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is describing other qualities that naturally manifest in the devotees by the influence of *bhakti*. “As I said previously, there is no possibility that My devotees’ behaviour can cause anybody the slightest harm, because they are free from the tendency to be violent toward any living being, and they have a friendly and compassionate disposition towards all. They do not create any fear or anxiety in anyone. And because they are even-minded both in happiness and misery, no one can agitate them in the slightest. When they attain their desired goal, they do not feel elated. They do not become envious upon seeing the superiority or progress of others, and their minds are never disturbed by fear or the anxiety of losing a possession.” The import is this: “Those devotees who are free from elation, envy, fear and agitation are most dear to Me.”

VERSE 16

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

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

anapekṣaḥ – not attached to the results of mundane activities; *śucih* – internally and externally pure; *dakṣaḥ* – expert; *udāsīnaḥ* – aloof in material dealings; *gata-vyathaḥ* – unaffected by agitation (due to being transcendently situated); *sarva-ārambha* – all items unfavourable to *bhakti*; *parityāgī* – fully renounced; *yaḥ* – who; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – a devotee of Mine; *saḥ* – he; *me* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear.

Dear to Me is that devotee who is not dependent on mundane or social activities, who is pure, expert, detached, free from all agitation and careful to avoid any activity unfavourable to *bhakti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Anapekṣaḥ* means ‘My devotees are unconcerned for anything mundane’. *Udāsīnaḥ* means that they remain indifferent in their dealings with society. It becomes a part of their nature to give up the observable fruits and also unobservable fruits of their

mundane activities. This refers to the fruits they are conscious of and those they are not conscious of. If spiritual endeavours such as teaching scriptures become unfavourable to their *bhakti*, they automatically give them up.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Furthermore it is said, “Dear to Me are My devotees, who are unattached to those objects that become available automatically, who are pure externally and internally, expert in grasping the essence of the Vedic literature, who are unbiased, indifferent, not agitated even when mistreated by others, and who do not make the slightest endeavour to perform any pious or impious work that is unfavourable to their *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān.”

VERSE 17

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

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

yaḥ – who; *na hṛṣyati* – neither becomes elated (in achieving that which is desirable for the materialists); *na dveṣṭi* – nor detests (that which is not liked by materialistic persons); *na śocati* – neither laments (when he loses something that is dear to him); *na kāṅkṣati* – nor (for that which he does not have); *śubha-aśubha* – pious and impious actions; *parityāgī* – who fully renounces; *bhaktimān* – devoted person; *yaḥ* – who; *saḥ* – he; *me* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear.

He who neither delights on attaining that which is pleasing to the materialists nor detests attaining something undesirable, who neither laments for the loss of anything dear to him nor hankers to attain something he does not have, who renounces pious and impious activities, and who has devotion to Me, that devotee is indeed dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: “Those devotees who neither become overwhelmed with joy when they beget a dear son or get a good

disciple, nor feel hatred towards a wayward son or bad disciple, who do not become absorbed in lamentation at the loss of some desirable object nor desire something pleasing that they do not have, who do not engage in either pious or sinful activities and who are devoted to Me – they are dear to Me.”

VERSES 18-19

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

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

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

samaḥ – equal; *śatrau* – towards an enemy; *ca* – and; *mitre* – a friend; *ca tathā* – as well as; *māna-apamānayoḥ* – in honour and dishonour; *śīta-uṣṇa* – in cold and heat; *sukha-duḥkheṣu* – happiness and unhappiness; *samaḥ* – equal; *saṅga-vivarjitaḥ* – unaffected by (mundane) association; *tulya* – equal; *nindā-stutiḥ* – in blame and praise; *maunī* – controlled in speech or silent, due to engagement in contemplation of his worshipful Lord; *santuṣṭaḥ* – fully satisfied; *yena kenacit* – by whatever necessities for bodily maintenance come to him (by the Lord’s grace); *aniketaḥ* – without attachment to any residence; *sthira-matiḥ* – whose mind is fixed (in spiritual subject matters); *bhaktimān* – the devoted person; *me* – to Me; *priyaḥ* – dear; *naraḥ* – man.

Being blessed with My *bhakti*, he who looks equally upon friends and enemies, who is equipoised in honour and dishonour, heat and cold, joy and anguish, who does not take any kind of mundane association, who is equal in both praise and criticism, who speaks nothing but *bhagavat-kathā*, who remains satisfied with whatever comes to him by the desire of the Lord for the maintenance of

the body, be it to his taste or otherwise, who has no fixed place of residence and who has unflinching faith in the conclusions of spiritual matters – such a devotee is dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *aniketaḥ* means ‘without attachment to mundane possessions, such as a house’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa now concludes His glorification of the natural qualities of His dear devotees in the present two verses. They behave equally towards enemies and friends, and they remain equipoised in honour and dishonour, heat and cold and happiness and distress. They never take bad association and they do not feel unhappy when criticized or happy when glorified. They do not speak anything except topics of the Lord (*bhagavat-kathā*). They remain content with either palatable or unpalatable foodstuffs that are useful for the maintenance of the body and that come by the will of Bhagavān. They do not maintain a fixed residence, and their intelligence is focused on the transcendental goal. Such devotees are dear to Him.

VERSE 20

ये तु धर्मामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

ye tu dharmāmṛtam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate
śraddadhānā mat-paramā bhaktās te ’tīva me priyāḥ

ye – who; tu – indeed; *dharm-amṛtam* – nectar in the form of religion; *idaṁ* – this; *yathā* – as; *uktam* – described; *paryupāsate* – worship in every way; *śraddadhānāḥ* – faithful; *mat-paramāḥ* – devoted to Me; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *te* – those; *atīva* – extremely; *me* – to Me; *priyāḥ* – dear.

Certainly, those devotees who engage in exclusive devotion to Me with firm faith and who worship this nectarean religion that I have described are exceedingly dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: While concluding His description of the many characteristics of His own devotees, who are steadily fixed on Him, Śrī

Bhagavān is explaining the result attained by those who hear, study or meditate on these instructions with a desire to actualize them. These characteristics are all born of *bhakti* and bring peace. They are not material qualities. It is said, “*bhaktyā tuṣyati kṛṣṇo na guṇaiḥ* – Kṛṣṇa is pleased only by *bhakti*, not by any material qualities.” There are unlimited statements like this in the scriptures.

Here the word *tu* (but) is used to show a different subject. Devotees who have the above-stated characteristics are fixed in certain good qualities. But practitioners of *bhakti* who desire all these qualities are superior to perfected mystics. The word *atīva* has been used here to indicate this.

Bhakti is supreme, pleasurable and the most easily achievable of all goals. In this chapter, many such qualities of *bhakti* have been delineated. *Jñāna* has been described to be like bitter neem leaf and *bhakti* like sweet grapes. *Sādhakas* who are greedy for their respective tastes accept one of these, according to their desires.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Twelfth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In concluding this chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Those who are devoted to Me and endowed with faith thoroughly worship this nectarean *dharma* of immortality, as described by Me. Such devotees are very dear to Me.” Bhagavān is only pleased by *bhakti*, not merely by a person’s material qualities. All good qualities naturally manifest in devotees by the influence of *bhakti*. There is no possibility of good qualities arising in non-devotees who are averse to Hari.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.18.12) says:

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ

All the demigods along with their superior qualities manifest within one who has developed selfless, pure *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān. But that person in whom *bhakti* is absent is devoid of any good qualities because he is absorbed in mundane action. He runs with his mental speculations and consequently, he has no choice but to submit to the external potency of the Supreme Lord. Where is the possibility of noble qualities residing in such a person?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has written that the intention of the Twelfth Chapter is to determine which worship of Śrī Bhagavān is superior, *nirguṇa* (impersonal) or *saguṇa* (personal).

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa writes, “Among the various types of *sādhana*, only *śuddha-bhakti*, which is supremely effective and performed without any difficulty, quickly bestows attainment of Bhagavān. This is the essence of this chapter.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Those who are devoted to Me faithfully worship, hear, study, contemplate and practise this nectarean *dharma* as I have described it, from beginning to end. Only they are My devotees and therefore very dear to Me. A *jīva* attains pure love free from all motivation (*nirupādhika-prema*) by following this gradual, step-by-step process, as described by Me.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Twelfth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Prakṛti-Puruṣa-Vibhāga-Yoga

Yoga Through Understanding the Distinctions
Between Material Nature and the Enjoyer

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।

एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥१॥

arjuna uvāca –

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva kṣetraṁ kṣetra-jñam eva ca
etat veditum icchāmi jñānam jñeyam ca keśava*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *prakṛtim* – nature; *puruṣam* – the enjoyer; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *kṣetram* – the field; *kṣetra-jñam* – the knower of the field; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *etat* – these things; *veditum* – to understand; *icchāmi* – I desire; *jñānam* – knowledge; *jñeyam* – the object of knowledge; *ca* – and; *keśava* – O Keśava.

Arjuna said: O Keśava, I would like to understand nature (*prakṛti*), the enjoyer (*puruṣa*), the field (*kṣetra*), the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jña*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and the object of knowledge (*jñeya*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: I pay my obeisances to devotion to Śrī Bhagavān, a portion of which is mercifully situated in processes such as *jñāna* so as to make them successful. Knowledge mixed with devotion (*bhakti-miśra-jñāna*) is described in this third set of six chapters. Indirectly,

these chapters also refer to the supremacy of exclusive devotion. This Thirteenth Chapter specifically deals with the subjects of the body (*kṣetra*), the soul (*jīvātmā*) and the Supersoul (Paramātmā), the process of knowledge (*jñāna*) and an extensive deliberation on the living entity (*jīva*) and material nature (*prakṛti*).

Bhagavān is attained only by exclusive, pure devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*). This is described in the second set of six chapters. These chapters also describe three types of worship, such as worship performed by those who identify with the object of worship (*ahaṅgraha-upāsanā*). A *niṣkāma-karma-yogī*, who selflessly performs his prescribed duty and offers the result to Bhagavān, attains liberation by *bhakti-miśra-jñāna*, or knowledge mixed with devotion, which was briefly described in the first six chapters. Now begins the third set of six chapters, which explains in detail the field (*kṣetra*), the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jña*) and so forth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā consists of eighteen chapters, which have been divided into three sections. The first six chapters describe *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, *bhakti-miśra-jñāna* and topics that are relevant for knowledge of the soul and the Supersoul. The second set of six chapters explains the glory of exclusive devotion; deliberates on spiritual and material devotion (*parā* and *aparā bhakti*); and describes the glory of Śrī Bhagavān's *svarūpa*, as well as the glory of the *svarūpa* of the devotee. It also explains the speciality and supremacy of *bhakti* compared to various other processes, and gives details of other similar topics. *Tattva-jñāna* is explained in detail in this third set of six chapters. Previously, it was described only in brief. It deliberates on material nature (*prakṛti*), the enjoyer (*puruṣa*), the field (*kṣetra*) and the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jña*). The most confidential instruction of Śrī Gītā is finally delivered in the Eighteenth Chapter.

In the first verse of this chapter, Arjuna is inquiring about such principles as *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *kṣetra*, *kṣetra-jña*, *jñāna* and *jñeya*. Some commentators, however, have purposely omitted this first verse, in which these questions have been raised.

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ २ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate

etat yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetra-jñā iti tad-vidah

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Lord said; *idaṁ* – this; *śarīraṁ* – body; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *kṣetram* – the field; *iti* – as; *abhidhīyate* – known; *etat* – this; *yaḥ* – who; *vetti* – knows; *taṁ* – that (person); *prāhuḥ* – describe; *kṣetra-jñāḥ* – the knower of the field; *iti* – thus; *tad-vidah* – persons conversant with that truth.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O son of Kuntī, those conversant with knowledge regarding *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā* describe this body as a field (*kṣetra*) and one who knows this body to be the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jñā*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: What is *kṣetra* and who is *kṣetra-jñā*? In reply to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *idaṁ*. This body is the refuge of all enjoyment through the medium of the senses and is called the field, or *kṣetra*. In other words, it is the origin of the tree of material existence. Those in bondage are covered by the misconceptions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in relation to their bodies, which are generated by the false ego. They are freed from such misconceptions however, when they attain the liberated stage. In other words, when they are liberated, they become free from attachment to the body. The living entity situated in either of these stages is known as *kṣetra-jñā*, the knower (*jñā*) of the field (*kṣetra*). He is like a farmer, in that he alone is the knower of his field and the enjoyer of its fruits.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.23) Śrī Bhagavān says:

adanti caikam phalam asya gṛhṛā grāme-carā ekam araṇya-vāsāḥ

haṁsā ya ekam bahu-rūpam ijyair māyā-mayaṁ veda sa veda vedam

The ignorant conditioned souls, greedy to acquire sense objects, experience misery as one of the fruits of this tree of material existence. Places like Svarga (the heavenly planets) are also ultimately miserable. However, there are some swan-like liberated personalities who also reside in the forest of the material world. They enjoy another type of fruit, namely the happiness of liberation (*mukti*), which is always blissful. Thus the one tree of material existence leads to various destinations, such as the heavenly planets, the hellish regions and liberation. It is observed, therefore, that this tree is composed of *māyā* (illusion) and that it has multiple forms, being born from the deluding potency (*māyā-śakti*). Only those who accept a bona fide spiritual master understand this secret, and it is they who actually know the field (*kṣetra*) and the knower of the field (*kṣetra-jñā*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After hearing Arjuna's questions, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the material body of the conditioned *jīva* which, along with his life-air and senses, is the place of enjoyment. It is called the *kṣetra*. One who knows this body understands that in the conditioned state it is either the means of enjoyment or the means of attaining liberation. The *jīva* situated in either of these states is called *kṣetra-jñā*. However, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa says, “*śarīrātmāvādī tu kṣetrajño na na kṣetratvena tat jñānābhāvāt* – that *jīva* who identifies himself with his body does not understand the *tattva* of the body; therefore, he is not *kṣetra-jñā*, the knower of the field.”

Those who accept this body as the self consider it to be a means of enjoyment only. Intoxicated by material false ego, they become bound to material existence. Life after life, their only attainment is misery. On the other hand, those who become free from material ego while remaining in their body and who render service to Śrī Hari gradually attain the happiness of liberation. After attaining the bliss of rendering service to Bhagavān, their lives become completely successful. This has been confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.23):

*adanti caikaṁ phalam asya gṛdhṛā grāme-carā ekam araṇya-vāsāḥ
hamsā ya ekam bahu-rūpam ijyair māyā-mayaṁ veda sa veda vedam*

Those attached to family life and who hanker after mundane pleasures taste only the miserable fruit of bodily enjoyment, while the wise and discriminating swan-like renunciants, who have relinquished all material goals, taste only the blissful fruit of transcendental happiness.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, “Śrī Bhagavān says: ‘O Arjuna, I first explained the *svarūpa* of the soul so that you would clearly understand the fundamental principles of devotion (*bhakti-tattva*), which is supremely confidential. I then explained the various activities (*karma*) of the conditioned souls and the nature of unalloyed *bhakti*, free from all designations. I concluded with a presentation on the three different processes – *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* – so that you would realize the highest end. At present, I am giving a specific, scientific description of knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*). By hearing this, you will become more fixed in the fundamental principles of unalloyed *bhakti*, which is free from all designations:

*jñānam parama-guhyam me yad vijñāna-samanvitam
sarahasyam tad-aṅgam ca gṛhāṇa gaditam mayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.31)

Knowledge of Me is non-dual, absolute and highly confidential. Although non-dual, it has four eternal divisions: My *svarūpa* (*jñāna*), realization of Me (*vijñāna*), *prema-bhakti* to Me (*rahasya*) and *sādhana-bhakti*, the means to attain Me (*tad-aṅga-pradhāna*). The *jīva* cannot understand this with his limited intelligence. He can only realize it by My mercy. *Jñāna* is My *svarūpa* and *vijñāna* is one’s relationship with Me through *bhakti*. The *jīva* is My *rahasya* and the *pradhāna* is My *jñāna-aṅga* (all that is accessory to My *svarūpa*). The eternal non-duality and the eternal confidential difference between these four principles are due to My inconceivable potency, the *acintya-śakti*.

“While instructing the four seed verses of the *Bhāgavatam* (*catuḥśloki*) to Lord Brahmā, I described four subjects: knowledge (*jñāna*), realized knowledge (*vijñāna*), confidential or secret topics (*rahasya*) and the limbs or various aspects of those confidential topics (*tad-aṅga*). The hidden meaning of *bhakti-tattva* does not manifest in the heart

without properly understanding these four essential topics. Therefore, through the medium of these instructions on *viñāna*, I am giving you pure intelligence, which is needed to understand these confidential instructions. When pure *bhakti* arises, causeless knowledge and renunciation easily awaken. These are the two concomitant fruits experienced while engaging in *bhakti*. O son of Kuntī, this body is called *kṣetra* and those who know this *kṣetra* are called *kṣetra-jña*.”

VERSE 3

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥३॥

kṣetra-jñam cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetra-kṣetrañayor jñānam yat taj jñānam matam mama

kṣetra-jñam – the knower of the field; *ca* – and; *api* – only; *mām* – Me; *viddhi* – understand; *sarva-kṣetreṣu* – within all the fields; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata; *kṣetra* – the field (in the form of the body); *kṣetra-jñayoḥ* – (of the living entity and the Supersoul) knowers of the field; *jñānam* – knowledge; *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *jñānam* – knowledge; *matam* – opinion; *mama* – is My.

O Bhārata, understand that I alone am the knower within the bodies of all living beings. This knowledge – of the body as the field and of the living entity and the Supersoul as the knowers of the field – is actual knowledge. This is My opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Thus the living entity is called *kṣetra-jña* (the knower of the field) because he has knowledge of *kṣetra*, the material body. But Paramātmā fully knows all fields, more so than the living entities. This verse, beginning with *kṣetra-jñam*, explains His quality of knowing all bodies. Śrī Bhagavān says, “Know Me, Paramātmā, who am situated as the Controller in all bodies, to be *kṣetra-jña*. The living entity is the *kṣetra-jña* of his individual body only. Furthermore, his knowledge of that body is incomplete. However, I alone am the perfect and complete knower of all bodies. Consider this to be My speciality.”

What is real knowledge, or *jñāna*? Anticipating this question, Śrī Bhagavān says, “Knowledge of *kṣetra* (the body) and *kṣetra-jñā* (the knowers of the body – the individual soul and the Supersoul), is indeed called *jñāna*. I accept this as actual knowledge.”

Of the two *puruṣas*, or persons who know the field of the body, the Supersoul is superior. Some persons explain that there is only one soul. This is rejected here, and it also contradicts a later statement of the *Gītā* (15.17).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Although the word *kṣetra-jñā*, the knower of the field, was used in the previous verse to indicate the living entity situated within the body, in the present verse Śrī Bhagavān, who is the indwelling witness in all, the Supreme Lord, the Supreme Director and Controller, and the Supersoul, explains that it is He who is the complete knower of the field, not the living entity.

The essence of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s commentary on this verse is as follows: “The *jīva* remains situated in this body, just as a subject remains subservient to a king, even though the *jīva*, as *kṣetra-jñā*, has knowledge of his own body as a means of enjoyment and liberation. But I alone am the controller and maintainer of everyone and, because I know all bodies, I am the complete knower of the field. Thus, I remain situated there like a king.”

It is also seen in the Smṛtis:

*kṣetrāṇi hi śarīrāṇi bījaṃ cāpi śubhāśubhe
tāni vetti sa yogātmā tataḥ kṣetra-jñā ucyate*

The entire body is like a field, and righteous and unrighteous actions are like the seeds of that field, in that they are its cause. Paramātmā knows the truth of all bodies. He is therefore called the complete *kṣetra-jñā*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.3.13) also says:

*kṣetra-jñāya namas tubhyaṃ sarvādhyakṣāya sākṣiṇe
puruṣāyātma-mūlāya mūla-prakṛtaye namaḥ*

I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto You, who are the Supersoul, the superintendent of everything, and the witness of

all that occurs. You are the Supreme Person, the origin of material nature and of the total material energy. You are also the owner of the material body. Therefore, You are the supreme complete. I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.*

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes “*kṣetram dehadvayam tattvena jānātīti kṣetrajñō ’antaryāmī* – Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness in all, knows the *tattva* of both the subtle and gross body and is called *kṣetra-jña*.” Furthermore, Śrī Bhagavān says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.17.11), “*kṣetra-jñāḥ sarva bhūtānāmi* – one who knows all living beings is called the knower of the field.”

The import of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s statement is that true knowledge means to know the field in the form of the body; the knower of this field, that is, the living entity, conditioned or liberated; and the Supersoul, Paramātmā, who is the original knower of the field, being situated within all. However, Paramātmā is different from the conditioned and liberated souls, and He is superior to them. Therefore, the conception that the living entity and the Supersoul are one is imaginary; it is opposed to the conclusion of the scriptures.

Also the Śruti statement, *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*, describes Paramātmā as being superior to all living, conscious, eternal entities. It also describes Him as being their controller and prompter. This conclusion is verified throughout the *Gītā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, “Because you are a *jīva*, you forget this fact again and again, but as the Supreme Lord, I never forget it.” According to the statement, *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*, the *jīva* is an insignificant part of Bhagavān. The *jīva* is eternally His part; in no state can he become one with Bhagavān by merging with Him.

The statement that *brahma*, the Absolute Truth, has become a living entity due to ignorance, and when freed from ignorance, the living entity again becomes *brahma*, is incorrect from the perspective of reason, logic and scripture. Ignorance can never touch Parabrahma, the Supreme Absolute Truth, who, in any state, is intrinsically composed of knowledge. It is said in the Śrūtis, “*satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma* – Parabrahma is never overpowered by

the deluding potency and falls into ignorance.” Thousands of Vedic statements give evidence of this.

Therefore, in this material body, there are two knowers of the field: the living entity and the Supersoul, Paramātmā. Paramātmā is the controller, prompter and imminent witness of the different living entities, who are situated in different bodies as localized knowers of the field. Paramātmā and the *jīva* can never be one.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “In regard to *kṣetra* (the field) and *kṣetra-jñā* (the knower of the field), there are three principles: the Lord (Īśvara), the living entity (*jīva*) and inert matter (*jaḍa*). Know that just as there is one *kṣetra-jñā*, the living entity, in each body, I, Īśvara, am the principal *kṣetra-jñā* of this entire inert world. By My controlling potency as the Supersoul, I am the knower of all other knowers. The knowledge of those who have understood these three principles by deliberating on *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jñā* is indeed realized knowledge.”

VERSE 4

तत् क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक् च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत्।
स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥४॥

*tat kṣetram yac ca yādṛk ca yad-vikāri yataś ca yat
sa ca yo yat-prabhāvaś ca tat samāsenā me śṛṇu*

tat – this; *kṣetram* – field; *yat* – what; *ca* – and; *yādṛk* – what is its nature; *ca* – and; *yad-vikāri* – what are its transformations; *yataḥ* – whence; *ca* – and; *yat* – for what reason (it exists); *saḥ* – that (knower of the field); *ca* – and; *yaḥ* – which (nature); *yat-prabhāvaḥ* – what is its influence; *ca* – and; *tat* – that; *samāsenā* – in brief; *me* – from Me; *śṛṇu* – hear.

Hear from Me a brief description of that field, its characteristics and transformations, why and from whom it has come into existence, and the *svarūpa* (nature) and influence of the knower of that field.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In this verse beginning with *tat kṣetram*, Śrī Bhagavān is beginning to elaborate on what He previously spoke about only in brief.

What is that *kṣetra*, or body? It is a combination of the five material elements, the life-air (*prāṇa*) and the senses. “Hear from Me how this body possesses different types of natures, desires and transformations, such as religiosity, enmity and friendship. Hear how it is born from the union of material nature (*prakṛti*) and the enjoyer (*puruṣa*), and how it manifests differently in the varieties of moving and non-moving forms. The knowers of the body are the *jīvātmā* and also the *Paramātmā*.” According to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, *kṣetra-jña* is in the neutral gender here, because the word *kṣetra* is used in the neutral gender.

VERSE 5

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक्।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥५॥

ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītaṁ chandobhir vividhaiḥ pṛthak
brahma-sūtra-padaiś caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ

ṛṣibhiḥ – by the sages; *bahudhā* – in many ways; *gītam* – has been described in song; *chandobhiḥ* – by the hymns of the Vedas; *vividhaiḥ* – through various ways; *pṛthak* – distinctly; *brahma-sūtra-padaiḥ* – through the statements of the *Vedānta-sūtra*; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *hetumadbhiḥ* – reasonable; *viniścitaiḥ* – perfectly ascertained conclusions.

The truth of the field and the knower of the field have been explained concisely in many ways by saintly persons in numerous Vedic literatures, and it is described with perfect logic and definitive conclusions in the verses of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Whose description of this subject matter are You going to briefly explain to me?” Anticipating this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān says, “Saints like Vasiṣṭha and others have described this in their *yoga-śāstras*.” *Chandobhir* means that it is also explained in the Vedas. Moreover, it is described in the *Brahma-sūtra* in aphorisms such as “*athāto brahma-jijñāsā* – therefore, one should enquire about *brahma*” (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.1). Since these *sūtras*

substantiate *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute Truth, they are known as *pāda*, that which gives the evidence required to establish Him.

What is the nature of that *brahma*? In response, Śrī Bhagavān explains, “This point specifically addresses the subject of the cause and effect of the universe.” It is determined by deliberating upon the truth of the substantial imports of *Brahma-sūtra*, such as “*ikṣhate nāśabdām* – the Supreme Lord is not indescribable” (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.5), and “*ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt* – by nature the Supreme Lord is blissful” (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.12).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *tattva* of *kṣetra* and its *kṣetra-jña*, as explained by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is accepted by all philosophers. This *tattva* is also clearly established in authoritative scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and *Brahma-sūtra*. Because the Vedas are *apauruṣeya* (not composed by any mortal being) they are accepted by everyone. The essence of the Vedas is the Upaniṣads, or Vedānta.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, an incarnation of Bhagavān, reconciled the seemingly contradictory statements of the Vedas and presented them in the form of short aphorisms, or *sūtras*, known collectively as the *Vedānta-sūtra*. The statements of the *Vedānta-sūtra* such as *ikṣhate nāśabdām* (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.5) and *ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt* (*Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.12) support this conclusion. *Ikṣhate nāśabdām* means that *brahma* can be seen and experienced only through the statements of the scriptures because He is *na aśabdām* – He cannot be known other than through the statements of the Vedas. This is explained in *Brahma-sūtra* (1.1.3), “*śāstra-yonitvāt* – *brahma* can be known and experienced through scripture (*śāstra*).” *Brahma* is the subject matter established by the Vedas; therefore, He is not beyond words. How is He experienced? In response to this question, it is further said, “*ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt* – the Supreme, whose very nature is filled with superlative bliss, can be seen and experienced by the practice of *bhakti*.” These statements establish Parabrahma as the perfect, or complete, knower of the field of the body, and the *jīva* who sees or experiences Him, or who performs *bhakti* to that Personality who is composed of bliss, as the partial, or secondary, knower of that field. Furthermore, according to *Brahma-sūtra* (2.3.16), “*nātmā śruter nityatvāc ca tābhyah* – the *jīva* is described as a partial

kṣetra-jña.” According to *Brahma-sūtra* (2.3.39), “*parāt tu tac chruteḥ* – Parabrahma is accepted as the complete *kṣetra-jña* and is superior to the living entity.”

In this verse, the word *ṛṣi* (sages) refers to the literature written by saints like Vasiṣṭha, and *chanda* (Sanskrit metre) refers to other Vedic literatures. In the *R̥ju* branch of the Vedas it is said: *tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ ity ādinā brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā ity astenānna-mayaṁ prāṇamaya-mano maya-vijñānamayānanda-mayāḥ pañca-puruṣāḥ paṭhitās teṣv annamayādi-trayaṁ jaḍa-kṣetra-svarūpaṁ, tato bhinno vijñānamayo jīvas tasya bhokteti jīva-kṣetra-jña-svarūpaṁ, tasmāc ca bhinnāḥ sarvāntara ānandamaya itīśvara-kṣetra-jña-svarūpaṁ uktam* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.2). This means, “Among conscious entities, there are five gradations of *puruṣa*, or enjoyer: *annamaya* (conscious only of food), *prāṇamaya* (conscious only of life), *manomaya* (conscious of the mind), *vijñānamaya* (conscious of the soul) and *ānandamaya* (conscious only of bliss). The first three (*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* and *manomaya*) represent consciousness centred upon the inert *kṣetra* (material body). Different from them is the *vijñānamaya-puruṣa*, the *jīva*, who, as the knower of the *kṣetra* (this material body), is the secondary *kṣetra-jña*. Distinct from these two is the Supersoul, and He is the *ānandamaya-puruṣa*. This *ānandamaya-puruṣa* is indeed Parameśvara, the regulator of everything, the witness of all and the original *kṣetra-jña*.”

VERSES 6–7

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥६॥

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत् क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥७॥

*mahā-bhūtāny ahaṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca
indriyāṇi daśaikam ca pañca cendriya-gocarāḥ*

*icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ
etat kṣetraṁ samāseṇa sa-vikāram udāhṛtam*

mahā-bhūtāni – the five great elements (earth, water, fire, etc.); *ahañ-kārah* – the conception of the self as the doer, false ego; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *avyaktam eva ca* – and the unmanifest material nature; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *daśa* – ten; *ekam* – the one (mind); *ca* – and; *pañca ca indriya-gocarāḥ* – the five sense objects (such as sound and touch); *icchā* – desire; *dveṣaḥ* – hate; *sukham* – happiness; *duḥkham* – unhappiness; *saṅghātaḥ* – the aggregate of all these (the body); *cetanā* – the functions of the mind for acquiring knowledge; *dhṛtiḥ* – patience; *etat* – this; *kṣetram* – field; *samāsenā* – in brief; *sa-vikāram* – together with their transformations; *udāhṛtam* – are said.

The five material elements, the false ego, the intelligence, the unmanifest material nature, the eleven senses, the five sense objects such as sound and form, desire, hatred, happiness, misery, the body, knowledge and patience comprise a brief description of the field, along with its transformations.

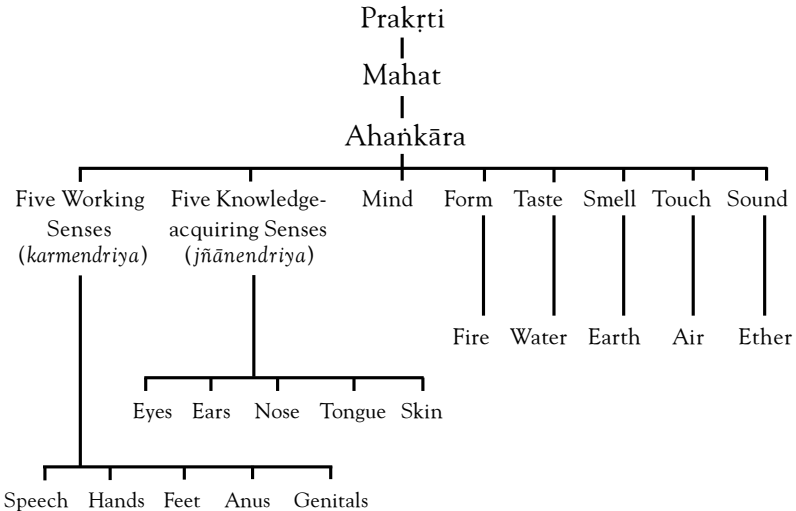
SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is now explaining the nature of *kṣetra*, the field of the material body. The following is a list of the twenty-four elements: earth, water, fire, air and sky; their cause – the false ego; intelligence that perceives the self; the cause of the false ego – the *mahat-tattva*; the cause of the *mahat-tattva* – *prakṛti*; the ten working senses and knowledge acquiring senses; the mind; and the five sense objects, such as sound and touch.

Desire, envy, happiness, misery, the body, which is a combination of the five material elements, consciousness knowledge and forbearance are functions of the mind. They are not functions of the soul. Therefore, these characteristics are all part of the *kṣetra* and are also characterized by qualities such as determination. In the Śruti it is said that the functions of the mind are desire, determination, doubt, faith, lack of faith, forbearance, detachment, shyness, intelligence and fear. They exhibit the qualities of the field of the body as previously described. “This *kṣetra* goes through six types of changes, such as birth and death, as described: *etat kṣetram savikāram*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The constituents of the field of the body are the twenty-four elements consisting of the

five *mahābhūtas* (earth, water, fire, air and sky), the false ego, the undifferentiated form of the total material energy (the *mahat-tattva*) and its cause, material nature (*prakṛti*), the ten external senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, speech, feet, hands, anus and genitals), the one internal sense (the mind) and the five objects of the senses (form, taste, smell, touch and sound). This is concluded from the statements of ṛṣis like Vasiṣṭha, Devala and Asita, from the Vedic *mantras* and from the *Vedānta-sūtra*. What actually is the *kṣetra*, or field of the body, and why it is known as such? This can be understood by analyzing these twenty-four elements. Transformations of the material body (*kṣetra*) are desire, envy, happiness, distress, all the activities of the body (which is a combination of the five material elements), the inclinations and absorptions of the mind (which is but a semblance of the pure consciousness of the soul) and forbearance. Therefore, it should be understood that they are a part of *kṣetra*. A chart depicting the twenty-four elements is given here.

TABLE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELEMENTS



VERSES 8-12

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
 आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ८ ॥
 इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।
 जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९ ॥
 असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
 नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १० ॥
 मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
 विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११ ॥
 अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
 एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२ ॥

amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntir ārjavam
ācāryopāsanam śaucam sthairyam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṅkāra eva ca
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam
asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu
nityam ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu
mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī
vivikta-deśa-sevitvam aratir jana-saṁsadi
adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam
etaḥ jñānam iti proktam ajñānam yad ato 'nyathā

amānitvam – being without desire for honour; *adambhitvam* – without pride; *ahimsā* – non-violence; *kṣāntiḥ* – forgiveness; *ārjavam* – simplicity; *ācārya-upāsanam* – worship of a spiritual preceptor who teaches by example; *śaucam* – cleanliness (internal and external); *sthairyam* – steadiness (of mind); *ātma-vinigrahaḥ* – control over the body and senses; *indriya-artheṣu* – from sense objects such as sound and touch; *vairāgyam* – detachment; *anahaṅkāraḥ* – freedom from false ego; *eva ca* – and also; *janma* – of birth; *mṛtyu* – death; *jarā* – old age; *vyādhi* – and disease; *duḥkha-doṣa* – the bad consequences due to sufferings; *anudarśanam* – considering repeatedly the statements of revealed

scriptures, the saints and spiritual preceptors; *asaktiḥ* – detachment (from sense pleasures); *anabhiśvaṅgaḥ* – freedom from absorption; *putra* – sons; *dāra* – wife; *gṛha* – home; *ādiṣu* – etc.; *nityam* – always; *ca* – and; *sama-cittatvam* – having an equipoised mind; *iṣṭa-anīṣṭa* – desirable and undesirable; *upapattiṣu* – amidst occurrences; *mayi* – to Me; *ca* – and; *ananya-yogena* – with exclusive connection; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *avyabhicāriṇī* – undeviating; *vivikta-deśa* – in solitary places; *sevitvam* – residing; *a-ratiḥ* – being without attachment; *jana-saṁsadi* – the association of sense-enjoyers; *adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam* – of the eternal nature of the truths concerning the Supreme Soul and the minute spirit souls (with the objective of freedom from repeated birth and death); *tattva-jñāna* – the principles of self-realization; *artha-darśanam* – investigating the (inner) purpose; *etat* – that; *jñānam* – knowledge; *iti* – thus; *proktam* – spoken; *ajñānam* – ignorance; *yat* – what; *ataḥ* – thus; *anyathā* – otherwise.

Devoid of a desire for honour; freedom from pride; possessing the qualities of non-violence; forbearance; simplicity; service to a qualified *guru*; both internal and external purity; steadiness of mind; control of the body and senses; detachment from sense objects such as sound and touch; absence of false ego; constantly perceiving the misery of birth, death, old age and disease; renouncing attachment to wife, children, home etc.; not being absorbed in the happiness and misery of others; equanimity in attaining either desirable or undesirable circumstances; one-pointed, steadfast and unswerving *bhakti* to Me; a liking for solitude; a distaste for the association of materialistic people; and constant deliberation on knowledge of the self and on the purpose of *tattva-jñāna*, that is, liberation – I consider all these to be knowledge. Everything else is ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In the above five verses, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining twenty practices to be cultivated, such as freedom from the desire to be honoured. He also elaborately explains the qualities of the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*, who are the *kṣetra-jñas*, those who know the field of the body. They are to be known as separate from the previously mentioned characteristics of the material body, or *kṣetra*. Seventeen of these qualities apply to both the *jñānīs*, or persons in search of knowledge,

and the *bhaktas*, or devotees. However, according to the statement of Bhagavān, *mayi cānanya-yogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī*, in order to experience Him, the devotees' only duty is to endeavour to perform exclusive devotion to Him. This is because the seventeen qualities, such as humility, manifest naturally within such devotees who practise *avyabhicāriṇī-bhakti*, chaste devotion. They have no need to endeavour separately to acquire these qualities. The last two qualities, however, are unique to the *jñānīs*. This is the opinion of the disciplic lineage of devotees, the *bhakta sampradāya*.

In this verse, the meaning of the series of words beginning with *amānitvam* is quite clear. In the Smṛtis, *śaucam* (cleanliness) is explained in this way: "Cleanliness is of two types, internal and external. External cleanliness is achieved by the use of earth, water, etc., and the cleanliness of consciousness, or desire, is called cleanliness of the mind." *Ātma-vinigrahaḥ* means 'control of the body'. To see the miseries of birth, death, etc., means to be constantly aware of them as a source of suffering. *Asaktiḥ* means 'to give up attachment to son, family, etc.', and *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ* means 'not becoming absorbed in the happiness or misery of others'. For example, "When my son or relative is happy, I am happy, and when they are miserable, then I am also miserable." *Iṣṭāniṣtopapattiṣu* means 'to remain equipoised upon receiving material objects, whether pleasurable or not pleasurable'.

Mayi means 'in Me, in My Śyāmasundara form', and *ananya-yogena* means '*bhakti* that is not mixed with *jñāna-yoga*, *tapa-yoga*, etc.' The word *ca* (also) indicates *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, *bhakti* that is mixed with yet predominant over *jñāna*, etc. Devotees only perform the first type of *bhakti* (*anyā-bhakti*). *Jñānīs* adopt the second type, *pradhānī-bhūtā-bhakti*, wherein *jñāna* is predominated by *bhakti*. Some devotees say, "Just as exclusive devotion is the means to attain pure love for Śrī Bhagavān, it also helps to give an experience of Paramātmā." The confidential glories of unwavering *bhakti* (*avyabhicāriṇī-bhakti*) have been described in this final set of six chapters.

Jñānīs, however, have a different opinion about *ananya-yogena*, saying that it means 'to see the self everywhere' and that *avyabhicāriṇī* means 'to perform that *yoga* every day'. According to Śrīpāda Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the word *avyabhicāriṇī* means 'that which cannot be checked

by anything'. The word *adhyātma-jñāna* refers to the knowledge that is situated in the self. In order to purify the self, *adhyātma-jñāna* should be practised constantly. *Tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam* means 'to see liberation, or *mokṣa*, as the goal of *tattva-jñāna*, to deliberate upon it and to discuss it, considering it to be one's cherished desire'. These twenty types of knowledge are the general means to attain *jñāna*, basic knowledge of the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*. Specific knowledge of the *Paramātmā* will be explained later. In contrast to these are symptoms of ignorance, such as the desire for honour.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "Humility; lack of false pride; non-violence; forgiveness; simplicity; service to the spiritual master; cleanliness; stability; control of the body and mind; detachment from sense objects; lack of false ego; realization of the miseries of birth, death, old age and disease; lack of attachment to son, family, etc., and indifference to their happiness and distress; even-mindedness under all circumstances; *avyabhicāriṇī-bhakti* (unalloyed and unswerving *bhakti* unto Me); residence in a solitary place; no interest in crowded places; firm belief that spiritual knowledge is eternal and the perception that *mokṣa* is the real purpose of *tattva-jñāna* – all are considered by the ignorant to be twenty transformations of *kṣetra* (the material body). In reality, they comprise knowledge, which destroys the transformations of *kṣetra*. One attains the supremely pure Absolute Truth by taking shelter of them. They are not the transformations of the field of the body; rather, they are the remedies that can destroy those transformations. "Of these twenty, a person should adopt exclusive and undeviating devotion to Me (*ananya-avyabhicāriṇī-bhakti*)." The other nineteen characteristics are secondary fruits of *bhakti*. They purify the impure *kṣetra* (body) of the *jīva* and ultimately help him attain his eternal, perfect *kṣetra*. These nineteen characteristics, which are like the throne of *Bhaktī-devī*, the goddess of devotion, should be understood as true knowledge. Everything else is *ajñāna*, ignorance.

Ananya-avyabhicāriṇī-bhakti is prominent among all other practices, or types of *sādhana*. The above qualities naturally manifest upon taking shelter of *bhakti*. Therefore, pure devotees only accept *ananyā-bhakti*,

which is the intrinsic characteristic of the *jīva*. The qualities that are marginal characteristics then manifest concomitantly. This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12):

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

All the demigods and their exalted qualities, such as *jñāna* and religiosity, always reside in the heart of those who have selfless devotion to Śrī Bhagavān. On the other hand, how can one who is not a devotee of Bhagavān possess any of the good qualities of a perfected *mahā-puruṣa*? Such a person is always hankering for petty worldly sense objects only.

Jñānīs practise the good qualities of saintly behaviour, non-violence, control of the mind and ego and so forth, but they do not endeavour for exclusive, unwavering devotion to Śrī Bhagavān. Their slight performance of *bhakti* is solely to attain perfection in *jñāna*, which is liberation. Therefore, it should be understood that their practice of devotion is *guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti*, *bhakti* that is predominated by *jñāna* and *karma*; it is not *svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti*, or pure devotion. Impersonalists, or *advaitavādīs*, fall into this category.

VERSE 13

ज्ञेयं यत्तत् प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।
अनादि मत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १३ ॥

*jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute
anādi mat-param brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate*

jñeyam – worthy to be known; *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *pravakṣyāmi* – I shall thoroughly explain; *yaj* – which; *jñātvā* – understanding; *amṛtam* – immortality; *aśnute* – one attains; *anādi* – without beginning; *mat-param* – dependent on Me; *brahma* – the great (refers to both the personal and impersonal aspects of God); *na* – neither; *sat* – cause; *tat* – that; *na* – nor; *asat* – effect; *ucyate* – is said.

Now I shall fully explain to you that which is worthy to be known. Upon understanding it, one attains liberation. The beginningless *brahma* is dependent on My personal form and is said to lie beyond all cause and effect.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The living entity and Paramātmā can be known by the various practices mentioned previously. Of the two, Paramātmā alone has been indicated by the word *sarvagata-brahma*, the all-pervading Supreme Spirit. [Note: The word *sarvagata* is from Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s original Sanskrit commentary.] This *brahma*, in His *nirviśeṣa* aspect (devoid of attributes) is the worshipful object of the *jñānīs*, and in His *saviśeṣa* aspect (replete with a variety of attributes), He is the worshipful object of the devotees. Because He is meditated upon in His four-armed form, He is known as Paramātmā, even though He resides within the body.

First, *brahma* is explained in this verse beginning with *jñeyam*. “*Anādi* means ‘without a beginning’, and since *brahma* is My *svarūpa*, it is eternal.” *Mat-param* means ‘I am the supreme shelter of *brahma*’. As will be said later on, “*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* – I am the foundation, or basis, of *brahma*.” But what is that *brahma*? Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān says that *brahma* is neither temporary nor eternal, being beyond both cause and effect.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Previously, Śrī Bhagavān explained the means of attaining *jñāna*. Now, in the present verse, He is explaining the Supreme Absolute Truth, which is knowable and which is the goal of that *jñāna*. The *jñānīs* think that the Absolute Truth is *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, bereft of name, form, qualities, pastimes, associates and so forth. Indeed, they imagine the Truth to be merely a void bereft of qualities like variegated activity. Pure devotees, who take shelter of exclusive, unwavering devotion, see the Supreme Absolute Reality as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of transcendental sports, the basis of all transcendental qualities, energies and *rasa*, and devoid of petty material qualities. Although in some places the Śrūtis describe this Truth as devoid of features, these statements only refute that Śrī Bhagavān possesses any material features; they do not deny His

transcendental qualities. The scriptures themselves have illuminated this deep secret:

*yā yā śrutir jalpati nirviśeṣam sā sābhidhatte sa-viśeṣam eva
vicāra-yoge sati hanta tāsām prāyo baliyah sa-viśeṣam eva
Hayaśirṣa-pañcarātra*

Those very same Vedic *mantras* that first describe the Absolute Truth as *nirviśeṣa* (without qualities) alternatively establish that Truth as *saviśeṣa* (with qualities). Both *nirviśeṣa* and *saviśeṣa* are indeed eternal aspects of Bhagavān, but deeply deliberating on this will reveal the personal *saviśeṣa-tattva* as superior. This is because one experiences only *saviśeṣa-tattva* in this world, whereas there is no experience of *nirviśeṣa-tattva* here.

The only knowable object of the *nirviśeṣa-jñānīs* is indicated in the present verse, spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, with the word *mat-param*, meaning ‘sheltered in Me’.

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyaयasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca
Bhagavad-gītā (14.27)*

I am the shelter of formless and imperishable *brahma* and the sole refuge of everlasting immortality, eternal *dharma* and transcendental bliss in the form of *prema* related to one-pointed devotion.

This subject will be described in detail in the commentary on the above verse. Sometimes in *śāstra*, the *jīva* is also called *brahma*, but the *jīva* can never be called Parabrahma, because he is different from Parabrahma in every respect. The living entity has atomic consciousness and Parabrahma is the infinite, conscious Entity.

Some people suffer from the misconception that the living entity becomes *brahma*. This is because they do not understand the deep import of the *Gītā*’s phrases such as *brahma-bhūta* (18.54) and *brahma-bhūyāya kalpate* (14.26), which describe the living entity. This subject will be described in detail in the verse *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā* (18.54).

Both the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā* are the objects of knowledge, but one can only understand that *jīva-tattva* is dependent on *Paramātmā* by

continuously cultivating devotional service to Him. The *jīva* is without beginning and by constitution devoted to Bhagavān. He is only partly endowed with the qualities of *brahma*, and he is beyond cause and effect.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, I have explained to you the fundamental principle of *kṣetra-jña* (the knowers of the field of the body). I have explained the nature of *kṣetra* (the field of body), its transformations, and the process by which one can become free from these transformations. I have also explained that the living entity and the Supersoul are the knowers of this field. Now, please listen as I explain that *tattva* which is knowable by realization. *Brahma*, the knowable, is without beginning. He is dependent on Me (*mat-param*) and beyond both cause and effect. Knowing this, one tastes the nectar of My *bhakti*.”

VERSE 14

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
 सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १४ ॥
sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvato 'kṣi-śiro-mukham
sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati

sarvataḥ – everywhere; *pāṇi* – hands; *pādam* – feet; *tat* – His; *sarvataḥ* – everywhere; *akṣi* – His eyes; *śiraḥ* – heads; *mukham* – faces; *sarvataḥ* – everywhere; *śrutimat* – that person listens; *loke* – in this world; *sarvam āvṛtya* – pervading everything; *tiṣṭhati* – He resides.

His hands and feet are everywhere. His eyes, heads and faces pervade all directions, and He hears everything. Situated thus, *brahma* pervades the entire universe.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Will it not contradict the statements of Śruti, such as “*sarvam khalv idaṁ brahma* – all this is *brahma*” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1) and “*brahmaivedaṁ sarvam* – everything is *brahma*”, to say that *brahma* is distinct from both cause and effect? Anticipating such a question, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining that although by nature *brahma* is beyond both cause and effect, at the same time, *brahma*

is also both the cause and the effect, because there is no difference between the energy and the energetic. Therefore, He is saying that His hands, feet, etc., are everywhere, which means that *brahma* has unlimited hands and feet – in the form of the hands and feet of every visible entity, extending from Lord Brahmā down to a minute ant. Thus His eyes, heads, mouths and ears are everywhere.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In the previous verse, *brahma* was described beyond cause and effect (*sat* and *asat*). Now, the *sūtra* from *Vedānta* “*śakti-śaktimātor abhedah* – the energy and the energetic are non-different” can be quoted in response to one who questions the validity of such Śruti statements as *sarvam khalv idaṁ brahma* and *brahmaivedaṁ sarvam*. According to this *sūtra*, although the *svarūpa* of Śrī Bhagavān is beyond both cause and effect, the workings of His potency (*śakti*) are indeed the work of the potent (*śaktimān*), because there is no difference between the energy and the energetic. One can thus understand that all effects, such as this visible world, are the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān, being non-different from Him and the transformations of His *śakti*. The present verse is being spoken to make this point clear. *Brahma* alone exists, pervading everything through the medium of the hands, feet, etc., of all *jīvas* who are subordinate to Him and situated within Him. Since He is all-pervading, He has unlimited hands, eyes, feet and ears. However, the *jīvātmā* is not all-pervading, nor does he possess unlimited hands, heads, feet, etc. *Paramātmā* is omnipotent, but the *jīva* is not.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The sun’s rays illuminate due to their dependence on the sun. In the same way, *brahma-tattva* has attained its infinite and all-pervading aspect because it is dependent on My potency. The existence of *brahma*, who is the resting place for unlimited *jīvas*, beginning from Brahmā down to the ant, collectively encompasses unlimited hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouths and ears, and is visible everywhere.”

VERSE 15

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १५ ॥

***sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam sarvendriya-vivarjitam
asaktam sarva-bhṛc caiva nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktṛ ca***

sarva-indriya – of all senses; *guṇa* – their functions; *ābhāsam* – the illuminator; *sarva-indriya-vivarjitam* – He is devoid of mundane senses; *asaktam* – He is detached; *sarva-bhṛt* – He is the maintainer of all beings; *ca* – yet; *eva* – indeed; *nirguṇam* – He is without material qualities; *guṇa-bhoktṛ* – He is the enjoyer of the six divine qualities; *ca* – yet.

That knowable Person is the illuminator of all the senses and their functions, yet He is devoid of mundane senses. Although detached, He is the maintainer of all living beings, and although devoid of material qualities, He is the enjoyer of six transcendental opulences.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Moreover, *brahma* manifests all the sense objects. The Śrutis say, “*tac cakṣuṣaś cakṣuḥ* – He is the eye of the eye” (*Kena Upaniṣad* 1.2) and “*sarvendriyair guṇaih* – He manifests the functions of the senses such as sound.” Yet He is *sarvendriya-vivarjitam*, which means that He has no material senses [rather, He has transcendental senses]. The Śrutis also say, “*apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā* – although He does not have material senses, such as hands and feet, He accepts, moves and sees” (*Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.19).

Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8) also states “*parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca* – it is heard that *brahma* has various types of transcendental potencies.” Those potencies are *jñāna* (knowledge), *bala* (strength) and *kriyā* (action), and they are naturally inherent within Him. His famous form as described in the Śrutis is the source of all energy.

He is devoid of attachment to the mundane plane, and He maintains everyone in His expansion as Śrī Viṣṇu. He has a unique transcendental form, which is free from the material modes of nature such as the mode of goodness, and He is *guṇa-bhoktṛ*, the enjoyer of the *guṇas*. He is addressed as *bhaga* because He is the enjoyer of six types of transcendental opulences.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: That *brahma* is the source of the function of the senses and is also the source of the sense objects.

It is also seen in the Śrutis, “*tac cakṣuṣaś cakṣuḥ* – He is the eye of the eye” (*Kena Upaniṣad* 1.2). He is devoid of material senses; He has transcendental senses. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.19) also states:

apāṇi-pādo javano grahitā paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarnaḥ

Although Bhagavān does not have material hands, feet, etc., He accepts offerings, He sees and He walks. Even without material eyes and ears, He sees and listens. In other words, He has transcendental hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc.

Therefore, *brahma* is not *nirviśeṣa*, devoid of qualities, but He is *saviśeṣa*, possessing transcendental features. He is devoid of material qualities, yet He is endowed with six types of transcendental opulences, and He is the enjoyer of them.

VERSE 16

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १६ ॥

*bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaram̐ caram eva ca
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyam̐ dūra-stham̐ cāntike ca tat*

bahir – outside; *antaḥ* – inside; *ca* – and; *bhūtānām* – of all beings; *acaram* – non-moving; *caram* – moving; *eva ca* – and indeed; *sūkṣmatvāt* – because He is very subtle; *tat* – He; *avijñeyam* – difficult to know; *dūra-stham* – is situated far away; *ca* – and; *antike* – very near; *ca* – and; *tat* – He.

That Absolute Entity dwells within and without all beings, and it is only because of Him that this world of moving and non-moving beings exists. Being very subtle, He is very difficult to comprehend, and He is simultaneously far away and very close.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: He is situated everywhere, both inside and outside all of the beings and elements of His creation, just as the sky is situated inside and outside the body. He is everything, all beings, both moving and non-moving, because He is the cause of the effect (the creation). Even so, He is not the object of direct perception because His form and

other attributes differ from material forms and attributes. Therefore, for ignorant people, He is millions of miles away. But for those who are enlightened in transcendental knowledge He, as the indwelling Supersoul, is as near to them as a person living in the same house. He is farther away than the farthest and nearer than the nearest. He is visible in the inner reaches of the heart for those who can see. As it is said in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, (3.1.7), “*dūrāt sudūre tad ihāntike ca paśyātsv ihaivam nihitam guhāyām* – in this world, He is much further away than the furthest thing, and for the observant, He is also seated secretly, very near in the midst of all.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All moving and non-moving beings are born from Parameśvara, that supreme *tattva*. He is situated within the heart of all beings as the indwelling Supersoul, and He exists externally in His all-pervading aspect. This entire moving and non-moving world is an effect of His energy, and therefore, the Śrutis describe Him to be everything: “*sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma* – all this is *brahma*.” Yet He has a personal form that is different from all other forms. He is equal only to Himself. He is *asamordhva*, meaning there is nobody equal to Him, what to speak of greater than Him. However, not everyone can know Him because He is very subtle. Only His exclusive devotees can know Him by the power of their pure devotion. Therefore, He is very far away as well as very near. He is near to His pure devotees and very far away from non-devotees:

tad ejati tan naijati tad dūre tad v antike
tad antar asya sarvasya tad u sarvasyāśya bāhyataḥ
 Śrī Īsopaniṣad (5)

The Supreme Lord walks but does not walk, He is far away but very near, and He is within everything yet outside everything.

VERSE 17

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
 भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १७ ॥

***avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam
bhūta-bhartṛ ca taj jñeyam grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca***

avibhaktam – He is undivided; *ca* – although; *bhūteṣu* – within all beings; *vibhaktam* – divided; *iva* – as if; *ca* – yet; *sthitam* – is situated; *bhūta-bhartṛ* – as the sustainer of all beings; *ca* – as well as; *taj* – that (Supreme Being); *jñeyam* – should be known; *grasiṣṇu* – the annihilator; *prabhaviṣṇu* – the creator; *ca* – and.

Although that Supreme Truth is undivided, He appears to be divided, being situated within every being. Know Him to be the sustainer, annihilator and creator of all.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Situated as the cause within the moving and non-moving living entities, He is undivided, while as the effect, He is divided. Only He, as Śrī Nārāyaṇa, is the sustainer of all beings during the period of maintenance. As Grasiṣṇu (the devourer) He is the destroyer during the time of annihilation, and at the dawn of creation, He is the creator of various effects and forms.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Although He appears differently in all living beings, that Supreme Absolute Truth, the *parama-tattva*, is situated in one undivided form. This is stated in the Śrutis: “*ekah santam bahudhā dṛśyamānam* – He is seen in various forms, although He is one.” The Smṛtis also say, “*eka eva paro viṣṇuḥ sarvatrāpi na saṁśayaḥ* – only one Paramātmā, Viṣṇu, exists everywhere; there is no doubt about this.” Just as the same sun appears differently to people in different places, He appears in various forms by His inconceivable potency, even though He is one. Only He exists as the individual Supersoul within the hearts of all *jīvas*, while externally He is all-pervading, in the form of the collective *puruṣa* – the Supersoul and the Supreme Lord. He is also the sustainer and the annihilator of all living entities. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (3.1) says, “*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayanty abhisamviśanti tad vijijnāsasva tad brahma* – you should understand *brahma* to be He from whom all living beings are born, by whose help they live and progress in life, and in whom they again enter.”

VERSE 18

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य धिष्ठितम् ॥१८॥

jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasaḥ param ucyate
jñānam jñeyam jñāna-gamyam ḥṛdi sarvasya dhiṣṭhitam

jyotiṣām – of the sun and other luminaries; *api* – also; *taj* – He; *jyotiḥ* – (the cause of) illumination; *tamasaḥ* – ignorance; *param* – transcendental; *ucyate* – He is said; *jñānam* – transcendental knowledge; *jñeyam* – the object of knowledge; *jñāna-gamyam* – accessible through divine knowledge; *ḥṛdi* – in the heart; *sarvasya* – of all (beings); *dhiṣṭhitam* – situated.

He is the source of illumination in all luminaries. Being transcendental to ignorance, He is divine knowledge, He is the object of such knowledge, and He is realizable through knowledge. He dwells within the heart of all beings.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: He is even the source of light for other luminaries, such as the moon and sun. This is confirmed in the Śrūti: “*sūryas tapati tejasendraḥ* – by His radiance, the sun becomes luminous and distributes heat.” What to speak of fire, even the sun, moon, stars and so forth lose their splendour before Him. They appear to be effulgent, but they all acquire their glow from Him. It is by His effulgence only that they acquire their own unique qualities of illumination. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.15) states:

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tāraḥ
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto 'yam agniḥ
tam eva bhāntaṁ anu bhāti sarvaṁ
tasya bhāṣā sarvaṁ idaṁ vibhāti*

The sun, moon, stars or fire cannot illuminate lightning what to speak of that self-effulgent Parabrahma. However, it is by that self-effulgent *brahma* alone that all luminous objects such as the sun give light. In fact, the whole universe exists only because of His existence.

Therefore, He is beyond ignorance; it can never touch Him. The Śrutis also say, “His complexion is like the colour of the sun and He lies beyond *tama*, or darkness.” His full manifestation in the faculty of pure intelligence is called actual knowledge, or *jñāna*. He Himself becomes modified as all forms, etc. He is the object of knowledge (*jñeya*), and He is accessible through knowledge (*jñāna-gamyam*). In other words, He is attainable by the previously described means of the careful practice of *jñāna*, such as humility. He alone is situated as Paramātmā in the hearts of all beings.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Parameśvara, the complete *kṣetra-jña*, is the original illuminator of all luminaries such as the sun, moon and fire:

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tāraṇam
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto 'yam agniḥ
Kāṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.15)*

Although the sun, moon, stars, lightning and fire illuminate everything, they cannot illuminate Bhagavān or His abode.

This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.42):

*mad-bhayād vāti vāto 'yam
sūryas tapati mad-bhayāt
varṣatīndro dahaty agnir
mṛtyuś carati mad-bhayāt*

It is because of fear of Me that the wind blows, the sun shines and Indra sends forth showers. Out of fear of Me, fire burns and death goes about taking its toll.

Furthermore, *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* (2.3.3) states, “*bhayād asyāgnistapati bhayāt tapati sūryaḥ* – out of fear of Parabrahma, fire burns and the sun heats.” That Supreme Truth is beyond darkness and is supremely pure, being transcendental to material nature. The Śrutis also say, “*āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ parastāt* – He is beyond material nature and has a golden effulgence (*āditya*).” He is knowledge (*jñāna*), the object of knowledge (*jñeya*) and the knower (*jñātā*).

Jñāna-svarūpa: The Śrutis say He is *vijñāna ānanda-ghanam brahma* – The specific attributes of *brahma* are that He is *jñāna-svarūpa*, intrinsically composed of knowledge, and *ghanībhūta ānanda-svarūpa*, the concentrated embodiment of bliss.

Jñeya-svarūpa: He is the shelter of those who desire liberation. Therefore, He is that which is to be sought:

*taṁ ha devam ātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ
mumukṣur vai śaraṇam ahaṁ prapadye
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.18)*

Being desirous of liberation, I surrender to the Supreme Lord, who illuminates the intelligence of the soul.

According to this Śruti statement, He is approachable by knowledge.

Jñātā: He is also the knower because He is situated in everyone's heart as the witness, controller and Supersoul. In this regard, one should refer to verses of the Śrutis, such as “*dvāsuparṇā, taṁ eva viditvā* and *antaḥ-praviṣṭaḥ śāstā* – within the body the *ātmā* and *Paramātmā* are compared to two birds seated in the same tree” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.6–7).

VERSE 19

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।
मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १९ ॥

*iti kṣetram tathā jñānam jñeyam cuktam samāsataḥ
mad-bhakta etad vijñāya mad-bhāvāyopapadyate*

iti – in this manner; *kṣetram* – the field (body); *tathā* – and also; *jñānam* – knowledge; *jñeyam* – the object of knowledge; *ca* – and; *uktam* – have been spoken of; *samāsataḥ* – in summary; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – My devotee; *etat* – all of this; *vijñāya* – having fully comprehended; *mat-bhāvāya* – *prema* for Me; *upapadyate* – attains.

Thus I have briefly described the field of the body, knowledge and the object of knowledge. By understanding them, My devotee attains *prema-bhakti*, transcendental loving devotion to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, in the verse beginning with *iti*, Śrī Bhagavān is concluding His statements about knowledge of the field of the body, etc., with an explanation about who is qualified for this knowledge and its result. From the verse *mahā-bhūtāny ahankāro* (Gītā 13.6) to *adhyātma* (Gītā 13.12), the word *kṣetra* has been explained. *Jñāna* has also been described from Gītā 13.8 to the word *adhyātma* in Gītā 13.12. *Jñeyah* and *jñāna-gamyam* have been described from Gītā 13.13 beginning with the line *anādi* up to the verse ending with *dhiṣṭhitam* in Gītā 13.18. That same Absolute Reality has been called *brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*. This has been briefly described.

The words *mad-bhakta* (My devotee) refers to a *jñānī* who is endowed with devotion. In such a case, *mad-bhāvāya* means that he attains *sāyujya-mukti*. Or, *mad-bhakta* means “My unalloyed servant, who knows ‘My Prabhu has so much opulence.’ In this case, such an unalloyed devotee becomes qualified to attain *prema* for Me”. In other words, he becomes eligible to attain *prema-bhakti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān clearly states that *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs*, *tapasvīs* and *nirviśeṣa-māyāvādīs* cannot understand the real truth of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Only devotees of Bhagavān can understand it. This is the deep meaning of the word *mad-bhakta* (My devotee). One should first become a *bhakta* to understand the *tattva* of the object of knowledge (*jñeya*), the knower (*jñātā*) and knowledge (*jñāna*), as described in the *Gītā*. For this reason, one must practise *bhakti* by taking shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, I have briefly described the field of the body, knowledge and the object of knowledge. This is considered to be knowledge with realization, and devotees who achieve it attain My unalloyed *prema-bhakti*. Non-devotees, who merely accept the shelter of useless monistic disciplic lineages, are cheated of real knowledge. *Jñāna* is nothing but the sitting place of *Bhakti-devī*. It is the pure state of a soul who has taken shelter of *bhakti*.” This topic will be further clarified in Chapter Fifteen, wherein the fundamental Truth about the Supreme Person is described.

VERSE 20

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।
विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्ध्य प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ २० ॥

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva vidhy anādī ubhāv api
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva vidhy prakṛti-sambhavān*

prakṛtiṁ – material nature; *puruṣaṁ* – the living entity; *ca* – and; *eva* – clearly; *viddhi* – you should understand; *anādī* – without beginning; *ubhāv* – both; *api* – also; *vikārān* – their transformations; *ca* – and; *guṇān* – all of their qualities; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *viddhi* – understand; *prakṛti-sambhavān* – arise from material nature.

Know both material nature (*prakṛti*) and the living entity (*puruṣa*) to be without beginning, and that the three binding qualities and their transformations are generated from *prakṛti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After explaining Paramātmā, Śrī Bhagavān is now explaining the *jīvātmā*, who is also *kṣetra-jña*, the knower of the field of the body. “Why did the relationship between this *kṣetra-jña* and *māyā*, the material energy, occur, and when did it start?”

Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān answers with this verse beginning with *prakṛti*. “*Prakṛti* (material nature) and *puruṣa* (the living entity) are both without beginning. That is, their cause has no beginning. Because they are the energy of Me, Īśvara, who am without beginning, they are also without beginning. Understand it in this way.”

It is also said in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.4–5):

*bhūmir āpo ’nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahankāra itiyāṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā
apareyam itas tv anyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parāṁ
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat*

This material nature is divided into eight parts: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego, but it is inferior to another nature of Mine. The living entities are My superior energy. They accept this material world to enjoy the results of their actions (*karma*).

“According to My statement here, because both the material energy and the living entity are My energy, they are without beginning, and therefore their relationship with each other is also without beginning. But although they are related to each other, they are in fact different.” Śrī Bhagavān therefore says that the body and the senses (*vikārāmś ca*) and the transformations of material qualities such as happiness, distress, lamentation and illusion (*guṇāmś caiva*) are born from *prakṛti* (*prakṛti-sambhavan*). The living entity, who is modified in the form of *kṣetra*, the field of the body, is separate from *prakṛti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After Śrī Bhagavān explains both the *kṣetras* – the partial *kṣetra-jña* (the *jīva*), the complete *kṣetra-jña* (Paramātmā), *jñāna* and *jñeya*, He explains the transformations of *kṣetra*, such as lust, anger, affection and fear, and how the relationship between the *kṣetra-jña-jīva* and *māyā* has occurred. Both material nature (*māyā*) and the living entity are without beginning, being the energy of Parameśvara. This means that they are also eternal. Inert matter is called *aparā-prakṛti*, and the *jīva* is called *parā-prakṛti*.

In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 20.108, 109, 111 and 117) in the teachings of Mahāprabhu to Sanātana Gosvāmī, we see:

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'tatasthā-śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'
sūryāmsu-kiraṇa, yena agni-jvālā-caya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tīna-prakāra 'śakti' haya
kṛṣṇera svābhāvika tīna-śakti-pariṇati
cicchakti, jīva-śakti, āra māyā-śakti
kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha

By his constitutional nature, the living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's marginal potency, the *tatastha-śakti*, transforms into unlimited living entities. Since *śakti* (energy) and *śaktimān* (the energetic) are non-different, then the atomic conscious *jīvas*, which are transformations of *śakti*, are in some respects non-different from Kṛṣṇa. But they are also eternally different in various ways. Bhagavān

is unlimitedly conscious and the living entity is minutely conscious. Both are non-different from the perspective of consciousness, but Bhagavān is the complete conscious entity and the living entity is an atomic conscious entity. Bhagavān is the master of *māyā*, and the living entity is subject to *māyā*. Bhagavān is the cause of creation, sustenance and destruction, but the living entity is not. The example is given that just as unlimited atoms are visible in the rays coming from the sun, the rays of Kṛṣṇa's energy produce unlimited atoms in the form of the living entities. Similarly, just as unlimited minute sparks come out of a fire, so unlimited atomic conscious living entities emanate from Bhagavān.

These are partial examples to explain the relationship between *sac-cid-ānanda* Bhagavān and the atomic conscious living entity. This means that the purpose of these examples is to make this reality understood, and for this, *śākhā-candra-nyāya*, literally, 'the logic of using the branch of a tree to locate the moon' is employed. In this material world, no example can fully describe Parabrahma, but these examples give a partial understanding.

Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate limit of the Absolute Truth. His inherent transcendental potency is also known as the *antarāṅgā-śakti*, *cit-śakti* or *parā-śakti*. This internal potency manifests itself in three ways. When it manifests the spiritual world (*cit-jagat*) it is called *cit-śakti*. When it manifests unlimited living entities, it is called *jīva-śakti* and when it manifests the material universe, it is called *māyā-śakti*. By the will of Bhagavān, the living entities manifest from the *jīva-śakti*. It is therefore their constitutional nature to be eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, but they can come under the influence of *māyā* because they are atomic by nature. The living entities situated in this illusory world have misused their free will, and they have forgotten their own *svarūpa* as well as Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa* due to associating with the deluding potency since time immemorial. Trapped in the cycle of birth and death, they are suffering, burned by the threefold miseries. When by some great fortune the living entities who have become bound in this material world attain the association of *sādhus*, they can come to realize their own constitutional nature. Following the process of *bhakti*, they engage in the service of Bhagavān, by which they can become situated in their actual identity.

This conclusion is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37):

*bhayaṃ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṃ
bhaktyaikayeṣaṃ guru-devatātmā*

The living entity is the eternal servant of Bhagavān, but by turning away from Bhagavān, he has forgotten his own *svarūpa*. Therefore, his eternal nature, service to Kṛṣṇa, has become covered. By associating with the deluding potency, he identifies himself with the body and, subsequently, he always fears for the material body, his house and other things. Bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's external deluding energy, He undergoes various types of miseries. By some good fortune, an intelligent person will take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master and will worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa with exclusive devotion. Only such a person is able to cross over *māyā*.

Furthermore it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.7.9):

*seyam bhagavato māyā yan nayena virudhyate
īśvarasya vimuktasya kārpaṇyam uta bandhanam*

Some conditioned souls maintain that Śrī Bhagavān is overcome by illusion. And at the same time, they proclaim Him to be unconditioned. This opposes all logic.

Bhagavān's potency is a special type. It can make the possible impossible and the impossible possible. This potency of Bhagavān makes it possible for the living entity to attain liberation from the bondage of the material world once he has attained the mercy of the ever-liberated Lord, and it also makes it possible for the living entity to be bound to this world. This fact cannot be understood merely on the strength of logic, and the influence of Bhagavān's inconceivable potency cannot be understood merely by argument. This potency puts the living entity into delusion, rendering him unable to realize Bhagavān's mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "I am explaining the result of knowing *kṣetra*, the field of the body, and *kṣetra-jña*, the knowers of that field. Three *tattvas* manifest in the existence of the

living entity bound by matter: *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* and Paramātmā. The *kṣetra* is known as material nature, or *prakṛti*, the living entity is known as *puruṣa*, and My all-pervading manifestation in both of them as Paramātmā. *Prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are both without beginning. They exist even before material time and thus do not take birth within it. Rather, they appear by My potency in spiritual time, within My supreme existence. Under the shelter of mundane time, material nature merges into Me and again becomes manifest during creation. The living entity is a *tattva* that emanates from My eternal marginal potency, the *taṭastha-śakti*. But because he has become averse to Me, he has been enveloped by My material potency. Although the living entity is in fact a pure, conscious entity, his quality is marginal, and therefore, he has even acquired a usefulness for matter. Conditioned material intelligence and knowledge cannot ascertain how the conscious living entity became entangled in inert matter, because My potency of inconceivability is not subordinate to your limited knowledge. It is important for you to know this much only: all of the transformations and qualities of the conditioned soul are born from material nature and are not a part of his eternal constitution.”

VERSE 21

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।
पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २१ ॥

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate

kārya – effect; *kāraṇa* – cause; *kartṛtve* – the workings; *hetuḥ* – the cause; *prakṛtiḥ* – material nature; *ucyate* – is said to be; *puruṣaḥ* – the jīva; *sukha-duḥkhānām* – of happiness and distress; *bhoktṛtve* – in experiencing; *hetuḥ* – the cause; *ucyate* – is said to be.

Material nature is said to bring about the workings of material cause and effect, and the minute living entity, the conditioned soul (*puruṣa*), is said to be the cause of his own experiences of material happiness, distress and so forth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is revealing the living entity's relationship with the external energy, *māyā*. *Kārya* (effect) refers to the body, *kāraṇa* (cause) refers to the senses, which are the means of happiness and misery, and *kartṛtva* (operating agent), refers to the presiding deities of the senses, the demigods. Due to ignorance, the *puruṣa*, or conditioned soul, adopts the attitude of being the doer, but in fact, material nature is the cause of this feeling. Material nature in contact with the *puruṣa* transforms into an effect. The tendency of *māyā* called *avidyā* (ignorance) is to give illusory knowledge to the living entity. However, the *puruṣa* (living entity) is the sole cause of his experience of the happiness and misery produced by *māyā*. Although the effect (*kārya*), the cause (*kāraṇa*), the operating agency (*kartṛtva*) and the experience (*bhokṛtva*) are the characteristics of material nature, all are predominated by inertness (*jaḍa*). And due to his conscious nature, the living entity (*puruṣa*) predominates over the experience of happiness and distress (*bhokṛtva*). A thing is named according to its predominant aspects. According to this logic, material nature is said to be the cause of the body (*kārya*), the senses (*kāraṇa*) and the demigods (*kartṛtva*). The *puruṣa* is said to be the cause of experience.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Prakṛti* is the cause of mundane effect, or *kārya* (the body). It is also the cause of mundane cause, or *kāraṇa*, (the senses) and the cause of the operating agency, or *kartṛtva* (the presiding deities of the senses), while the conditioned living entity is said to be the cause of *bhokṛtva*, the experience of mundane happiness and misery. Here, one should clearly understand that the living entity in his pure state is not the enjoyer of material happiness, nor does he experience distress. However, because the living entity is born from the marginal potency, when he identifies himself with the body, which is generated by contact with the external potency, an ego develops whereby he feels that he experiences material happiness and distress.

In this regard, Lord Kapiladeva says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.8):

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve
kāraṇam prakṛtiṁ viduḥ
bhokṛtve sukha-duḥkhānām
puruṣam prakṛteḥ param

O Mother, those who know the truth accept *prakṛti* (material nature) to be the cause of *kārya* (the body), *kāraṇa* (the senses) and *kartṛtva* (the presiding deities of the senses, the demigods).

Through his pure ego, the soul who is fixed in his constitutional position is related to Paramātmā as His eternal servant, and therefore Paramātmā dominates the soul's existence. Thus the pure soul is above all material designations and unaffected by the transformations of material nature. Material nature predominates over the conditioned soul because he strongly identifies with the body, which is born from the transformation of material nature. Therefore, learned persons say that *prakṛti*, material nature, is the cause of the operating agency, or the presiding deities of the senses (*kartṛtva*). However, in terms of experiencing the results of action, such as happiness and distress, the *puruṣa* (living entity), who is different from material nature, is said to be the cause of that experience. Both the operating agent and experience, or perception, are subordinate to ego, yet material nature is the dominant factor in them because the body and so forth are the effect of inert matter. The experience of happiness and distress is not possible without consciousness; therefore, the conscious entity, who is under the control of material nature, is the dominant factor here. Ultimately, however, it should also be understood that the operating agency (*kartṛtva*) of both material nature and the conscious living entity is under the control of the Supreme Lord (Īśvara). Both *māyā* as well as the living entity are subordinate to His control.

VERSE 22

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ २२ ॥

puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi bhunkte prakṛti-jān guṇān
kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu

puruṣaḥ – the *jīva*; *prakṛti-sthaḥ* – being situated within material nature; *hi* – indeed; *bhunkte* – enjoys; *prakṛti-jān* – born of material nature; *guṇān* – the sense objects; *kāraṇam* – the cause; *guṇa-saṅgaḥ* – in

association with the binding qualities of nature; *asya* – of the *jīva*; *sat-asat-yoni* – higher or lower species; *janmasu* – taking births.

Becoming situated within material nature, the living entity enjoys sense objects, which emanate from that nature. The cause of his birth in higher and lower species is his association with the three qualities of material nature, which bind him to material existence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The living entity considers the qualities of material nature, such as *kartṛtva* (the performer of action) and *bhokṛtva* (the experience of happiness and distress) to be his own, because of the false knowledge born of ignorance that has existed since time immemorial. This is the reason for his bondage to the material world. The *jīva* is situated within the body, which is the effect of *prakṛti*, material nature, and he is fully absorbed in identifying the body as his own self. Due to his false ego, he considers experiences of the mind, such as lamentation, delusion and misery, which are generated by the modes of material nature, to be his own and suffers because of them. This is all because of *guṇa-saṅgah*, association with the modes of material nature. This means that his identification with the body, which is made of the material modes, is an assumption based on ignorance, because the *jīva* is in fact free from this association.

Where does the living entity enjoy? Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān says, “In the species that have higher consciousness such as saintly persons and demigods – *satīṣu* – and in the species whose consciousness is low, such as animals and birds – *asatīṣu*.” He takes birth and experiences happiness and distress according to his good and bad *karma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having turned their faces away from Kṛṣṇa, the living entities, who are marginal by nature, consider the body to be the self. They falsely see themselves to be the cause of the result of their activities and the enjoyers of inert matter. Thus they become bound to the material world and take birth in various species of life, thereby experiencing happiness and distress. Such living entities, who are deluded by *māyā*, have fallen into the cycle of birth

and death. Consequently, they suffer worldly miseries, sometimes taking birth in the heavenly planets and sometimes in hell, sometimes as kings and sometimes as subjects, sometimes as *brāhmaṇas* and sometimes as *śūdras*, and sometimes as worms, demons, servants or masters. Sometimes they are happy and sometimes distressed. The consciousness of the living entity is atomic, and although he is a servant of Bhagavān, he becomes overpowered by the external energy, which is close by. This is because he harbours sensual material desires, which are the result of his aversion to Kṛṣṇa. Just as the intelligence of a person who is possessed by a ghost becomes covered, similarly, the intelligence of the living entity who is overpowered by *māyā* becomes covered. By the mercy of Bhagavān and His devotees, he attains saintly association (*sat-saṅga*) and becomes free from the deluding external energy, or *māyā*. Becoming situated in his own *svarūpa*, he enjoys the bliss of service to Śrī Bhagavān.

*kṛṣṇa bhūli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha*

*kabhu svarge uthāya kabhu narake dūbāya
daṇḍya-jane rājā yena nadīte cubāya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.117-118)

Because he has forgotten Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been absorbed in his attempts to enjoy the material energy since time immemorial. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's deluding potency awards the living entity the various sufferings of material birth and death. Sometimes he is elevated to the heavenly planets, and at other times he is thrown into hell. This can be likened to a man the king punishes by tying him to a wooden plank and dunking him in a river. Sometimes he is immersed till he nearly drowns, and sometimes he is released to experience a few moments of so-called happiness.

VERSE 23

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥ २३ ॥

***upadraṣṭānumantā ca bharttā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ
paramātmēti cāpy ukto dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ***

upadraṣṭā – the witness; *anumantā* – the permitter; *ca* – and; *bharttā* – master; *bhoktā* – enjoyer; *mahā-īśvaraḥ* – the Supreme Controller; *parama-ātmā* – the Supersoul; *iti* – that; *ca api* – and also; *uktaḥ* – it is said; *dehe* – body; *asmin* – in this; *puruṣaḥ paraḥ* – a superior transcendental enjoyer.

In this body, there exists another *puruṣa* apart from the individual living entity. He is known as the Supersoul and He is called the witness, the permitter, the supporter, the maintainer, the Supreme Controller, Paramātmā and so forth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After explaining the conscious living entity, the *jīvātmā*, Śrī Bhagavān is now explaining Paramātmā, the Supersoul, in this verse beginning with *upadraṣṭā*. The verses from *anādi mat-param brahma (Gītā 13.13)* to *hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam (Gītā 13.18)*, explain Paramātmā in both a general and specific manner. One fact in particular should be understood: although Paramātmā remains close to the *jīvātmā*, He is still separate from him. To clarify this, it is stated that Paramātmā is situated within the body. *Para* (another) refers to another *puruṣa*, or enjoyer, within this body. That *puruṣa* is Maheśvara (the Supreme Controller), or Paramātmā. The very word ‘Paramātmā’ establishes that He is superior to the *ātmā*. The word *parama* (supreme) only partially favours *ekatma-vada*, or the theory, that there is only one soul throughout the creation. In fact, the word *parama* refers to *svāmśa*, a personal expansion of Kṛṣṇa. This is given emphasis by stating that He is situated separately from the *jīva* although very close (*upa*) to him, and that He is the seer, or witness. *Anumantā* (the permitter) means that while residing close to the living entity, He is kind and facilitating. It is said in *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (Uttara 97)* “*sākṣī cetāḥ kevala nirguṇaś ca* – that *puruṣa* is *sākṣī* (the witness), *cetāḥ* (conscious), *kevalā* (the undivided Reality) and *nirguṇa* (beyond the material modes).” Similarly, *bhartā* means ‘supporter’ and *bhoktā* means ‘protector’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Paramātmā, who is situated as the witness in this body, is different from the *jīva*. This Paramātmā is not

a *jīva*. The monists, or *advaitavādīs*, consider the *jīvātmā* and Paramātmā to be one, but it is clear from this verse that within each body, Paramātmā, who is the witness and permitter, is different from the *jīvātmā*. Because He is superior to the *jīvātmā*, He is called Paramātmā, or the superior *ātmā*. This Paramātmā is a *kalā*, a portion of a portion (an *aṁśa* of an *aṁśa*) of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Without His permission, the *jīvātmā* cannot do anything. There are unlimited *jīvātmās*, and Paramātmā eternally exists within each of them as their friend and supreme well-wisher. Although He lives with the living entity, Paramātmā is always the master of both the *jīva* and of the external potency, *māyā*.

Bhagavān has bestowed an invaluable treasure upon the living entity in the form of independence. By properly utilizing this independence, the living entity can very easily relish the nectar of loving service to Bhagavān in His eternal abode. But by misusing this independence, he becomes bound by *māyā*, and while suffering from the threefold miseries, he is trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, how can a living entity who is overpowered by *māyā* ever be Bhagavān, the master of *māyā*? Such a conception is completely erroneous and opposed to the conclusions of all the scriptures.

Paramātmā is very clearly described in the Śrutis as different from the *jīvātmā*: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām* (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.13). He is the Supreme Eternal among all eternal. That is, He is the topmost eternal being. And among all conscious beings, it is He who bestows consciousness, the original consciousness. Moreover, it is said in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.6) and the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.1.1):

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty
anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti

Kṣīrodakaśāyī-puruṣa and the living entity live together in this temporary material world (the body) just like two birds who are friends sitting in a *pīpala* tree. One, the living entity, is tasting the fruits of the tree according to his actions, and the other, Paramātmā, is the witness. He is not enjoying the fruits, but He is watching His friend.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.6) also states:

*suparṇāv etau sadṛṣau sakhāyau
yadrchayaitau kṛta-nīḍau ca vṛkṣe
ekas tayoh khādati pippalānnam
anyo niranno 'pi balena bhūyān*

Two birds in the form of the living entity and Supreme Controller have a relationship, being equal in quality. That quality is consciousness. They are living in the nest (heart) of the tree (the body) by the will of providence. One bird (the living entity) is enjoying the fruits (*karma*) of that tree (the body). The other bird (Īśvara, the Supreme Controller) is not enjoying the fruits. He is ever satisfied in eternal bliss, being happily situated due to the strength of His potencies such as *jñāna*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The living entity is My friend. He becomes inclined to Me when he becomes purely situated in his marginal nature. This marginal nature is his independence. The perfection of *jaiva-dharma*, the eternal occupation of the living entity, is to achieve pure love for Me by using his marginal (independent) nature. When the living entity misuses that independent nature, he enters the material field. I, as Paramātmā, then become his companion. Therefore, I alone am the witness, the permitter, the supporter and protector, and the Supreme Controller of all the living entity’s actions. As Paramātmā I am always present in the body as *parama-puruṣa*, the Supreme Person. I award the result of whatever *karma* is performed by him in his conditioned state.”

VERSE 24

*य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।
सर्वथा वर्त्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥२४॥*
*ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha
sarvathā varttamāno 'pi na sa bhūyo 'bhijāyate*

yaḥ – who; *evam* – in this manner; *vetti* – understands; *puruṣam* – the Supreme Person; *prakṛtim* – material nature (*māyā*); *ca* – and (the

living beings); *gunaiḥ* – three binding influences of goodness, passion and ignorance; *saha* – together; *sarvathā* – in every way; *varṭtamānaḥ api* – even though situated (within the material world); *na* – never; *sah* – he; *bhūyaḥ* – again; *abhijāyate* – takes birth.

One who thus understands the Supersoul (*puruṣa-tattva*), the deluding potency with her three binding influences (*māyā-tattva*), as well as the minute living beings (*jīva-tattva*), does not take birth again, even though presently situated within this material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the result of this *jñāna*. “Although overpowered by sleep and distraction of mind, those who know *puruṣa* (Paramātmā), *prakṛti* (the material energy) and *jīva-śakti* (understood by the word *ca*) do not take birth again.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *sādhaka*, or practitioner, becomes qualified to achieve liberation when he knows the fundamental principles of devotion (*bhakti-tattva*), the conscious living entity (*jīva-tattva*) and the Supersoul (*paramātma-tattva*) and also their mutual relationships. Then, by the mercy of a bona fide spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas, and by following the path of pure *bhakti*, he gradually attains the stages of faith (*śraddhā*), strong, fixed faith (*niṣṭhā*), relish (*ruci*), attachment (*āśakti*), transcendental emotion (*bhāva*), and finally pure love for Bhagavān (*bhagavat-prema*) and enters His abode. It is certain that the living entity never fell from the eternal abode of the Lord and never will. The imaginary conception that the conditioned souls were first engaged in the service of Bhagavān in His abode and somehow or other fell to the material world is both illogical and against the conclusion of all scriptures. But say, for the sake of argument, that this theory is accepted, then the glories of *bhakti* and *prema* come into question if one falls from Śrī Bhagavān’s abode into the material world, even after performing rigorous *sādhana* to attain it. The examples of King Citraketu and Jaya and Vijaya are not appropriate in this regard because they are eternal associates of Bhagavān. By the will of Bhagavān, they only descended into this material world for the welfare of the *jīvas* and for the nourishment of Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes. It is

a grievous offence to consider them ordinary conditioned souls. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this in *Mādhurya-kādambinī*. The living entity who attains residence in the abode of Śrī Bhagavān never returns to this material world, and if he ever does come here, it is as an associate of Bhagavān and by His will. He is not subject to material conditions. The *Gītā* (15:6) states:

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*

Neither the sun, moon nor fire can illuminate that supreme realm, attaining which surrendered persons do not return to this world. That abode of Mine is illuminating and self-effulgent.

VERSE 25

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापर ॥ २५ ॥
*dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare*

dhyānena – through meditation (upon Bhagavān); *ātmani* – within their hearts; *paśyanti* – they behold; *kecit* – some (persons); *ātmānam* – the Supersoul; *ātmanāḥ* – personally; *anye* – others (the *jñānīs*); *sāṅkhyena* – through the *yoga* of analyzing the elements of the material world; *yogena* – through the eightfold process of mystic *yoga*; *karma-yogena* – by unmotivated activity within *karma-yoga*; *ca apare* – and others.

By meditating on the Supreme Person, the devotees see Him within their hearts. The *jñānīs* try to see Him by analytical philosophy, *sāṅkhyā-yoga*. The *yogīs* meditate on Him as the Supersoul by the eightfold process of mystic *yoga*, and others attempt to perceive Him through the process of selflessly performing their prescribed duty and offering Him the results, *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the various means to attain *ātma-jñāna*, knowledge of the self, in this verse beginning

with *dhyānena* and in the next. By *dhyāna*, meditation on Bhagavān, some devotees see Him within their hearts. This will be explained in *Gītā* 18.55 – *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti*. “But I am not visible to other types of worshippers. The word *anye* (others) indicates that the *jñānīs* endeavour to see Me by *sāṅkhya*, the analytical study of conscious and inert matter. The *yogīs* endeavour to see Me by the eightfold *yoga* process, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, and the *karma-yogīs* try to see Me by selflessly performing their prescribed duty, *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*.”

Here, *sāṅkhya-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* are not the direct causes of receiving *darśana* of Paramātmā, because they are in the mode of goodness, and Paramātmā is beyond the modes of nature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.1) also states “*jñānam ca mayi sannyaset* – one should surrender that knowledge to Me.” Furthermore “*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am attained only by pure devotion” (11.14.21). It is clear from the above statements of Bhagavān that He is attained only by *bhakti* that is devoid of *jñāna*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining how one can attain pure knowledge of the self (*viśuddha-ātma-jñāna*), which was described in the previous verse. Although the scriptures mention various processes such as *sāṅkhya-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, one can only attain this pristinely pure *jñāna* in a simple and natural way by *bhakti-yoga*. In the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21), Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally says, “*bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I can be attained only by *bhakti*.” Furthermore, He says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.6–8):

*yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇām śreyo-vidhitsayā
jñānam karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo ’nyo ’sti kutracit*

*nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogo nyāsinām iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām karma-yogas tu kāminām*

*yadyḥchayā mat-kathādau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto bhakti-yogo ’sya siddhi-dah*

For the welfare of human beings, I have described three types of *yoga*: *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*. There is no other

way to achieve Me. Those who are completely detached from the material world become eligible to perform *jñāna-yoga*, but those who are neither too detached from worldliness nor too attached to it, and who, by the will of providence, have faith in hearing about My pastimes, are qualified to engage in *bhakti*. By following the path of *bhakti*, they attain perfection very quickly.

“*Bhakti-yoga* is the best of these three types of *yoga*. In fact, I am only fully attained by devotion. This is a very deep secret. ‘*Na sādhayati mām yogo* – I am not controlled by *sāṅkhya*, etc.’ (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.20). In other words, I do not become pleased by the processes of *karma-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga*, nor by the chanting of *mantras* (*japa*), the performance of austerities (*tapa*), fire-sacrifices (*yajña*), meditation upon the self and so forth. I am conquered only by *bhakti*.”

This is also confirmed in the *Gītā* (6.47):

*yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ*

However, he who constantly worships Me with full faith, his mind undeviatingly attached to Me, is in My opinion the topmost of all *yogīs*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, in regard to spiritual attainment, the conditioned souls are divided into two divisions: those averse to Me (*bahir-mukha*) and those inclined to Me (*antar-mukha*). Atheists, materialists, sceptics and moralists are counted among those averse to Me. An inquisitive and faithful person, a *karma-yogī* and a devotee are of the second type, as they are inclined toward Me. Devotees are the best of all because they take shelter of *cit*, the spiritual nature, which is beyond matter, and they meditate on Paramātmā within the self. The *sāṅkhya-yogīs* who search after Īśvara (the Controller) are the next best. After deliberating on *prakṛti*, material nature, which consists of twenty-four elements, they come to know that the twenty-fifth element, the *jīva*, is a pure conscious entity. They gradually engage in *bhakti-yoga* to Bhagavān, the twenty-sixth element. The *karma-yogīs* are inferior to them. By the process of *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, selflessly performing their prescribed duty and

offering the results to Bhagavān, they attain the facility to deliberate on and worship Him.”

VERSE 26

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २६ ॥

*anye tv evam ajānantaḥ śrutvānyebhya upāsate
te 'pi cātitaranty eva mṛtyum śruti-parāyaṇāḥ*

anye – others; *tu* – but; *evam* – thus; *ajānantaḥ* – not knowing; *śrutvā* – after hearing; *anyebhyaḥ* – from others (self-realized teachers); *upāsate* – worship; *te* – they; *api ca* – also; *atitaranti* – transcend; *eva* – this is certain; *mṛtyum* – death (in the form of material existence); *śruti-parāyaṇāḥ* – being devoted to hearing (the instruction of realized souls).

Others, however, who are not conversant with this *tattva*, begin to worship the Supreme after hearing from realized persons, who teach by example. Thus, by dedication to the hearing process, they, too, gradually transcend this mortal world. This is certain.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *anye* means ‘those who hear the *kathā* (topics) related to Bhagavān here and there at different places’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining a very important process. “There are some people who are not atheists, nor are they sceptics, *māyāvādīs* or philosophers. They are only ordinary people in society, yet they are faithful because they have good past life impressions (*saṃskāras*). When, in the association of saintly devotees, they hear narrations of topics about Bhagavān and receive instructions from various preachers, they try to worship Me somehow or other. Later, when they have attained the association of pure devotees, they receive the opportunity to hear pure *hari-kathā*, and by entering *bhakti-tattva*, they ultimately achieve Me.”

No education about *ātma-jñāna*, the knowledge of the soul, is given in modern, so-called cultured society, but *Bhagavad-gītā* and

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explain that the process of hearing about it is very powerful. Particularly in recent times, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu placed great emphasis on hearing and chanting *hari-nāma*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. His prime teaching was that by the influence of hearing, chanting and remembering the holy name and the narrations of Bhagavān, one can very easily attain service to Bhagavān. The four-headed Brahmā, Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, Śrī Vedavyāsa, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, King Parikṣit and Prahlāda Mahārāja all attained direct *darśana* of Bhagavān by following that process.

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was one of the associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Although he was born in a Yavana family, he used to chant 300,000 names of Śrī Hari every day. All types of people, both rich and poor, had great regard for him. Seeing this, Rāmacandra Khan, a famous landlord of that area, became envious of him. To defame Haridāsa, he lured a beautiful young prostitute by promising her great wealth, and one moonlit night he sent her to Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Sitting in a solitary place on the bank of Bhagavatī Gaṅgā, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, while keeping count of the *mantras* he had chanted, loudly and attentively chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. The Tulasī plant graced a nearby platform.

The prostitute approached him, and with various bodily postures she expressed her mind, but this had not even the slightest influence on Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Finally, she openly propositioned him. He replied, “I have taken a vow to chant ten million names of Hari. I will fulfil all your desires very shortly, as soon as I have completed this amount.”

Hearing this assurance, the prostitute sat there for the entire night, waiting for him to complete his chanting. In the morning, she returned to her house out of fear of being seen. The next night, she came back and resumed her position. Haridāsa Ṭhākura again told her that he was just about to complete his chanting. That night passed like the previous one. When she arrived on the third night, Haridāsa Ṭhākura again started chanting loudly. Just see! The effect of hearing the holy name from the mouth of a pure devotee was so wonderful that it changed the heart of that prostitute. She fell at his feet crying and asked to be

forgiven. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was very pleased and said, “I would have gone elsewhere the very first day you came, but I remained here only for your sake. That your heart has changed is a matter of great pleasure for me. This is the unfailing glory of hearing and chanting the holy name. Now you should fearlessly remain in this *āśrama* and continuously chant the name of Hari. You should render service to Tulasī-devī and Bhagavatī Gaṅgā (the Ganges).”

She followed these instructions and her life changed completely. Even great devotees started coming to her *āśrama* to have *darśana* of her, a topmost Vaiṣṇavī. Remaining humble, lowly and without possessions, she performed *bhajana* of Hari and was delivered to the abode of Bhagavān within a very short time. In this way, even an ordinary person can attain Bhagavān by hearing and chanting.

VERSE 27

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित् सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २७ ॥

yāvat saṁjāyate kiñcit sattvaṁ sthāvara-jaṅgamam
kṣetra-kṣetrajña-saṁyogāt tad viddhi bharatarṣabha

yāvat – as many as; *saṁjāyate* – are produced; *kiñcit* – any; *sattvam* – being; *sthāvara* – non-moving; *jaṅgamam* – moving; *kṣetra* – of the field; *kṣetra-jña* – the knower of the field; *saṁyogāt* – from the combination; *tat* – this; *viddhi* – try to understand; *bharata-ṛṣabha* – O best amongst the lineage of Bharata.

O best amongst the descendants of Bharata, know that whatever moving and non-moving beings take birth within this material nature, all are produced from the combination of *kṣetra* – the field of the body, and *kṣetra-jña* – the knower of the field.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The subject matter that was described earlier is being explained in detail from now until the end of this chapter. *Yāvat* means ‘either low or high’, and *sattvam* means ‘living beings’. All are born from the combination of *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña*.

VERSE 28

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २८ ॥

samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantaṁ parameśvaram
vinaśyatsv avinaśyantaṁ yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati

samaṁ – equally; *sarveṣu* – in all; *bhūteṣu* – beings; *tiṣṭhantaṁ* – situated; *parama-īśvaram* – the Supreme Person; *vinaśyatsv* – among the perishable; *avinaśyantaṁ* – imperishable; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyati* – sees; *saḥ* – he; *paśyati* – sees.

Only one who sees the Supreme Controller, who is equally disposed toward all beings, as the imperishable Lord situated within the perishable material elements actually sees.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says, “Understand that Paramātmā is situated in all perishable bodies. Those who see in this way are real *jñānīs*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who are *jñānīs* in the real sense simultaneously experience the body, the embodied soul (the *ātmā*) and Paramātmā, who is the friend of the *ātmā*, by the influence of associating with a self-realized soul, who has seen the Truth. On the contrary, those who are bereft of such saintly association are truly ignorant. They can only see the perishable body and consider it to be their self. When the body is destroyed, they think that everything is lost. A *jñānī*, however, experiences the existence of the *ātmā* and Paramātmā even after the body is destroyed. When one body is destroyed, the *ātmā* enters another body along with the senses and subtle body. His friend, Paramātmā, also remains with the *jīvāt mā* as a witness. Those who actually understand this are indeed *jñānīs*.

VERSE 29

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २९ ॥

*samaṁ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram
na hinasty ātmanātmānam tato yāti parām gatim*

samaṁ – equally; *paśyan* – observing; *hi* – because; *sarvatra* – everywhere (in all living entities); *samavasthitam* – completely situated; *īśvaram* – the Lord, Īśvara; *na hinasty* – does not degrade; *ātmanā* – through his mind; *ātmānam* – himself; *tataḥ* – thus; *yāti* – he attains; *parām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination.

Because he perceives the Supersoul to be equally dwelling everywhere in all living beings, he does not degrade himself by his mind. Thus he attains the supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ātmanā* means ‘the mind, which leads one to degradation’. *Ātmānam* means ‘the living entity’ and *na hinasty* means ‘it does not lead to degradation’. They do not degrade themselves through the degrading mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The conditioned soul is bound by the various modes and actions of material nature, and for this reason he is put into various situations. But Parameśvara, situated in the hearts of different *jīvas*, exists everywhere equally. Those who understand this finally achieve the supreme destination. On the contrary, those whose minds do not meditate on the opulences, qualities and glories of Bhagavān remain bound in sense gratification. Being the killer of their own soul, they fall down. This is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.17):

*nṛ-deham ādyaṁ su-labhaṁ su-durlabhaṁ
plavaṁ su-kalpaṁ guru-karṇadhāram
mayānukūlena nabhasvateritam
pumān bhavābधिṁ na taret sa ātma-hā*

O Uddhava, this human body is the basis of the attainment of all auspicious results, and although it is very rare, it has been obtained easily. It is like a strong boat in which to cross the ocean of material existence. Simply accepting the shelter of the spiritual master, who becomes the captain and navigator of this boat, and being blown

by the favourable winds of remembrance of Me, it is propelled towards its destination. After acquiring this human body, a person who does not endeavour to cross this ocean of material existence, even after receiving so much facility, is certainly considered to be the killer of his own soul.

VERSE 30

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।
यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

*prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānam akarttāraṁ sa paśyati*

prakṛtyā – by material nature; *eva* – actually; *ca* – also; *karmāṇi* – activities; *kriyamāṇāni* – performed; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every way; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyati* – sees; *tathā* – and; *ātmānam* – himself; *akarttāraṁ* – a non-doer; *saḥ* – he; *paśyati* – actually sees.

One who perceives material nature to be the sole executor of all the functions of material activity and sees himself, the soul, to be inactive in this regard, actually sees.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Prakṛtyaiva* means that *prakṛti* transformed into the body and senses performs all work. The vision of those *jīvas* who identify the self with the inert body and thus think that they are the doers is not real. They are in ignorance. But he who sees that he is not the doer of action, actually sees.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The conditioned soul is impelled by the actions and modes of material nature because of the false ego, which makes him think that he is the doer of material actions. But in the true sense, he is not the doer. Bhagavān has explained this earlier. Parameśvara is also not the doer, although He is situated in the hearts of all beings as the indwelling witness and He who gives inspiration. What to speak of Parameśvara, even the *jīvātmā* in the pure state does not have the ego of being the doer of material actions,

which are performed by the material senses. Those who know this are really in knowledge. It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.28.15):

*śoka-harṣa-bhaya-krodha-lobha-moha-sprhādayaḥ
ahaṅkārasya dṛśyante janma-mṛtyuś ca nātmanaḥ*

O Uddhava, the material ego is the only cause of lamentation, happiness, fear, anger, greed, delusion, desire, birth and death. The pure soul has no connection with them.

It is also seen in the *Tantra-bhāgavata*, “*ahaṅkārat tu saṁsāro bhavet jīvasya na svataḥ* – It is only due to material ego that this material existence in the form of birth and death occurs for the *jīvas*. The pure *jīvas* have no relationship with such material ego.” However, in the *jīva*’s pure state, he has the ego of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa, possessing a human-like spiritual body, with a name, form, qualities and activities that are all transcendental. He is not formless or without qualities.

VERSE 31

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ ३१ ॥

*yadā bhūta-prthag-bhāvam eka-stham anupaśyati
tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma saṁpadyate tadā*

yadā – when; *bhūta* – the living beings; *prthag-bhāvam* – diverse nature; *eka-stham* – situated in one nature, *parā-prakṛti*, the transcendental potency; *anupaśyati* – he sees by following the guidance of previous authorities; *tataḥ* – thereafter; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *vistāraṁ* – born from; *brahma* – (realization of) spiritual transcendence; *saṁpadyate* – he attains; *tadā* – at that time.

When he sees that the diverse natures of all moving and non-moving beings are situated within one transcendental energy (*parā-prakṛti*), and when he understands all of them to be born from that same energy, he attains realization of transcendence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: During annihilation, all moving and non-moving beings of various shapes merge into the one material nature, and later,

at the time of creation, they again manifest from that same material nature. Those who truly perceive this attain the state of *brahma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Only because a person identifies himself with the body does he see the various forms, or bodies, of others as demigods, human beings, dogs, cats, *śūdras*, Hindus, Muslims and so on. The cause of this mundane differentiation is ignorance, whereby a person falsely identifies himself with the body. Due to this ignorance, one forgets Bhagavān. When remembrance of Bhagavān awakens within him by the influence of the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas, all his ignorance is dispelled and his conceptions regarding material differences are removed. At that time, he becomes situated in *brahma*, which is endowed with eight qualities. He perceives everything equally at all times and ultimately he attains that topmost *bhakti*. Sometimes in the scriptures, an individual soul endowed with these eight special qualities has been called *brahma* or *brahma-bhūta*. These eight qualities are given as follows:

*ya ātmāpahata-pāpnā vijaro
vimrtyur viśoko vijighitso 'pipāsah
satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ
so 'nveṣṭavyaḥ sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ*

One should search for and know the soul who is completely free from (1) the miseries arising from desires for sense objects, (2) miseries such as old age, (3) death, (4) lamentation, (5) an enjoying propensity and (6) mundane aspirations. That soul is (7) endowed with pure aspirations (*satya-kāma*), and (8) able to attain whatever he desires (*satya-saṅkalpa*).

This is also explained in the *Gītā* (18.54), “*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*—ultimately, one who is a *brahma-bhūtātmā*, situated transcendently, beyond the contamination of the three modes of nature, achieves supreme *bhakti*.” The living entity’s ultimate objective is to achieve supreme devotion, or *parā-bhakti*. It is improper to say, “Parambrahma achieves *parā-bhakti*,” because *parā-bhakti* means ‘to render service to the feet of Parambrahma’.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying: “When a man of true wisdom sees that during annihilation, all moving and non-moving

living entities of various shapes are situated in *prakṛti* only, and that at the time of creation, those varieties again manifest from the same *prakṛti*, he becomes free from the tendency to differentiate between material designations. He then realizes his real spiritual identity and his relationship with *brahma* (the Absolute Reality). Now I will explain how the living entity, having acquired this knowledge of qualitative oneness, perceives Paramātmā, who is present as the witness.”

VERSE 32

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात् परमात्मायमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥३२॥

anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ
śarīra-stho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate

anāditvāt – because He is without beginning; *nirguṇatvāt* – because He is free from the three binding forces of material nature; *parama-ātmā* – Supreme Soul; *ayam* – this; *avyayaḥ* – imperishable; *śarīra-sthaḥ* – situated in the body; *api* – although; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *na karoti* – does not perform fruitive activity; *na lipyate* – is unaffected by the fruits of His activities.

O son of Kuntī, because He is without beginning and free from the influence of the three modes of material nature, this imperishable Supreme Soul, though situated in the body, neither performs fruitive activity nor becomes affected by the results of His activities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Bhagavān said in *Gītā* 13.22, “*kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu* – the *jīvātmā* and Paramātmā equally reside in the body, yet only the *jīvātmā* becomes materially conditioned by his implication in the material modes of nature; Paramātmā does not.” Someone may raise the question, “How is that?” For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *anāditvān*. That which has no cause, or origin, is *anādi*. When a word ending in the fifth case (ablative) is used with the word *anuttama*, it will read *paramottama* (higher than all, supreme). In the same way, here the word *anādi* means ‘the supreme

cause'. Since, in the original verse, *anāditvāt* is used in the fifth case, the meaning is 'He is the Supreme Cause'. *Nirguṇatvāt* means 'He who is free from the modes' or 'from whom all qualities such as creation emanate'. He is that Reality. Therefore, Paramātmā is distinct from the *jīvātmā* and is imperishable; His knowledge and bliss never diminish. *Śarira-stho 'pi* means that although He is situated in the body, He does not accept the characteristics of the body, and *na karoti* means that unlike the *jīva*, He does not become the doer or the enjoyer, nor does He become affected by the qualities of the material body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Being *avyaya* (imperishable), *anādi* (beginningless) and *nirguṇa* (free from the modes), Paramātmā, unlike the *jīva*, does not become affected by the characteristics of the body even though He resides in the body. When the pure *jīva* attains the state of *brahma*, which is completely free from material vision (*brahma-bhūta*), he understands that the complete *kṣetra-jña* – the indwelling Parameśvara – is not at all tainted by material qualities. He, the *jīva*, then becomes totally aloof from the qualities of the body also, although he resides within it.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "When the *jīvas* have attained *brahma* realization, they can see that Paramātmā is imperishable, beginningless and transcendental. Although He exists in the body along with the *jīvātmā*, He does not become affected by the qualities of the body like the conditioned soul does.

"The *jīvas* who have attained the state of *brahma* no longer become implicated in material affairs. They take shelter of this knowledge (of the qualities of Paramātmā) and remain untouched, unlike the conditioned souls. Hear from Me how the *jīva* who is not implicated in material qualities uses this body."

VERSE 33

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३३ ॥

yathā sarva-gataṁ saukṣmyād ākāśaṁ nopalipyate
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate

yathā – just as; *sarva-gatam* – the all-pervading; *saukṣmyāt* – due to its subtle nature; *ākāśam* – sky; *na upalipyate* – is untouched; *sarvatra* – throughout; *avasthitaḥ* – situated; *dehe* – the material body; *tathā* – in the same way; *ātmā* – the Supersoul; *na upalipyate* – is unaffected.

Just as the all-pervading sky does not mix with anything due to its subtle nature, in the same way, the Supersoul is unaffected by the qualities or faults of the material body, even though He pervades it.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Here, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the verse beginning with *yathā sarva-gatam*, in which He gives an example. The sky pervades mud and other material objects due to its subtle nature, yet it does not become contaminated or mixed with them. Similarly, the liberated soul who has attained the nature of *brahma* does not become influenced by the qualities and defects related to the material body, although residing within it.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The sky, although all-pervasive, remains free from any contaminating association or influence, and is thus always aloof. Similarly, the pure living entity who has attained the state of *brahma* also does not become influenced by the qualities of the body even though he resides within it. He always remains unaffected.

VERSE 34

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३४ ॥

yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ kṛtsnam lokam imam raviḥ
kṣetram kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnam prakāśayati bhārata

yathā – just as; *prakāśayati* – illuminates; *ekaḥ* – the one; *kṛtsnam* – entire; *lokam* – universe; *imam* – this; *raviḥ* – sun; *kṣetram* – field (body); *kṣetrī* – the Supersoul within the field (of the body); *tathā* – so; *kṛtsnam* – the entire; *prakāśayati* – illuminates; *bhārata* – O scion of Bharata.

O Bhārata, just as one sun illuminates the whole universe, in the same way, the Supersoul illuminates the entire body with consciousness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: How does an illuminating object remain unaffected by the qualities of the object it illuminates? To explain this with an example, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *yathā*.

The sun is the illuminator, yet it is not affected by the qualities of the objects it illuminates. Similarly, *kṣetrī* (Paramātmā) does not become affected by the qualities of *kṣetra* (the body). It is also said in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.11):

*sūryo yathā sarva-lokasya cakṣur
na lipyate cakṣuṣair bāhya-doṣaiḥ
ekas tathā sarva-bhūtāntarātmā
na lipyate loka-duḥkhena bāhyaḥ*

The sun, like the eye of all beings, does not become affected by the defects in another's eye or the defects in that which is perceived by the eye. In the same way, the one Paramātmā is not subject to the happiness or misery of anybody, even though He is situated in all beings.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Just as the one sun illuminates the whole universe, even though it is situated in the one place, in the same way, the *ātmā*, which is situated in one part of the body, illuminates the entire body with consciousness. *Brahma-sūtra* (2.3.25) also says “*guṇād vā lokavat* – although the individual soul is atomic, it pervades the whole body by its quality of consciousness.”

In this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura translates the word *kṣetrī* as Paramātmā, because Paramātmā is the complete *kṣetra-jña* and the *jīva* is the partial *kṣetra-jña*. The conscious *jīva* is *kṣetra-jña* of a particular body, but Parameśvara is the complete *kṣetra-jña* of all bodies, simultaneously.

VERSE 35

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३५ ॥

*kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor evam antaram jñāna-cakṣuṣā
bhūta-prakṛti-mokṣam ca ye vidur yānti te param*

kṣetra-kṣetrañjayoh – the field and the knower of the field; *evam* – in this way; *antaram* – the difference between; *jñāna-caḥṣuṣā* – with the eye of transcendental knowledge; *bhūta* – of the living beings; *prakṛti-mokṣam* – liberation from material nature; *ca* – and; *ye* – who; *viduḥ* – comprehend; *yānti* – attain; *te* – they; *param* – the Lord's supreme abode.

Those who see through the eye of spiritual knowledge and thus become conversant with the differences between the field and the knower of the field and with the means by which the minute living entity attains deliverance from the bondage of material nature, attain Śrī Bhagavān's supreme abode.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter. Those who know *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña*, the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*, and processes such as *dhyāna* (meditation) by which the living entities achieve liberation from material nature, attain the supreme destination. Of the two *kṣetra-jñas*, it is the *jīvātmā* who becomes bound when he enjoys the qualities (fruits) of the material body, but he becomes liberated by the awakening of this knowledge. This is the subject explained in the Thirteenth Chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānūvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Thirteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In concluding the subject of the *kṣetra* and *kṣeta-jña*, Śrī Bhagavān says that an intelligent person should properly understand the distinguishing characteristics of the body and the knowers of the body: the partial *kṣetra-jña* (the soul) and the complete *kṣetra-jña* and friend of the soul (the Supersoul). Those who realize this attain the supreme destination.

From the beginning, faithful people should associate with realized devotees (*tattva-darśis*). By hearing extremely powerful *hari-kathā* in their association, they can easily attain knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva*, *jīva-tattva*, *māyā-tattva* and *bhakti-tattva*. Then, when their identification with the material body is removed, they attain the supreme destination.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “All activities of material nature constitute *kṣetra*. There are two types of *tattva*, *paramātma-tattva* and *ātma-tattva*, and both are *kṣetra-jña*. According to the process described in this chapter, those who understand the difference between *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña* with the eye of spiritual knowledge, which is attained by following the process that delivers all living entities from mundane activities, very easily understand the Supreme Truth Śrī Bhagavān, who is beyond both *kṣetra* and *kṣetra-jña*.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Thirteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Guṇa-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga

Yoga Through Transcending
the Three Modes of Material Nature

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥१॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parām siddhim ito gatāḥ*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Supreme Lord said; *param* – the best; *bhūyaḥ* – further; *pravakṣyāmi* – I shall enunciate; *jñānānām* – amongst all forms of transcendental knowledge; *jñānam* – instructions on transcendental knowledge; *uttamam* – the best; *yaj* – which; *jñātvā* – having understood; *munayaḥ* – the sages; *sarve* – all; *parām* – supreme; *siddhim* – liberation; *itaḥ* – from this (bondage to bodily identification); *gatāḥ* – have attained.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I shall impart to you further knowledge which transcends all other knowledge. The sages who have understood and followed these instructions have all attained ultimate liberation from bondage to the body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The three modes of nature are indeed the cause of bondage. This is inferred by their result. And *bhakti* causes the

symptoms that destroy the three modes. This is being explained in the Fourteenth Chapter.

In the previous chapter it was stated, “*kāraṇam guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni-janmasu* – the living entity’s attachment to the modes of material nature is the cause of his taking birth in auspicious and inauspicious species” (*Gītā* 13.22). What are the *guṇas*, the binding modes of material nature? How is one associated with them? What is the result of this association? What are the symptoms of a person who is influenced by the *guṇas*, and how can he become free from them? Expecting these questions, Śrī Bhagavān is making a declaration in this verse beginning with *param bhūyaḥ*. In this way, He introduces the subjects that He will later elaborate on. The word *jñānam* means ‘that by which something is known’, or ‘instruction’, and *param* means ‘the best’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is clearly described in the Thirteenth Chapter that in saintly association, even an ordinary person can become liberated from the bondage of material existence by knowing the fundamental truth (*tattva*) about the body and they who reside within the body, the *jīva* and *Paramātmā*. The living entity has become bound to this material world only by his association with the modes of material nature. In this chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa extensively explains to His devotee Arjuna what the *guṇas* are, how they function, how they bind the living entity, and how the living entity can attain the supreme destination by becoming free from them. With this knowledge, many saintly persons (*ṛṣis* and *munis*) have attained perfection and reached the supreme destination. Even ordinary people have become transcendental to the modes of nature upon acquiring this knowledge, and they have attained the supreme status.

VERSE 2

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ
sarge 'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca

idam – this; *jñānam* – knowledge; *upāśritya* – taking refuge in; *mama* – Mine; *sādharmyam* – a similar nature; *āgatāḥ* – attained; *sarge* – at the time of creation; *api* – even; *na upajāyante* – they do not take birth; *pralaye* – at the time of devastation; *na vyathanti* – they are undisturbed (do not enter the cycle of repeated birth and death); *ca* – and.

Taking refuge of this knowledge, the sages attain a transcendental nature similar to Mine. Thus they do not take birth again, even at the time of creation, nor do they experience death at the time of devastation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *sādharmyam* means ‘the liberation of attaining a transcendental form like that of Śrī Bhagavān’. *Na vyathanti* means ‘they do not experience misery’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Upon acquiring transcendental knowledge of the self, the living entity who practises *sādhana* acquires qualities similar to those of Bhagavān. This means that many of his qualities become partially equal to the qualities of Bhagavān. Even after he attains liberation and becomes free from the cycle of birth and death, his individual existence as an eternal associate of Śrī Bhagavān continues, and having become established in his *svarūpa*, his eternal nature and form, he remains eternally engaged in loving service to Śrī Bhagavān's lotus feet. Thus, even after attaining liberation, the devotees do not give up their *svarūpa*, or their natural inclination to serve.

The essence of all Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions is that the *jīvātmā* does not completely become one with Paramātmā by merging with Him. Rather, the living entity's pure spiritual form continues to exist separately from that of Śrī Bhagavān, and in this pure form he remains engaged in love-filled service to Him. Great realized personalities, like Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, have accepted the meaning of *sādharmya* here as *sārūpya-mukti*, attaining a form similar to the Lord's. In the fourth *prameya* of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on *Prameya-ratnāvalī*, he has commented on the use of the word *sāmya* in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.3) and on *sādharmya* in the present verse. He writes that these two words

should be understood to mean that even in the liberated state, there is a difference between the *jīva* and *Īśvara*. He explains that the use of *aiva* in the verse *brahma-vid brahmaiva bhavati* means ‘like *brahma*’. The word *eva* has been used in the sense of similarity. Therefore, *brahmaiva* means ‘to acquire qualities like those of Bhagavān’, that is, freedom from birth and death. The living entity, however, can never carry out such functions as the act of creation.

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments on the present verse as follows: “When the faithful living entity through his practice of *bhakti* acquires the above-stated transcendental knowledge by worshipping the spiritual master, he partially attains eight of Bhagavān’s eternal qualities and becomes free from birth and death. The Śrutis state that the *jīvas* retain their individuality even in the stage of liberation; they never merge. In other words, more than one living entity is seen there. *Tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*. “Liberated persons, those who have attained the stage of *mukti*, constantly see the supreme abode of Śrī Viṣṇu.” The word *sāmya* is also seen in the *Muṇḍaka Śruti*, “*yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇaṁ... nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam upaiti* – one who sees that golden-coloured Supreme Lord is liberated,” and also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.48), “*tat-sāmyam āpuḥ* – they achieve a position on the same level as Him (in His eternal spiritual abode).”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “*Jñāna* is generally materially tinged, or *saguṇa*. *Jñāna* that is materially untainted, or *nirguṇa*, is called *uttama-jñāna*, the topmost knowledge. By taking shelter of this *nirguṇa-jñāna*, the *jīva* attains My *sādharmya*, qualities similar to Mine. Less intelligent persons think that by giving up material qualities, material form and material existence, the living entity himself becomes bereft of all qualities, form and existence. They are not aware that, just as all objects in the material world are distinguished from each other by their unique attributes, similarly, the purest unique attributes, *viśuddha-viśeṣa*, are situated in My eternal, spiritual abode of Vaikuṇṭha, which transcends this material nature. That *viśuddha-viśeṣa* makes an eternal display of My transcendental form and existence, which is called My *nirguṇa-sādharmya*. With knowledge that is beyond the modes of nature, one initially transcends the material varieties within the material

world and attains the featureless aspect of the Absolute Truth, or *nirguṇa-brahma*. Thereafter, transcendental qualities manifest and the *jīva* never takes birth again in the material world. Even upon the dissolution of the material world, the soul is never destroyed.”

VERSE 3

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥३॥

*mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata*

mama – My; *yonih* – womb; *mahat* – great; *brahma* – spirit (in the form of material nature); *tasmin* – in that (womb); *garbham* – an embryo (in the form of the hosts of conscious beings); *dadhāmi* – impregnate; *aham* – I; *sambhavaḥ* – birth; *sarva-bhūtānām* – of all living entities; *tataḥ* –thereby; *bhavati* – comes about; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata.

O descendant of Bharata, the immense sum-total of the material reality (*brahma*) is My womb, which I impregnate with the seeds of the living entities, who are marginal by nature. It is from here that all souls take birth.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The cause of material bondage is association with the *guṇas*, the three binding qualities of material nature, which is the consequence of ignorance since time immemorial. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is describing how *kṣetra* (literally, ‘the field’, the material body) and *kṣetra-jña* (the knower of the field) are born. “*Mahat-brahma* is My, Parameśvara’s, womb.” That which cannot be divided by time and place and whose limit cannot be ascertained is called *mahat* (great). Here *brahma* refers to *prakṛti*, or material nature, because the creation is an expansion of *brahma*. In this way, the word *mahad-brahma* is formed.

In the Śrūtis, the word *brahma* is also sometimes used for *prakṛti*. *Dadhāmi* means ‘I place the seed in the form of the *jīva* in that *prakṛti*, thereby impregnating it’. *Itas tv anyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām*

jīva-bhūtām (Gītā 7.5). This statement mentions that the source of the conscious entities, the *jīva-prakṛti*, is the marginal potency, the *taṭasthā-śakti*, and because it is the life of all beings, the word *garbha* (conception) has been used. *Tataḥ* means, ‘All living entities (*sarva-bhūtānām*) beginning from Lord Brahmā are born as a result of My impregnating material nature (*prakṛti*).’

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this material world, everything happens by the combination of *kṣetra* (the body) and *kṣetra-jña* (the living entity).

This combination of *prakṛti* (material nature) and *puruṣa* (the living entity) happens only by the will of the Lord. The scorpion lays eggs in a pile of rice. People say that scorpions are born from rice, but in fact, rice is not the cause of the scorpions’ birth. Scorpions are actually born from eggs. In the same way, the birth of the living entity is not caused by material nature. Bhagavān places the living entity, the seed, in the womb of material nature, but people think that the *jīva* is born from material nature. Every living entity gets a different type of body according to his past actions. *Prakṛti* simply creates various material bodies under the supervision of Bhagavān. The *jīvas* who identify themselves with their body enjoy happiness or undergo misery according to their previous activities. It should be clearly understood that Parameśvara is the original cause of both the living entities and the universe.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The origin of material nature is the universal womb. I impregnate that universal womb, and all beings are born from that. The material aspect of My *parā-prakṛti* (transcendental nature) is *brahma* (material nature), into which I place the seeds of the *taṭastha-jīvas*. Indeed, all the living entities beginning from Lord Brahmā are born in this way.”

VERSE 4

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥४॥

*sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ
tāsām brahma mahad yonir aham bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

sarva-yoniṣu – all species of life; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *mūrtayaḥ* – all life-forms; *sambhavanti* – born; *yāḥ* – which; *tāsām* – of those; *brahma mahat* – immense material nature; *yoniḥ* – the womb, the place of origin; *aham* – I; *bīja-pradaḥ* – the seed-giving; *pitā* – father.

O son of Kuntī, the *mahad-brahma* – immense material nature – is the mother from whose womb all species of life, such as demigods and animals, are born, and I am the seed-giving father.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “It is not only at the time of creation that *prakṛti* is the mother of all beings and I am the father; *prakṛti* is always the mother and I am always the father. *Mahad-brahma* (*prakṛti*) is the womb, or birth-giving mother, of all varieties of bodies, moving and non-moving, from demigods to grass and creepers. And I am the seed-giver, the father who impregnates.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, it is clearly stated that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the primeval father of all living entities. All the *jīvas* in this material world are born from the mother – material nature, or *prakṛti* – through the seed-giving father, Bhagavān. Living entities reside everywhere: inside the earth and outside it, in the water and in the sky, in the seven lower planetary systems and in the seven upper, in Vaikuṅṭha, in Goloka and also in other abodes. The souls in Vaikuṅṭha are the associates of Bhagavān and are liberated. The souls within this universe who are conditioned remain in various situations and various states of consciousness, such as covered (*ācchādita*), contracted (*saṅkucita*), budding (*mukulita*), blooming (*vikasita*) and completely blossoming (*pūrṇa-vikasita*).

VERSE 5

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥५॥

***sattvaṁ rajasa tama itī guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam***

sattvaṁ – goodness; *rajaḥ* – passion; *tamaḥ* – ignorance; *iti* – thus; *guṇāḥ* – the three binding influences of material nature; *prakṛti-sambhavāḥ* – born of material nature; *nibadhnanti* – they bind; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed; *dehe* – within the body; *dehinam* – embodied soul; *avyayam* – beyond transformation.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, the three qualities born of material nature – goodness, passion and ignorance – bind the immutable living entity who dwells within the body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After explaining how all living entities are born from *prakṛti* (material nature) and *puruṣa* (the Supreme Lord), Śrī Bhagavān is now explaining what the binding qualities are and how the living entities become bound by contact with them. Śrī Bhagavān is saying *dehe*, meaning that the living entity who identifies himself as one with the functions of material nature is situated within a material body and becomes bound by the modes of nature. Although in truth, the *jīva* is imperishable, immutable and free from any material contact, the *guṇas* bind him because of his association with them. This association is caused by his ignorance since time immemorial.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The three modes of nature – goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and ignorance (*tamas*) – are born from material nature, *prakṛti*. They manifest to perform the three functions of creating, maintaining and annihilating the universe. *Prakṛti* remains unmanifest when these three modes are in their state of equilibrium. At that time, creation, sustenance and annihilation do not take place.

*prakṛtir guṇa-sāmyaṁ vai prakṛter nātmano guṇāḥ
sattvaṁ rajasa tama itī sthity-utpatty-anta-hetavaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.22.12)

Nature exists originally as the equilibrium of the three material modes, which pertain only to nature, not to the transcendental

spirit soul. These modes – goodness, passion and ignorance – are the effective causes of the creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe.*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.23) also states, “*sattvaṃ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇāḥ* – the living entities who manifest from the marginal potency receive the association of material nature because they have become averse to Kṛṣṇa.” By their constitutional nature, the *jīvas* are beyond *māyā*, but in association with *māyā*, they have attained the ego of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and have fallen into the bondage of this material existence in bodies generated by material nature. Lord Kapiladeva clearly instructs His mother Devahūti about this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.6–7):

*evam parābhidyānena artritvaṃ prakṛteḥ pumān
karmasu kriyamāṇeṣu guṇair ātmani manyate
tad asya saṃsṛtir bandhaḥ pāra-tantryam ca tat-kṛtam
bhavaty akartur īśasya sākṣiṇo nirvṛtātmanah*

This means that due to the living entity’s cohabitation with the activities of *prakṛti*, he considers himself the performer of activities, which are actually born of the modes of nature. In fact the living entity is only a witness; he is not the performer of any action. He is the transcendental energy of the Supreme Lord, Īśvara – indicated by use of the word *īśa* – and the *jīva* himself is bliss personified. He is in the clutches of this material existence of birth and death because he acquired the ego of being the doer, or performer, of material activities. He has therefore become bound, being controlled by sense objects.

*sa eṣa yarhi prakṛter guṇeṣv abhiviṣajjate
ahaṅkriyā-vimūḍhātmā kartāsmīty abhimanyate
tena saṃsāra-padavīm avaśo ’bhyety anirvṛtaḥ
prāsaṅgikaiḥ karma-doṣaiḥ sad-asan-miśra-yoniṣu
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.27.2–3)*

When the *jīva* becomes excessively absorbed in the modes of nature, such as happiness and misery, he becomes bewildered because of his false ego. Identifying his body with his self, he thinks, “I am the doer.” The *jīva* helplessly wanders throughout the higher and lower species

of life, such as demigods, humans and animals, because he identifies as being the doer and also because he performs improper actions, due to his association with material nature. Unable to get free from the experience of mundane happiness and misery caused by his actions, he continuously receives bodies in the material world – one after another.

VERSE 6

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥६॥

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha*

tatra – of these three qualities of nature; *sattvam* – the quality of goodness; *nirmalatvāt* – because of its pure nature; *prakāśakam* – illuminating; *anāmayam* – free from fault; *sukha-saṅgena* – through attachment to happiness; *badhnāti* – binds; *jñāna-saṅgena* – through attachment to knowledge; *ca* – and; *anagha* – O sinless one.

O sinless one, of these three modes, the quality of goodness is illuminating and free from vice due to its purity. It binds the living entity by attachment to happiness and knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This verse explains the characteristics of *sattva-guṇa*, the quality of goodness, and how it binds the *jīva*. *Anāmayam* means ‘calm’, or ‘free from agitation’. Having become peaceful, the living entity becomes attached to the happiness derived from activities performed in the mode of goodness, which causes him to feel materially satisfied. And because he is illuminated by knowledge and attached to it, he thinks, “I am happy, I am knowledgeable.” These feelings of happiness and knowledge arise from ignorance, and it is because of these two conceptions that the intrinsically pure soul remains covered. “However, O sinless one, you should not accept this sin – this characteristic of the false ego – of thinking, ‘I am happy, I am knowledgeable.’”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It was described in the previous verse how the three modes of material nature (*prakṛti*) bind the *jīva* to the body. The present verse specifically explains how *sattva-guṇa*, the mode of goodness, binds him. Of the three qualities of material nature, *sattva-guṇa* is relatively pure and illuminating, and it makes one peaceful. In this way, it binds the living entity to happiness and knowledge. Some people think that because the quality of goodness is superior to the other two modes of nature, liberation can be achieved simply by taking shelter of it. This, however, is completely untrue. In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa says that this mundane knowledge, by which one discriminates between matter and consciousness, comes from *sattva-guṇa*, as does the happiness of the satisfied body and mind. Due to a person's attachment to such knowledge and happiness, he engages in actions that foster a serene state of existence. Despite this, he has to accept another body to experience the result of those actions. Then, becoming attached to that body, he must again perform action. In this way, he remains perpetually within the cycle of birth and death and can never become released from it. Self identification with the mode of goodness is also sinful. This is the import of the word *anagha* (sinless) used to address Arjuna in this verse. Therefore, Arjuna (the *sādhaka*) is advised to not accept an ego in the mode of goodness.

VERSE 7

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥७॥

rajo rāgātmaṅkaṁ viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam

rajaḥ – the quality of passion; *rāga-ātmakam* – in the form of attachment; *viddhi* – know that; *tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam* – arises from desire and attachment to sense enjoyment; *tat* – it (the mode of passion); *nibadhnāti* – bound; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *karma-saṅgena* – by attachment to fruitive work; *dehinam* – the embodied being.

O son of Kuntī, know that the quality of passion manifests through attachment to sense objects and an intense hankering to enjoy them. It binds the embodied living entity by attachment to fruitive actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Know that it is the mode of passion that gives mundane pleasure. To desire an object that one does not yet have is called *tṛṣṇā*, and attachment to objects that have been already attained is called *saṅga*. Both *tṛṣṇā* and *saṅga* are born from *rajo-guṇa*, the quality of passion, which binds the embodied soul by dint of his attachment to fruitive actions, performed knowingly or unknowingly, *dṛṣṭa* (seen) or *adṛṣṭa* (unseen). Thus an affinity with fruitive action is solely due to *tṛṣṇā* (desire) and *saṅga* (attachment).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is called *rajo-guṇa* because it imbues the conditioned souls with attachment to sense objects. The specific feature of *rajo-guṇa* is the mutual attraction between male and female. It generates a hankering in embodied beings to enjoy material things, such as honour in society or nation, a beautiful wife, good progeny and a happy family. These are the characteristics of the mode of passion.

Because of this material mode of passion, the whole universe has become attached to sense pleasures and has fallen into the bondage of *māyā*. The influence of the mode of passion is visible everywhere in modern society, but in ancient times the mode of goodness predominated. Yet if even a man in goodness is unable to achieve liberation, what, then, are the chances of it being attained by one influenced by the mode of passion?

VERSE 8

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तत्रिबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

tamaḥ tv ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām
pramādālasya-nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti bhārata

tamaḥ – the quality of ignorance; *tu* – however; *ajñāna-jam* – born of ignorance; *viddhi* – know; *mohanam* – bewilderment; *sarva-dehinām* – of all

embodied beings; *pramāda-ālasya-nidrābhiḥ* – through carelessness, laziness and sleep; *tat* – it; *nibadhnāti* – binds; *bhārata* – O descendent of Bharata.

O Bhārata, know, however, that the quality of darkness, which is born of ignorance, is the cause of delusion for all living entities. It binds the embodied soul by carelessness, laziness and sleep.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ajñāna-jam* means that ignorance, or darkness (*tamas*), is inferred or perceived, solely by its result, ignorance. It thus means ‘that from which ignorance arises’. *Mohana* means ‘that which causes confusion’, *pramādaḥ* means ‘madness’, *ālasyam* means ‘lack of endeavour’, and *nidrā* means ‘depression of the mind’. These are all symptoms of *tamo-guṇa*, the mode of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Tamo-guṇa* is the most degraded of the three qualities of material nature. It is the antithesis of the mode of goodness. A person in the mode of ignorance considers the body and bodily pleasures as the all-in-all. Consequently, he loses all discrimination and becomes almost mad. We see that in the course of time that our grandfather dies and so does our father. Similarly we will die and our progeny will also die. In other words, death is certain. Despite this, those in the mode of ignorance fail to search for the self within. Simply to satisfy their senses, they collect wealth by cheating, duplicity, violence and other such acts. This is their madness. The specific characteristic of *tamo-guṇa* is that it makes one mad like this. Consuming intoxicants, meat, fish, eggs, wine, etc., are symptoms of one in the mode of ignorance. Such a person remains inactive, lazy, careless and heedless, and he oversleeps. A *sādhaka* should endeavour to save himself from these tendencies.

VERSE 9

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥९॥

*sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta*

sattvam – the quality of goodness; *sukhe* – to happiness; *sañjayati* – generates (attachment); *rajaḥ* – passion; *karmaṇi* – to fruitive work; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata; *jñānam* – knowledge; *āvṛtya* – by covering; *tu* – but; *tamaḥ* – the quality of ignorance; *pramāde* – to madness; *sañjayati* – generates (attachment); *uta* – indeed.

O Bhārata, the quality of goodness generates attachment to happiness, and the quality of passion generates attachment to fruitive work, but the quality of ignorance covers all knowledge and binds one to madness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is recapitulating His words above. The quality of goodness binds the living entity by creating attachment to happiness, which is the result of that mode. The quality of passion binds the living entity by his attachment to fruitive activity, and the quality of ignorance engages the living entity in illusion, thus covering knowledge and giving rise to ignorance.

VERSE 10

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥१०॥

rajas tamaś cābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś caiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā

rajaḥ – passion; *tamaḥ* – ignorance; *ca* – and; *abhibhūya* – overwhelming; *sattvam* – goodness; *bhavati* – becomes manifest; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata; *rajaḥ* – passion; *sattvam* – goodness; *tamaḥ* – ignorance; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *tamaḥ* – ignorance; *sattvam* – goodness; *rajaḥ* – passion; *tathā* – also.

O descendant of Bharata, when the quality of goodness arises, it overwhelms passion and ignorance. When the quality of passion appears, it subdues goodness and ignorance, and when the quality of ignorance manifests, it overpowers both goodness and passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: How do the material modes of nature manifest their influence on their effects, such as happiness, as previously mentioned? Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān says that when the mode of goodness manifests, it overpowers the modes of passion and ignorance. Similarly, when the mode of passion manifests, it overrides goodness and ignorance. And when the mode of ignorance manifests, it subjugates goodness and passion. All this takes place by *adrṣṭa-vaśād*, ‘the influence of the unseen’.

VERSE 11

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन् प्रकाश उपजायते ।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

sarva-dvāreṣu dehe ’smin prakāśa upajāyate
jñānam yadā tadā vidyād vivṛddham sattvam ity uta

sarva-dvāreṣu – in all the gates (of the knowledge-acquiring senses such as the eyes and ears); *dehe* – body; *asmin* – in this; *prakāśaḥ* – illumination (of the factual situation); *upajāyate* – appears; *jñānam* – knowledge; *yadā* – when; *tadā* – at that time; *vidyāt* – one should understand; *vivṛddham* – predominating; *sattvam* – the quality of goodness; *iti* – that; *uta* – emphatic.

When all the gates of the body – the knowledge-acquiring senses such as the ears and nose – are illuminated by the awakening of true knowledge of sense objects, and when signs of such happiness manifest, one should know for certain that the mode of goodness is predominating.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Previously it was said that when a mode increases, it predominates over the two weaker modes. Now, in three consecutive verses, the first beginning here with *sarva*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the symptoms of the predominating mode. When the senses, such as the ears, begin to acquire perfect knowledge of Vedic sound and so forth, one should know that *sattva-guṇa*, the mode of goodness, is predominating. The word *uta* emphasizes illumination in the form of happiness generated by the self.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The symptoms by which one can understand which mode of nature is predominating are explained here. It is understood that the mode of goodness is predominating when one's senses, such as the ears and nose, provide proper knowledge of objects and when a feeling of happiness manifests from the soul. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.13) also states:

*yadetarau jayet sattvaṁ bhāsvaraṁ viśadam śivam
tadā sukkena yujyeta dharmajñānādibhiḥ pumān*

The mode of goodness, illuminating, pure and peaceful, grants the living entity qualification for happiness, virtue and knowledge. By restraining the modes of passion and ignorance, goodness increases.

Furthermore, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.9) it is said, “*puruṣaṁ sattva-samyuktam anumīyāc chamādibhiḥ* – one should recognize that a person who can control his mind and who possesses other similar characteristics is endowed with the quality of goodness.”

“When *bhakti* to Me is mixed with the material modes, it is called *saguṇa-bhakti*.”

It is said in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.10):

*yadā bhajati mām bhaktyā nirapekṣaḥ sva-karmabhiḥ
tām sattva-prakṛtiṁ vidyāt puruṣaṁ striyam eva vā*

Any person, male or female, who is situated in the mode of goodness, becomes indifferent to their prescribed duty and engages in the worship of Bhagavān.

The Gītā (9.27) refers to *saguṇa-bhakti*:

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpanam*

O son of Kuntī, whatever activities you perform, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice and give in charity and whatever austerities you perform, offer them all to Me.

VERSE 12

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
 रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ spṛhā
rajasye tāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha

lobhaḥ – greed; *pravṛttiḥ* – profuse activity; *ārambhaḥ* – endeavour; *karmaṇām* – for fruitive undertakings; *aśamaḥ* – dissatisfaction (with material enjoyment) or restlessness; *spṛhā* – hankering (for sense enjoyment); *rajasi* – when passion; *etāni* – all these; *jāyante* – become manifest; *vivṛddhe* – in predominance; *bharata-ṛṣabha* – O best of Bharata’s line.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, when the quality of passion becomes prominent, certain symptoms appear: intense greed, profuse activity, fervent endeavour for fruitive undertakings, dissatisfaction with the results of one’s work and constant hankering for sense pleasure.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Pravṛtti* means ‘various types of endeavours’. *Karmaṇām ārambhaḥ* means ‘efforts such as the building of a house’, and *aśamaḥ* means ‘being unfulfilled in sense enjoyment’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse lists a number of symptoms that indicate an increase in the mode of passion. *Lobha* (greed) means that even when one’s wealth increases from different sources, one still hankers to collect more. *Pravṛtti* (conduct) means ‘the tendency to always engage in action’. *Karmaṇām ārambhaḥ* (beginning an undertaking) means ‘endeavours such as the building of mansions’. *Aśama* (desire) means ‘the cycle of resolution and rejection’: “I will perform this work and then I will do that other work.” *Spṛhā* (desire) means ‘the desire to obtain good or bad sense objects as soon as one sees them’. In other words, it means a thirst for sense enjoyment.

It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.14):

*yadā jayet tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajaḥ saṅgam bhidā calam
tadā duḥkhena yujyeta karmaṇā yaśasā śriyā*

When the quality of passion, which gives rise to attachment and separatism and which is restless by nature, overpowers the modes of goodness and ignorance, a person endeavours tirelessly for fame and wealth, but all he gleans is misery.

Moreover, it is seen in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.9), “*kāmādibhiḥ rajo-yuktam* – one should understand that the mode of passion is predominating when a desire for sense objects, etc., is present.” While describing *guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti* in the mode of passion, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.11) states, “*yadā āśiṣa āśāsya mām bhajeta sva-karmabhiḥ tām rajaḥ prakṛtiṁ vidyāt* – when a person worships Bhagavān to acquire sense objects, both he and his worship are in the mode of passion.”

VERSE 13

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ १३ ॥
*aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca pramādo moha eva ca
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kuru-nandana*

aprakāśaḥ – lack of discrimination; *apravṛtitiḥ* – inertia; *ca* – and; *pramādaḥ* – madness; *mohaḥ* – illusion; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *tamasi* – in the quality of ignorance; *etāni* – these; *jāyante* – are manifest; *vivṛddhe* – upon becoming predominant; *kuru-nandana* – O descendant of Kuru Mahārāja.

O descendant of the Kuru dynasty, a predominance of the quality of ignorance gives rise to a lack of discrimination, as well as to apathy, madness and illusion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Aprakāśaḥ* means ‘lack of discrimination’, and ‘to accept what scripture forbids’. *Apravṛtitiḥ* means ‘lack of endeavour’. *Pramādaḥ* means ‘to believe that the objects before one’s very eyes do not exist’. *Moha* means ‘to be absorbed in illusory objects’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the symptoms arising from a predominance of *tamo-guṇa*, the quality of ignorance. *Aprakāśa* means ‘loss of discrimination’ or ‘lack of knowledge’. It is seen that one in the condition of ignorance tends to thirst for that which scripture forbids. *Apravṛtti* means ‘to have no inclination to understand the duties recommended by the scriptures’. One believes it is not his fate to perform such duties and he remains indifferent towards them. *Moha* means ‘illusory absorption’, that is, to become attached to temporary objects, considering them to be eternal. This is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.15):

*yadā jayed rajah sattvaṁ tamo mūḍham layaṁ jaḍam
yujyeta śoka-mohābhyāṁ nidrayā himsayāśayā*

Lamentation, delusion, sleep, violence and desire are seen to dominate the living entity when the mode of ignorance, which covers discrimination and causes degradation, overpowers the modes of passion and goodness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.9) also states, “*krodhādyaṁ tamasā yutam* – one can infer an excess of the mode of ignorance by symptoms such as anger.” While describing the symptoms by which a person in the mode of ignorance worships Bhagavān, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.11) states, “*himsām āśāya tāmāsam* – a person who worships Me, all the while maintaining a predilection for violence, is understood to be in the mode of ignorance.”

VERSE 14

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान् प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४ ॥

*yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti deha-bhṛt
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate*

yadā – and when; *sattve* – goodness; *pravṛddhe* – predominates; *tu* – indeed; *pralayaṁ* – death; *yāti* – attains; *deha-bhṛt* – an embodied soul; *tadā* – then; *uttama-vidāṁ* – of the worshipers of Lord Viṣṇu; *lokān* –

planets; *amalān* – pure, devoid of the modes of passion and ignorance, and full of happiness; *pratipadyate* – he attains.

When a person leaves his body under the predominance of the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*), he attains the pure, higher planets, which are the abodes of great sages who are worshippers of Hiranyagarbha, and which are free from the modes of passion and ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After death, people in the mode of goodness, such as those who worship Hiranyagarbha and who actually know transcendence, go to the higher pleasure-giving planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One takes another birth according to whatever mode predominates at the time of death. If a person dies when the mode of goodness is predominant, he attains the pleasure-giving and spotless planets of the worshippers of Hiranyagarbha, etc. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also states (11.25.22), “*sattve pralīnāḥ svar yānti* – if a person dies when *sattva-guṇa* predominates, he attains the heavenly planets.”

VERSE 15

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ १५ ॥

rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate
tathā pralīnas tamasī mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate

rajasi – when passion predominates; *pralayam* – dissolution (death); *gatvā* – upon attaining; *karma-saṅgiṣu* – among those attached to fruitive work; *jāyate* – one takes birth; *tathā* – similarly; *pralīnaḥ* – one dying; *tamasī* – when ignorance (predominates); *mūḍha-yoniṣu* – in the species of the foolish (animals and so forth); *jāyate* – takes birth.

One who gives up the body when the mode of passion is predominant takes a human birth among those attached to fruitive work, while one who dies under the predominance of the mode of ignorance takes birth among animals and other such ignorant species.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Karma-saṅgiṣu* means ‘a person who is attached to *karma*, fruitive activities’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: If a person dies when *rajo-guṇa*, the mode of passion, is predominant, he takes birth in a family of humans who are attached to fruitive activities. If a person dies when *tamo-guṇa*, the mode of ignorance, is extremely predominant, he takes birth in an animal species.

Some think that once the soul has taken birth in a human species, he does not degrade to a lower species. However, from the present verse it can be understood that even after receiving a human body, a person can receive an animal body after death if he is governed by the mode of ignorance instead of the mode of goodness. He even goes to hell if he engages in activities such as violence, and it is not sure when he will again take a human birth after returning from that place. Therefore, it is the duty of every human being to rise gradually from the mode of ignorance to the mode of passion, and from the mode of passion to the mode of goodness. And even beyond that, one should become *nirguṇa*, free from the modes of nature, by taking shelter of *suddhā-bhakti* in the association of pure devotees. Only that *sādhaka* who is completely free from the modes of nature, and who takes shelter of *nirguṇā-bhakti*, directly sees Śrī Bhagavān. In this way, his life becomes perfect and successful.

The specific rule is that a person achieves a destination that corresponds to his consciousness at the time of death: “*maraṇe yā matiḥ sā gatiḥ* – whatever one’s mind reaches out to at the time of death determines one’s next destination and body.” Therefore, it is imperative to only remember Bhagavān at the time of death. One can make one’s life successful by attaining *bhakti* that is free from the modes of nature, by remembering Bhagavān.

VERSE 16

कर्मणः सकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम्।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६ ॥

*karmanah sukṛtasyāhuḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalam
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam*

karmanah – for one who acts; *sukṛtasya* – piously; *āhuḥ* – they say; *sāttvikam* – cleansing one’s existence; *nirmalam* – pure; *phalam* – result; *rajasah* – of passionate (actions); *tu* – verily; *phalam* – the result; *duḥkham* – grief; *ajñānam* – ignorance; *tamasaḥ* – of (actions performed in) darkness; *phalam* – the fruit.

The wise say that pious action in the mode of goodness gives blissful and pure results. Action in the mode of passion incurs only misery, and the sole result of action in the mode of ignorance is ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The result of the virtuous performance of one’s prescribed duty in the mode of goodness is goodness – pure and free from disturbance. *Ajñāna* refers to a lack of consciousness, dullness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those situated in the mode of goodness remain engaged in beneficial acts for their own welfare, as well as for the welfare of society and people in general. Their actions are called *punya-karma* (pious actions). Those who perform such pious acts live happily in this material world, and they have a great chance of gaining the association of *sādhus*.

The action, or *karma*, performed by those in the mode of passion is the cause of misery. Action performed for momentary sense pleasure is useless and the lives of people who perform such action are full of misery; they attain no real happiness.

The action of a person predominated by the mode of ignorance is a source of much pain. After death, he must take birth as a worm, bird, animal or any other lower species. Killing an animal and eating its flesh is the chief symptom of those in the mode of ignorance. Those who kill animals do not know that in the future the same animal, in some form or other, will kill them. This is the law of nature. In human society, if a person kills another person, he is given the death penalty. This is the law of the state. But ignorant people do not know that Parameśvara is the original controller of the entire universe. He cannot tolerate the killing of even an ant in His kingdom; therefore, persons who do so certainly undergo punishment.

To participate in the killing of animals just for the sake of satisfying one's taste buds is a heinous offence. The killing of a cow is severely punishable, since the cow and bull are considered our mother and father. Therefore, the Vedas and Purāṇas describe the killing of cows as the most sinful act. The cow with her milk is like a mother, and since the bull helps in farming, he is likened to a father. In this way, they nourish us like parents. But modern day so-called cultured human beings neglect this fact out of ignorance and thus clear the path to their own degradation and for the degradation of society as a whole. They are heading down a steep path to complete destruction and taking all of society with them.

In human society at present, there is a predominance of the modes of passion and ignorance, and this is dangerous for everyone. It is therefore imperative for intelligent people to become situated in the mode of goodness and take shelter of *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān and the chanting of the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*harināma-saṅkīrtana*), to protect humanity from this great danger. When, in saintly association, one remembers Bhagavān, all of one's ignorance is removed, his worldly sectarianism and mundane discrimination are completely dispelled, and he sees Parameśvara, the Supreme Lord, everywhere.

VERSE 17

सत्त्वात् सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ १७ ॥

sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato 'jñānam eva ca

sattvāt – from the mode of goodness; *sañjāyate* – is born; *jñānam* – knowledge; *rajasah* – from the mode of passion; *lobhah* – greed; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *pramāda-mohau* – madness and delusion; *tamasah* – from the quality of darkness (ignorance); *bhavataḥ* – become manifest; *ajñānam* – ignorance; *eva ca* – as well as.

Knowledge is born from the mode of goodness, while the mode of passion gives rise to greed. Carelessness, delusion and ignorance are the products of the mode of ignorance.

VERSE 18

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

ūrdhvam gacchanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ

ūrdhvam – upwards (to the upper planetary systems); *gacchanti* – they go; *sattva-sthāḥ* – those situated in goodness; *madhye* – in the middle planets (as human beings); *tiṣṭhanti* – remain; *rājasāḥ* – those in the quality of passion; *jaghanya-guṇa* – of the (most) abominable quality; *vṛtti-sthāḥ* – those situated in activities; *adhāḥ* – down (to the lower planets); *gacchanti* – go; *tāmasāḥ* – who are in the quality of darkness.

Those situated in the mode of goodness go to the higher celestial planets. Those in the mode of passion remain as human beings within the Earth planet, and those in the mode of ignorance, being absorbed in laziness, madness and so forth, descend to the lower planets.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to this gradation, those in the mode of goodness go up to Satya-loka, and those in the mode of passion remain in Manuṣya-loka, the middle planet, Earth. The word *jaghanya* means ‘abominable’, and its tendencies are gross ignorance, laziness, etc. Those who are thus situated go to hell.

VERSE 19

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९ ॥

nānyam guṇebhyaḥ karttāram yadā draṣṭānupaśyati
guṇebhyaś ca param vetti mad-bhāvaṁ so 'dhigacchati

na – no; *anyam* – other; *guṇebhyaḥ* – beyond the three binding influences of material nature; *karttāram* – doer; *yadā* – when; *draṣṭā* – the seer (the minute living being); *anupaśyati* – sees in pursuance of the Vedic teachings; *guṇebhyaḥ* – to those qualities; *ca* – and; *param* – transcendental

(the minute spirit soul); *vetti* – understands; *mat-bhāvam* – pure devotion to Me in the form of *bhāva* (ecstatic love of God); *sah* – he (that living entity); *adhigacchati* – fully attains.

When the living entity does not see any agent of action besides the three modes of material nature, and when he realizes the spirit soul to be transcendental to those modes, he fully attains pure devotion to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: After describing the material world, which is composed of the three modes of material nature, Śrī Bhagavān explains liberation that is quite distinct from these modes, in this verse beginning with *nānyam* and in the next verse. “When the *jīva* does not see any other agent of action besides the modes of nature, which have been transformed to become the doer, the effect and the objects of sense enjoyment, he actually sees things as they are. He also realizes that the *ātmā*, or soul, is superior to the modes of nature and different from them. Such a seer (the *jīva*) attains love for Me (*mad-bhāvam*), that is, he merges with Me. In other words, he attains Me through *bhakti*. But even after he has acquired this knowledge, he only attains Me by performing *bhakti*.” This will become clear from the meaning of the twenty-sixth verse of this chapter.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All living entities in the various species of life, from rivers, mountains and ants up to creepers, trees and human beings, are working while helplessly bound by the modes of nature. In reality, these three modes of material nature are the only active agent in all their actions. Parameśvara is the original director of material nature, and even though He is the controller of material nature (*prakṛti*) and the three modes of nature (the *guṇas*), He is completely transcendental to both. Those who know this truth also cross over *prakṛti* and the *guṇas* to attain the supreme destination, but this cannot be understood merely by one’s own intelligence and discrimination. Therefore, it is of utmost necessity to have the association of *mahā-puruṣas*, exalted, liberated personalities, who are well-versed in transcendental knowledge. Regardless of the extent of a

living entity's degradation, in the association of such persons, he will very quickly and easily transcend these three modes of nature.

VERSE 20

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha-samudbhavān
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute

guṇān – qualities; *etān* – these; *atītya* – after transcending; *trīn* – three; *dehī* – the embodied being; *deha-samudbhavān* – which produce the body; *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair* – from the miseries of birth, death, old age and other sufferings (such as disease); *vimuktaḥ* – becomes fully liberated; *amṛtam* – immortality; *aśnute* – attains.

After transcending these three binding qualities, which are the cause of the material body, the embodied living entity attains freedom from the bondage of birth, death, old age and other miseries, and he attains liberation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: He then becomes free from the modes of nature after attaining that state wherein he sees material nature as the only doer. Śrī Bhagavān, therefore, speaks this verse beginning with the word *guṇān*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A person who has attained the nature of *brahma* is not affected by the miseries of birth, death, old age and disease. Even those who have attained perfection in *jñāna* by performing mixed devotion (*bhakti-miśra-jñāna*) relinquish *jñāna* to attain transcendental devotion to the lotus feet of Bhagavān. Remaining engaged in the bliss of that service, they finally taste the nectar of *prema*. In contrast, the *nirviśeṣa-jñānīs*, who simply cultivate *jñāna* with the aim of attaining the featureless aspect of the Supreme, achieve nothing. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4) it is stated, “*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya* – only the pure devotees (*śuddha-bhaktas*) of Śrī Bhagavān transcend the modes of material nature, no one else.”

VERSE 21

अर्जुन उवाच—

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन् गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन् गुणानतिवर्त्तते ॥ २१ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho
kim ācāraḥ katham caitāms trīn guṇān ativarttate*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *kaiḥ –* by which?; *liṅgaiḥ –* symptoms; *trīn –* three; *guṇān –* binding influences; *etān –* these; *atītaḥ –* transcendental; *bhavati –* he becomes; *prabho –* O Lord; *kim –* what?; *ācāraḥ –* his behaviour; *katham –* how?; *ca –* and; *etān –* these; *trīn guṇān –* three qualities; *ativarttate –* does he transcend.

Arjuna inquired: O Lord, what are the symptoms of one who is transcendental to these three binding forces? How does he behave? And how does he transcend the modes?

VERSES 22-25

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२ ॥
उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येवं योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥
समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*prakāśam ca pravṛttim ca moham eva ca pāṇḍava
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati*

udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ity evaṁ yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate
sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ
tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras tulya-nindātma-saṁstutiḥ
mānāpamānayoḥ tulyas tulyo mitra-ri-pakṣayoḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Supreme Lord said; *prakāśam* – of illumination; *ca* – and; *pravṛttim* – activity; *ca* – and; *moham* – delusion; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *pāṇḍava* – O son of Pāṇḍu; *na dveṣṭi* – does not hate; *saṁpravṛttāni* – the appearance; *na* – not; *nivṛttāni* – their disappearance; *kāñkṣati* – he hankers; *udāsīna-vat* – as if neutral; *āsīnaḥ* – situated; *guṇaiḥ* – by the actions of the qualities of nature (such as happiness and distress); *yaḥ* – who; *na vicālyate* – is undisturbed; *guṇāḥ* – of the three qualities; *vartante* – following their cycles; *iti* – thus; *evaṁ* – so; *yaḥ* – who; *avatiṣṭhati* – remains steady; *na iṅgate* – unmoved; *sama* – remains equipoised; *duḥkha-sukhaḥ* – in happiness and distress; *sva-sthaḥ* – who is situated in his *svarūpa*; *sama* – who considers equally; *loṣṭa-aśma-kāñcanaḥ* – dirt, stone and gold; *tulya* – who is equal; *priya-apriyaḥ* – amidst pleasant and unpleasant events; *dhīraḥ* – intelligent; *tulya* – equipoised; *ninda-ātma-saṁstutiḥ* – in hearing praise and defamation of himself; *māna-apamānayoḥ* – in honour and dishonour; *tulyaḥ* – equal; *tulyaḥ* – equal; *mitra-ari-pakṣayoḥ* – to parties of friends and enemies; *sarva-ārambha-parityāgī* – who renounces all endeavours (except those for bare bodily maintenance); *guṇa-ātītaḥ* – transcendental to the three modes of nature; *saḥ* – he; *ucyate* – is said.

Śrī Bhagavān said: O son of Pāṇḍu, a person who is transcendental to the three modes of material nature does not hate illumination, activity and delusion when they occur nor does he long for them to cease. Therefore, as if indifferent to and unmoved by the actions of the three modes such as happiness and misery, he knows that it is the modes alone that are active. He remains undisturbed and even-minded, he is always situated in his *svarūpa*, and he considers dirt, stone and gold to be the same. He maintains his equilibrium amidst pleasant and unpleasant circumstances, he is intelligent, and he is equipoised in both fame and defamation, honour and

dishonour. He treats friend and foe equally, and he renounces all actions except those required to maintain the body.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the Second Chapter, Arjuna received an answer to the question: “What are the symptoms of one who is *sthita-prajñā*?” Now, however, he is questioning further, being eager for more specific knowledge about this. (1) “By which symptoms are those who have transcended the three *guṇas* to be known?” (2) “What is their conduct?” and (3) “How can one transcend the three *guṇas*, thereby attaining the state of transcendence?” In the Second Chapter, when Arjuna asked, “What are the symptoms of one who is *sthita-prajñā*?” he did not ask, “How does he transcend the *guṇas*?” But here he is specifically asking this question.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: In this verse, Arjuna has questioned Śrī Bhagavān about the symptoms of a person who is beyond the three modes of nature. What is his conduct and what spiritual practice enabled him to attain that stage? It is very important for every human being to ask these questions, which are essential for those genuinely enthused to follow the teachings of the *Gītā*. The answers to these questions provide instructions on how to transcend the modes of ignorance, passion and goodness and achieve the state of *nirguṇa*. Thereafter, by cultivating *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān, one can attain the highest goal in the form of *prema* for Him.

VERSE 26

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ २६ ॥

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

mām – Me, the Supreme Lord; *ca* – only; *yaḥ* – who; *avyabhicāreṇa* – with one-pointed; *bhakti-yogena* – devotional connection; *sevate* – serves; *saḥ* – he; *guṇān* – three qualities; *samatītya* – fully transcends; *etān* – these; *brahma-bhūyāya* – to realize *brahma*; *kalpate* – becomes eligible.

One who renders service with one-pointed devotion to Me, in My form as Śyāmasundara, can transcend these three binding influences of material nature and become qualified to realize *brahma*, My spiritual nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How can one transcend these three material modes?” In response to this third question, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *mām ca*. The word *ca* means ‘Me alone’. “Only those who render service to Me, Śyāmasundara, who am the Supreme Controller, become *brahma-bhūyāya*, or qualified to experience My spiritual nature.” This is proven by the use of the adjective *ekayā* in the statement “*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am attained only by exclusive devotion” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21).

According to the *Gītā* (7.14), “*mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etān taranti te* – only those who surrender to Me cross over the deluding external energy.” The word *eva* also emphasizes that *brahma*, or Spirit, can only be experienced with the help of *bhakti*, not by any other means. The import of the word *avyabhicāreṇa* (undeviating) is that *bhakti-yoga* should not be mixed with *karma*, *jñāna* or any other process. Even *niṣkāma-karma* is to be given up. “Renounce even *jñāna* related to Me.” In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.1), it is said, “*jñānaṁ ca mayi sannyaset* – one should surrender knowledge and the means by which he achieved that knowledge to Me.” According to this statement, *jñānīs* renounce their *jñāna*, having even cultivated it to its highest degree, but nowhere is it said that *bhakti-yoga* must be renounced. Only *bhakti-yoga* is *avyabhicāra* (undeviating). Therefore, just as *karma-yoga* should be rejected, *jñāna-yoga* should also be rejected in order for a person to engage in *avyabhicāra*, or *kevalā-bhakti* (exclusive devotion). There is no other means to attain the state beyond the modes. It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.26): “A performer of action who has taken shelter of Me is *nirguṇa*, situated beyond the modes of nature. In other words, only one-pointed devotees are free from the modes of nature.”

*sāttvikāḥ kārako 'saṅgī rāgāndho rājasāḥ smṛtaḥ
tāmasāḥ smṛti-vibhraṣṭo nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.26)

A person in the mode of goodness is not attached. A person in the mode of passion is extremely attached, and a person in the mode of ignorance loses his memory and can no longer discriminate. But a person who has taken shelter of Me is situated beyond the modes of nature.

This verse (11.25.26) describes the detached *karmī* and *jñānī*, who due to being situated in the mode of goodness, are *sāttvika sādhakas*, while those who have taken shelter of Bhagavān are described as beyond the material modes. From this statement, it is understood that Kṛṣṇa's devotees are the only real *sādhakas*.

After becoming perfect in *jñāna* and renouncing the quality of goodness, a *jñānī* becomes transcendental to the modes. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda says, "The word *ca* in this verse is used to indicate a conclusion." Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī writes, "Only those who serve Me, Lord Nārāyaṇa alone, with *avyabhicāra-bhakti-yoga* as described in the Twelfth Chapter, become transcendental to the modes of nature."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: How does the above-mentioned person who is *guṇātīta*, transcendental to the three modes, cross beyond them? In response to this third question, Śrī Bhagavān says, "As a result of rendering service to Me in My Śyāmasundara form, with undeviating, one-pointed *bhakti-yoga*, My devotees easily cross over these modes and become qualified to experience My *svarūpa*." Only those devotees who have taken shelter of Bhagavān become free from the modes. This is verified in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.26): "*nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ* – those who take exclusive shelter of Me are *nirguṇa*." The word *mad-apāśrayaḥ* means "*mad-eka-śaraṇo bhaktaḥ* – only a devotee who takes exclusive shelter of Me is *āśritaḥ*, dependent on Me, and free from the modes."

It is also seen in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88.5):

*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sāksāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet*

Certainly Śrī Hari Himself is directly the Supreme Person, who is beyond the modes of material nature. He is the witness of everyone. Those who worship Him also transcend the modes of nature.

Here, the word *brahma-bhūyāya* means ‘to become qualified to realize Spiritual Reality, *brahma-tattva*’. *Brahma* cannot be realized by any practice other than *bhakti*. Realization of this requires eternal distinction between the person experiencing and that which is to be experienced (Parabrahma). In other words, the living entities’ existence is always separate from Bhagavān’s. The monists, or *nirviśeṣavādīs*, do not accept that the *jīva* and *brahma* exist separately after liberation, so it is not possible for them to experience Him. In fact, only devotees are qualified to realize *brahma*, or Śrī Bhagavān, the Absolute Truth. “Only those who serve Me in My form as Śyāmasundara, the Supreme Lord, in *bhakti-yoga* are qualified to realize *brahma*.” This has been stated very clearly in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21): “*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I can be attained only by *bhakti*.” One cannot attain liberation merely by *jñāna*. It can only be achieved with the help of *bhakti*, in some way or another. This has been stated very clearly in many verses in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, such as (1.5.12):

*naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam
na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam*

This means that even if *jñāna* is selfless and pure, it is not auspicious if it is bereft of a service attitude to Bhagavān; rather, it is useless. What, then, to speak of fruitive action, which is always miserable and insignificant.”

Such *jñānīs* fall down even after reaching the highest stage of *jñāna*: *sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.3). The following verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can be referred to in this regard: 10.2.32; 11.14.21 and 4.31.12.

Some people translate the word *brahma-bhūyāya* in the present verse to infer that the living entity becomes one with *brahma*, the Supreme Spirit. But in fact, the living entity does not become one with *brahma* even after he has attained liberation. *Chandogya Upaniṣad* ascribes eight characteristics to one who is realized (*brahma-bhūta*):

*ātmā ’pahata-pāpnā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso ’pipāsuḥ
satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ so ’nveṣṭavyaḥ*

(1) *Apahata-pāpa* – he has no relationship with the sinful tendencies of *māyā*, such as ignorance (*avidyā*).

- (2) *Vijara* – because he is eternally youthful, he never faces old age.
- (3) *Vimṛtyu* – there is no possibility of him ever becoming degraded.
- (4) *Viśoka* – he is free from mundane happiness, misery, etc.
- (5) *Vijighatsa* – he has no desire to enjoy sense objects.
- (6) *Apipāsu* – he has no desire other than to serve Bhagavān.
- (7) *Satya-kāma* – he is endowed with desires that are favourable for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- (8) *Satya-saṅkalpa* – he attains perfection in whatever he desires.

According to the statement of *Gītā* 14.17, *sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam*, knowledge results from the quality of goodness, and therefore *jñānīs* are *sāttvika*. After attaining perfection in *jñāna*, a *jñānī* gives up his *sāttvika* nature and becomes *nirguṇa*, transcending all modes of nature. But the special quality of the devotees is that even from the beginning of their practice, they are free from the modes. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.34) states:

*martyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā
niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me
tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno
mayātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai*

Having given up all types of prescribed duties, a mortal person attains immortality and becomes most dear to Me the very moment he fully surrenders to Me. In this way, he becomes free from the influence of the modes of nature.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments on the verses “*jñānam viśuddham paramārtham ekam* – the non-dual Absolute Truth, being devoid of material contamination, bestows liberation upon us” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.11), and “*martyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā* – that surrendered mortal, having given up all fruitive desires and offered Me his very life, achieves opulences akin to Mine” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.34). He writes, “From the very beginning of the *sādhana* stage, when one takes shelter of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān begins His treatment of His surrendered devotees. In other words, He starts to make them *nirguṇa*.” This means that in his practice of *bhakti*, a *sādhaka* will progress systematically through the different stages: *niṣṭhā* (steadiness in *bhakti*), *ruci* (relish of *bhakti*) and *āsakti*

(deep attachment to *bhakti* and to the Supreme Lord). Eventually, he achieves *rati* (transcendental emotion), and becomes completely free from the modes of nature. At that time, he has no relationship with illusory objects, such as his body or a house. “*Bhakti*’s power is so inconceivable that even while still receiving instruction, the devotee’s transcendental body, mind and senses are created by Me in a way that is hidden, or invisible.” In other words, this process is unknown to the *jīva*. Similarly, his illusory body, mind and senses are also removed in a way that is imperceptible. This shows the glory of *bhakti*.

“At that time, after being situated in his own *svarūpa* in My supreme abode, that pure living entity becomes qualified to taste the bliss of rendering service to Me.”

In many places, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has confirmed that a devotee becomes free from the modes of nature even in the stage of *sādhana*. Although objects such as a leaf, flower, fruit, water and sandalwood paste appear to be material in the eyes of the non-devotees, when the devotees offer these items to Bhagavān with devotion, they attain a transcendental nature and become situated beyond the three modes. How much more is this true of the devotees who fully offer themselves? This is also confirmed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Antya-līlā* (4.191):

*prabhu kahe—vaiṣṇava-deha ‘prākṛta’ kabhu naya
‘aprākṛta’ deha bhaktera ‘cid-ānanda-maya’*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “The body of a *bhakta* is never material. It is considered to be transcendental, full of spiritual bliss.”*

VERSE 27

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च॥ २७॥

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyaayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

brahmaṇaḥ – of that *nirviśeṣa-brahma*; *hi* – because; *pratiṣṭhā* – the shelter; *aham* – I am; *amṛtasya* – of liberation; *avyayasya* – of the everlasting; *ca* – and; *śāśvatasya* – of the eternal; *ca* – and; *dharmasya* – of *sanātana-dharma*

(the eternal spiritual nature); *sukhasya* – of the happiness of *prema*; *eka-antikasya* – of one-pointed (exclusive) devotion to Me; *ca* – and.

I alone am the basis of that undifferentiated, impersonal *brahma* and the sole refuge of everlasting immortality, eternal *dharma* and the transcendental bliss of *prema* arising from one-pointed, pure devotion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One may raise the question: “How can Your devotees attain the state of *nirguṇa-brahma*, that aspect of the Absolute Truth that is devoid of qualities, which is only possible by experiencing oneness with *brahma*?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *brahmaṇo*. “I am indeed the basis (*pratiṣṭhā*) of that *brahma* and am famous as the supreme basis of everything. Since *brahma* depends upon Me, I am its shelter, or fountainhead. The word *pratiṣṭhā* has this meaning in all Śruti statements, such as “*annamaya*”. Furthermore, “*amṛtasya* – I am also the shelter of immortality (*amṛta*).” Is this *amṛta* heavenly nectar? No! It refers to imperishable liberation, or *mokṣa*. I am also the shelter of *śāśvatasya dharmasya*, the eternal *dharma*, and I am also the shelter of *bhakti*, the supreme and everlasting religion, which eternally exists in the stages of practice (*sādhana*) and perfection (*siddha*). Furthermore, I am *prema*, which is attained by exclusive devotion. Thus, since everything depends on Me, one can attain the platform of *brahma* (characterized by merging with *brahma*) by worshipping Me with a desire to achieve such liberation (*kaivalya*).”

While commenting on this verse, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am the shelter (*pratiṣṭhā*) of *brahma*, which means that I am concentrated *brahma*. Although the sun is concentrated light, it is known as the shelter of light. In the same way, although I am the form of Kṛṣṇa, I am the basis (*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*) of that aspect of the Absolute that is devoid of features, *nirviśeṣa-brahma*.” The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* also proves this point. “Viṣṇu is the shelter of all auspiciousness. He is the shelter of all consciousness and the shelter of the all-pervading Soul.” Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī also writes that Viṣṇu is the shelter of Parabrahma, the omniscient Supersoul. “As Śrī Bhagavān says in the *Gītā*, ‘I am the shelter (*pratiṣṭhā*) of *brahma*.’”

In *Viṣṇu-dharma* it is said, “Among material nature (*prakṛti*), the Enjoyer (*puruṣa*) and *brahma* (the effulgence of Bhagavān), only *puruṣa*, Vāsudeva, is the Lord. This is the conclusion.” The same scripture also states, “Just as Bhagavān Acyuta is Parabrahma, Lord of the impersonal *brahma* effulgence, He is also the Lord of the *ātma*, Paramātmā.”

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed the pastime of rescuing the sons of the *brāhmaṇa*, He told Arjuna that Parabrahma extends Himself throughout the universe as various opulent manifestations. “O Arjuna, that concentrated radiance should be considered to be My *svarūpa* composed of effulgence” (*Hari-vamśa Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu-parva* 114.11.12).

In *Brahma-samhitā* (5.40) it is also said, “I worship the original personality, Śrī Govinda. The non-differentiated, impersonal *brahma*, which has been described by the Upaniṣads has originated from the radiance of His limbs.”

Also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.24.38), Bhagavān Matsya told King Satyavān, “I will enlighten your heart with answers to your questions, and then, by My mercy, My glory, popularly known as Parabrahma, will manifest in your heart and you will be able to realize Me completely.”

Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī writes in his commentary: “The following doubt may be raised: ‘How can Your devotees, having attained Your transcendental nature, become qualified to achieve that state of *brahma* if You are different from *brahma*?’ Anticipating this doubt, Śrī Bhagavān says, *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*. (*Pratiṣṭhā* implies ‘I alone am sufficient and complete.’) ‘Since I am the basis of *brahma*, if someone realizes Me, then his realization is sufficient and complete. Realization of *brahma* is included in that.’”

According to the *Amara-koṣa* dictionary, the word *paryāpti* means ‘the most complete’. Apart from this, there is another verse establishing this. This has been composed by Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī himself:

*parā-kṛta-mana-dvandvaṁ param brahman narākṛtim
saundarya-sāra-sarvasvaṁ vande nandātmajam aham*

I worship the effulgent form of the essence of all beauty, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Parabrahma, who has a human form and who has put aside the duality of my mind.

The three modes of nature are unwanted obstacles on the path of perfection. One's life is perfected by freedom from the modes of nature, and that is *bhakti*. This is the topic that has been explained in this chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīkā* (the commentary that gives pleasure to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons) on the Fourteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Arjuna as saying, "You may ask that since the attainment of *brahma* is the ultimate goal of all types of *sādhana*, how is it possible for persons who have realized *brahma* to enjoy *prema* for You, which is beyond the modes?" In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, "In My eternal state, transcendental to the modes of nature, I exist in My original form as Bhagavān. I place the conscious seed, the *jīva*, who is of the *taṭasthā-śakti*, in the womb of My inert material energy, which is illuminated by My *brahma-svarūpa* (the effulgence of My form). When a conditioned soul advances to higher and higher stages by his cultivation of *jñāna-yoga*, he ultimately attains *brahma*, the Absolute Truth, in My personal form. This is the first step of the *nirguṇa* stage, the realm that is transcendental to the modes. Before this, he is engrossed in *nirviśeṣa-bhāva*, feelings of impersonalism, due to relinquishing all attraction to mundane variety. This *nirviśeṣa-bhāva* is removed by becoming situated in that *nirguṇa* stage and taking shelter of pure *bhakti-yoga*. He then realizes the stage of transcendental spiritual variety (*cid-viśeṣa*).

"Great saints such as Sanaka and Vāmadeva first deliberated on the featureless *nirviśeṣa-brahma* by following the path of *jñāna*. Later they achieved nectar in the form of *nirguṇa bhakti-rasa* by this process of devotional service. Unfortunately, those who hanker to achieve liberation, forced by the adversity of lowly desire, cannot properly situate themselves in *brahma-tattva*, and therefore, they do not attain that *bhakti* which is beyond the modes as their highest attainment. In the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (*nirguṇa-saviśeṣa-tattva*), I am indeed the shelter of the impersonal *brahma*, which is the supreme destination of the *jñānīs*. My form as Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of

all immortality, imperishability, eternality, love of God in the form of the eternal occupation, and the ever-blissful nectarean mellows of Vraja. These are all attainable by taking shelter of My *kṛṣṇa-svarūpa*. I am that *para-tattva*, beyond the material modes and full of variety.”

“*Mukti-pradātā sarveṣāṃ viṣṇur eva na saṁśayaḥ* – Viṣṇu alone is the bestower of *mukti*.” The Śrutis also say, “*tam eva viditvātimṛtyum eti* – merely by knowing Him, one becomes free from the clutches of death” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8). The *Padma Purāṇa* states, “*viṣṇor anucaratvaṁ hi mokṣam āhur manīṣinaḥ* – thoughtful sages who have realized the Absolute say that liberation means service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān.” And the *Skanda Purāṇa* states, “*kaivalaya-daḥ param brahma visnur eva sanātanaḥ* – only Viṣṇu, who is the supreme *brahma*, is beyond impersonal oneness and eternal.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Fourteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Puruṣottama-Yoga

Yoga Through Understanding
the Supreme Person

VERSE I

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*ūrddhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham aśvattham prāhur avyayam
chandānsi yasya parṇāni yas tam veda sa veda-vit*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the all-opulent Supreme Lord said; *ūrddhva-mūlam* – whose roots grow upwards; *adhaḥ-śākham* – whose branches grow downwards; *aśvattham* – the sacred fig tree; *prāhuḥ* – they said; *avyayam* – imperishable; *chandānsi* – the Vedic hymns (that establish the glories of fruitive activities); *yasya* – whose; *parṇāni* – leaves; *yaḥ* – who; *tam* – that tree; *veda* – knows; *saḥ* – he; *veda-vit* – the knower of the Vedas.

Śrī Bhagavān said: The scriptures describe this material world as a special type of imperishable *aśvattha* tree, with roots that grow upwards and branches that grow down, the leaves of which are the Vedic hymns that eulogize the path of fruitive action (*karma-kaṇḍa*). He who knows this tree knows the essence of the Vedas.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This Fifteenth Chapter describes how Śrī Kṛṣṇa cuts one's bondage to material existence. He is completely detached from it. It describes how the living entity is a part (*aṁśa*) of Īśvara and that Kṛṣṇa alone is the *puruṣa* who is beyond both fallible and infallible entities.

The previous chapter stated, “Those who worship Me with one-pointed *bhakti* transcend the modes of material nature and become qualified to experience *brahma*, or transcendence” (*Gītā* 14.26). One may ask, “But You have a human form, so how will one attain a spiritual nature by worshipping You through *bhakti-yoga*?” In response Śrī Bhagavān said, “In reality, I am indeed a human being, but I am also the supreme shelter and support of that *brahma*.” This Fifteenth Chapter begins with an explanation of this point. *Gītā* 14.26 stated that after transcending the modes of material nature, one-pointed devotees become qualified to realize *brahma*.

What, then, is the nature of this material world consisting of the modes of nature? Where is it generated? Who are the living entities who cross beyond this material world by their performance of *bhakti*? What is the specific meaning of *brahma* in the statement ‘they become qualified to realize *brahma*’? And who are You, the shelter and basis of *brahma*? Expecting these questions, Śrī Bhagavān uses an ornamental metaphor to describe this material world as a wonderful *aśvattha* tree. The first shoot of this tree – namely, four-headed Lord Brahmā, the root of the *mahat-tattva* – sprouted from the seed of material nature in Satya-loka, the topmost region of the material universe.

Adhaḥ means that the branches of this tree extend downwards to such planets as the heavens and Earth, as unlimited demigods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, demoniac species – such as Asuras, Rākṣasas, Pretas (ghosts) – human beings, and animals, such as cows, horses, birds, insects and non-moving living entities. For the fruitive workers, this tree bestows the fourfold results of religiosity (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sense-enjoyment (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) as its fruits. For this reason, it is called *uttama*, the best.

Adhaḥ also means that according to the perception of devotees, this material world will not exist in the future. In other words, it is temporary and subject to destruction. But for non-devotees, however, it is *avyayam*, eternal.

Statements that establish fruitive activities are given in the Vedas. *Chandāmsi* means that those desiring opulence will perform sacrifice to the wind-god Vāyu by offering Him a white goat, and those who desire progeny will perform a sacrifice to the eleven Indras. Since fruitive activities make the material world expand, they are like the leaves on the tree of the Vedas. The tree only appears beautiful due to its leaves. Those who know this are called the knowers of the Vedas. It is said in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.3.1), “This material world is an eternal *aśvattha* tree. Its roots extend upwards and its branches downwards.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous chapter, it was explained that a *jīva* becomes qualified to experience the impersonal *brahma* only by *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is because Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the sole shelter of *brahma*, or transcendence. In the present chapter, *puruṣottama-yoga*, *yoga* through understanding the Supreme Person, is being explained to clearly convey information about Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the origin of the material world, is the Supreme Truth. But His separated parts (*vibhinnāṃśa*), the *jīvas*, do not recognize Him and have thus neglected to serve Him. Consequently, from time immemorial, they are bound in the cycle of birth and death within this material existence, wandering throughout various species of life and suffering the threefold miseries. They are completely unable to get out of this cycle because they repeatedly become attached to the fruits of their actions.

In this chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by His causeless mercy, is giving instructions about the nature of this material world. He does so in an interesting way. His purpose is to bring helpless *jīvas* out of the cycle of *karma* and create in them a feeling of renunciation towards the material world. He gives the example of an *aśvattha* tree to present this subject in a simple manner. Just as an *aśvattha* tree expands to an enormous size, with endless branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits, in the same way, this material world also expands. Its various branches are the *Ṛg*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva Vedas* and its leaves are the Vedic hymns, which establish the means for attaining one’s desires for immediate material enjoyment by performing fruitive activities. In this way, this tree of material existence appears to bestow the fruits of *dharma*, *artha*,

kāma and *mokṣa* to the conditioned living entities who are in bondage as a result of their actions.

The sight of this tree is so instantly pleasing that a conditioned soul cannot possibly know that its fruits are poisonous, and he becomes enchanted. But devotees realize the poisonous nature of its fruits and say that it can only be cut down with the weapon of renunciation. The name of this tree, *aśvattha*, means *na śvaḥ sthāsyāti* – not existing in the future.

Those who understand that the material world is temporary know the Vedas. Bhagavān has clearly refuted the conception of the *māyāvādīs* who claim that this material world is false, or a dream. In fact, this material world is a reality and eternal, but it undergoes changes and is periodically annihilated. This is lucidly established in all the statements of scripture and of Śrī Bhagavān.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Bhagavān as saying, “O Arjuna, if you think that it is better to follow the statements of the Vedas and thus take shelter of material life, then listen. This material world, which is generated by *karma* (fruitive acts), is a specific type of *aśvattha* tree. For those who take shelter of *karma*, this tree is imperishable and its roots spread upwards. The statements of the Vedas that establish fruitive action are its leaves, and its branches spread downwards. This means that this tree gives the results of the living entity’s actions through Me, the Supreme Absolute Reality. Those who know the temporary nature of this tree indeed know its reality.”

VERSE 2

अधश्चोद्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसन्ततानि
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २ ॥

adhaś corddhvaṁ prasṛtās tasya śākhā
guṇa-pravṛddhā viṣaya-pravālāḥ
adhaś ca mūlāny anusantatāni
karmānubandhīni manuṣya-loke

adhaḥ – downwards (to various species of life such as human beings and animals); *ca* – and; *ūrdhvam* – upwards (to superior species such as the demigods); *prasṛtāḥ* – are extended; *tasya* – of this (tree of this material world); *śākhāḥ* – branches; *guṇa-pravṛddhāḥ* – nurtured by the three binding influences of material nature; *viṣaya-pravālāḥ* – its twigs are the objects of the senses; *adhaḥ* – downwards; *ca* – and; *mūlāni* – its roots; *anusantatāni* – are always expanding; *karma-anubandhīni* – binding to fruitive activities; *manuṣya-loke* – in human society.

The leaves on the branches of this tree of the material world, in the form of various sense objects, are nurtured by the three modes of nature. Its branches spread to the lower species of life such as human beings and animals, as well as to the higher species such as the demigods. The roots of this tree are the desires for sense enjoyment. They bind one to the flow of actions and the reactions of action and increasingly spread downwards.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ; The branches of this tree of the material world spread everywhere. *Adhaḥ* means ‘in the lower species, such as animals’, and *ūrdhva* means ‘in the higher species, such as the demigods’. As a tree is nourished by pouring water on it, this tree of the material world is nourished by the different tendencies of the modes of nature, such as the mode of goodness. Sense objects such as sound are its leaves. Moreover, some believe that a great treasure is hidden beneath the original roots of the tree. Like a banyan tree, this tree also has branches and matted tangles. Although its origin is in Brahma-loka, its roots are in human society. These roots, which take support from fruitive acts (*karma*) are ever-expanding. The living entity undergoes the result of his actions by receiving a body in any other species. Then, upon attaining a human body, he engages in fruitive action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Many branches on this tree take support of the mode of ignorance and spread downwards. Many branches are nourished by the mode of passion and are situated in the middle of the tree, spreading outward. And many branches are supported by the mode of goodness and spread

upwards. Material sense pleasures are the shoots of these branches. The external matted roots of this tree, like that of a banyan tree, search for the fruit of action and spread downwards.”

VERSES 3-4

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
 नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
 अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलम्
 असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥

ततः पदं तत् परिमार्गितव्यं
 यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
 तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
 यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४ ॥

*na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate
 nānto na cādir na ca sampratiṣṭhā
 aśvattham enam su-virūḍha-mūlam
 asaṅga-śastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā
 tataḥ padaṁ tat parimārgitavyaṁ
 yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ
 tam eva cādyam puruṣaṁ prapadye
 yataḥ pravṛtṭiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī*

na – nor; *rūpam* – the form; *asya* – of this (tree); *iha* – within this world; *tathā* – as described above; *upalabhyate na* – is not perceivable; *antaḥ* – its end; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *ādiḥ* – its beginning; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *sampratiṣṭhā* – existing but not perceived; *aśvattham* – *pīpal* tree; *enam* – this; *su-virūḍha-mūlam* – very firmly rooted; *asaṅga-śastreṇa* – by the sharp axe of detachment; *dṛḍhena* – resolutely; *chittvā* – having cut down; *tataḥ* – then; *padam* – place; *tat* – that; *parimārgitavyam* – one must dutifully search out; *yasmin* – whence; *gatāḥ* – having attained; *na nivartanti* – they never return; *bhūyaḥ* – again; *tam* – to that; *eva* – indeed; *ca* – and; *ādyam* – primeval; *puruṣam* – person; *prapadye* – surrender; *yataḥ* – whence; *pravṛtṭiḥ* – cycle of birth and death; *prasṛtā* – has been expanded; *purāṇī* – this ancient.

The actual form of this tree of material existence, as described above, is not perceivable within the world, for its beginning, end and existence cannot be ascertained here. Therefore, after resolutely cutting down this deeply rooted tree of material existence with the sharp axe of intense detachment, one should search out the lotus feet of that primeval Person, Śrī Bhagavān, who is the root of this tree. Once one takes shelter of Him, from whom the cycle of birth and death expands, one never returns to this material world. With the heartfelt feeling, “I fully surrender unto that primeval Person,” one should take full shelter of Him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this mortal world, the *svarūpa*, or actual form, of this tree, as described above, certainly cannot be understood. There are many different opinions about this tree: ‘it is true’, ‘it is false’, ‘it is eternal’. Because this tree has no limit, it is endless, and because it has no beginning, it is beginningless. It also has no substratum, or support. What, then, is its basis, or foundation? What is it? A person with no knowledge of the Truth cannot understand this. Regardless of what it may be, one should cut it down with the weapon of detachment, knowing it to be the only remedy for one’s endless misery. One should then search for the great wealth present at its roots. It is for this end that Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse describing the banyan tree. Here the word *asaṅga* (in verse 3) means to be detached from everything. Cutting down this tree with the axe of detachment, one should search for *brahma*, the Supreme Lord, who is the great wealth and root (origin) of the tree.

“What is the nature of that origin?” In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān says, “Having attained the root, or origin, one never returns to this temporary material world.”

“How is one to search for this root?” To this He responds, “One must take shelter of that primeval Person and devoutly worship Him. It is from Him that this material world, which is without beginning, has expanded, so it is imperative to search for Him with devotion.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Ordinary people cannot understand the reality of this tree of material existence. That is, they

are unable to ascertain its beginning, end and foundation. Even after they have understood the sequence of the creation of this material world, from the unmanifest material energy (*mahat-tattva*) to the false ego (*ahaṅkāra*), etc., they remain ignorant, not knowing that it is the Supreme Lord, in fact, the actual shelter of everyone, who is the original support of material nature. The living entity's aversion to Bhagavān causes him to be bewildered by the deluding external energy, *māyā*, and binds him to material existence, consisting of the three material qualities (*guṇas*). Impelled by these *guṇas*, he wanders to the lower and higher regions of this material world, finally becoming completely exhausted. Although he feels the need to cut this tree of material existence, he is unable to trace out its root. It is only on the strength of practising *bhakti* in the association of saintly persons that it is possible to cut attachment to the material realm. With this understanding, a fortunate living entity surrenders to the lotus feet of the Supreme Truth, Śrī Hari, and begins to perform *bhajana* of Him. As a result, he becomes free from the clutches of the material world and attains eternal service to Śrī Bhagavān in His abode. This is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.18):

*tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovido
na labhyate yad bhramatām upary adhaḥ
tal labhyate duḥkhavad anyataḥ sukham
kālena sarvatra gabhīra-rāṁhasā*

Intelligent people should only endeavour for transcendental happiness of the self, which cannot be attained by wandering from Brahma-loka in the upper planets to Sutala-loka in the lower planets. However, as far as sense pleasures are concerned, they are automatically obtained without any endeavour in due course of time, in every species of life, even in hell.

Moreover, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37) it is said:

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

This means that the *jīva* has lost his memory due to being separated from the Lord, Parameśvara. Bewildered, the living entity becomes absorbed in other sense objects, and because of this, he feels fear arising from misidentifying his self with his body. In this way, the conditioned *jīvas* are bound by *māyā*. Learned persons should therefore take shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru* and perform exclusive devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By doing so, they can cross over *māyā*.

VERSE 5

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
 अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
 द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-
 र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥५॥
nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-samjñai-
rgacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṁ tat

nirmāna-mohāḥ – who are free from absorption in pride and delusion; *jita-saṅga-doṣāḥ* – free from the fault of (degrading) attachments; *adhyātma-nityāḥ* – always engaged in spiritual practices; *vinivṛtta-kāmāḥ* – free from sensual hankerings; *dvandvair* – from the dualities; *vimuktāḥ* – fully liberated; *sukha-duḥkha-samjñaiḥ* – known as happiness and distress; *gacchanti* – they attain; *amūḍhāḥ* – unbewildered (liberated persons); *padam* – abode; *avyayam* – imperishable; *tat* – that.

Only liberated personalities – who are free from pride and delusion, who have overcome the degradation of false attachment, who are engaged in searching for Paramātmā and who are free from sensual hankerings and from the dualities of happiness and distress – attain that unchangeable, eternal abode.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “How do those people who perform *bhakti* to Him attain His abode?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse

beginning with *nirmāna-mohā*. *Adhyātma-nityāḥ* means that those whose concern is to discriminate between what is eternal and what is temporary remain engaged in deliberation on Paramātmā.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here the words *padam avyayam* mean ‘the eternal abode’. Only loving service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān is an eternal position. To obtain service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān in His abode, in any one of the *rasas*, one must first surrender to His lotus feet. But it is not easy to surrender to Him, for as long as a living entity remains intoxicated by the false ego, which is related to the subtle and gross body, he thinks he is the controller of material nature. In this condition, he neglects Śrī Bhagavān and His devotees and does not accept their instructions.

When, however, material nature punishes the living entity by giving him various miseries, he begins to realize, by the mercy of Bhagavān or His devotee, that the Supreme Lord (Parameśvara) is the master of material nature, and that he, the living entity, is completely powerless and helpless. Birth and death, loss and gain, fame and infamy are all controlled by Parameśvara alone, and the *jīva* is just like a puppet in His hands. When the *jīva* realizes this fact, he surrenders to the feet of Bhagavān, and the path of *bhakti* becomes wide open for him. *Śaraṇāgati* (surrender) is the sole doorway to spiritual life, the realm of *bhakti*. The present day non-devotee thinks that the land, country and Earth belong to him and also that he is controlled by human society, but this is a complete misconception and the root cause of all miseries and bondage.

VERSE 6

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्भाम परमं मम ॥६॥

na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśāṅko na pāvakaḥ
yad gatvā na nivarttante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

na – neither; *tad* – that; *bhāsayate* – illuminate; *sūryaḥ* – the sun; *na* – nor; *śaśāṅkaḥ* – the moon; *na* – nor; *pāvakaḥ* – fire; *yad* – which; *gatvā* – having

attained; *na nivarttante* – he never returns; *tat* – that (place); *dhāma* – abode; *paramam* – supreme (all-illuminating); *mama* – Mine.

In that supreme self-effulgent realm, sun, moon and fire are not required for illumination. When surrendered persons attain that abode of Mine, they do not return to this world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What is the nature of that supreme abode?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *na tad*. That place is free from miseries such as heat and cold, and it is self-luminous.

“That supreme abode of Mine is superior to all others and beyond the scope of the material senses. It is *tejah*, all-illuminating.” It is said in the *Hari-vamśa* that Parabrahma, the Supreme Reality, who is superior to *brahma*, has arranged the universe and made it appear in various forms. “O Bhārata, you must know about that *brahma*, My concentrated effulgence.” It is also said in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.15):

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra tārahakam
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto 'agni*

What to speak of fire, not even the effulgence of the sun, the light of the moon and stars, and the splendour of lightning exist there. Everything is illuminated by His effulgence only.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The *svarūpa*, or intrinsic nature, of Bhagavān’s abode is explained in the present verse. After reaching that abode, one never returns to the material world. That abode is not illuminated by the sun, moon, fire or lightning; it is self-effulgent. That supreme abode is called Goloka, Kṛṣṇa-loka, Vraja, Gokula or Vṛndāvana. Svayam Bhagavān, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eternally performs blissful pastimes there, along with His associates. Only by cultivating *prema-bhakti*, or *rāgānugā-bhakti*, which specifically follows the footsteps of the *vraja-gopīs*, can one gain entrance there. There is no other means. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has indicated that very *dhāma* by the words *paramam mama*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Neither the sun, moon nor fire can illuminate that immutable abode of Mine.

After reaching My abode, the *jīva* is never again cheated of eternal bliss. In reality, the living entity is either bound to material existence (*baddha*) or liberated from it (*mukta*). Due to falsely identifying the body with the self, the *jīva* in his bound state desires to associate with matter. The *jīva* in the liberated state always tastes the nectar of blissful service to Me. To attain this state, it is imperative for one who is situated within this world to cut the *aśvattha* tree of the material world with the weapon of detachment, *asaṅga*.

“Attachment to mundane objects is called *saṅga*. Those who can give up that attachment, even while situated within this mundane sphere, are by nature *nirguṇa*, or beyond the modes of nature, and only they achieve devotion that is beyond the modes of nature, *nirguṇā-bhakti*.

“Taking the company of saintly persons is also called *asaṅga*. Therefore, a bound *jīva* in this material world should give up his attachment to mundane objects and, with the help of saintly persons, cut his bondage to the material world at the very root. One may pretend to practise detachment by accepting the dress of a *sannyāsī*, but this will not actually cut one’s mundane entanglement. When a *jīva* adopts My supremely blissful *bhakti* and relinquishes all desires that have no connection with Me, he attains *mukti*. In other words, the dissolution of his bondage to the material world is a mere secondary result of his endeavour. Therefore, the *bhakti* I have described (in Chapter Twelve) is the ultimate goal of the *jīvas* who desire eternal auspiciousness.”

The previous chapter explained that all types of empirical knowledge are contaminated by the modes of nature, and that pure knowledge, which acts to serve *bhakti*, is beyond the modes. This chapter reveals that all types of detachment are also contaminated by the modes of nature. Only that detachment which arises as a concomitant result of *bhakti* transcends the modes of material nature.

VERSE 7

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनः षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥७॥
mamāivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati

mama – My; *eva* – certainly; *aṁśaḥ* – separated part and parcel (*vibhinnāṁśa*); *jīva-loke* – in the world of conditioned living beings; *jīva-bhūtaḥ* – who experience conditioned life; *sanātanaḥ* – eternal; *manaḥ* – including the mind; *ṣaṣṭhāni* – the six; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *prakṛti-sthāni* – which are subject to the influences of material nature; *karṣati* – attracted.

The eternal living entities in this material world are certainly My separated parts and parcels (*vibhinnāṁśa*). Situated in material nature, they are attracted by the six senses, including the mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Who are the living entities who perform *bhakti* to You and consequently transcend this material world to obtain Your abode?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *mamaivāṁśaḥ*. The *Varāha Purāṇa* states, “The *aṁśas* (parts) of Bhagavān are of two types: *svāṁśa* (personal expansions) and *vibhinnāṁśa* (separated expansions). The *jīvas* are *vibhinnāṁśa*, separated parts.” The living entities are eternal, but in the conditioned state they identify with their material bodies. In this way, they are bound by mundane attraction through the mind and the five senses. Due to this ego they think, ‘All this is mine,’ and thus they are drawn to worldliness, as if hauled by a chain binding their feet.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining *jīva-tattva*, the fundamental truth of the living being. The *jīva* is a part (*aṁśa*) of Bhagavān, but one should understand which type of part. Śrī Bhagavān’s *aṁśas* are of two types: *svāṁśa* (personal expansions) and *vibhinnāṁśa* (separated expansions). Within the *svāṁśa* category is *viṣṇu-tattva*, or incarnations of the Lord like Matsya, Kūrma, Nṛsimha and Rāma.

The living entities are *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*, His separated parts. When Bhagavān, who is composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss, is separated from all other energies and endowed exclusively with His marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*), then these separated parts are called *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*.

This is also explained in the following manner: the living entities are generated from the *jīva-śakti*, or *taṭasthā-śakti*, which is non-different from Bhagavān, and they are known as *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*. In some

ways, they are non-different from the Lord, and in other ways they are different from Him. Therefore, their relationship with Bhagavān is one of inconceivable oneness and difference. This philosophy is termed *acintya-bheda-abheda-tattva*.

Jīvas can be in one of two states: bound or liberated. In the liberated state, the living entity is free from illusory designations and remains engaged in service to Bhagavān. But in the bound state, he remains entangled in the material world, being covered by the illusory designations of the gross and subtle body. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.4), this has been explained in the following way:

*ekasyaiva mamāśasya jīvasyaiva mahā-mate
bandho 'syāvidyānādir vidyayā ca tathetarah*

O most intelligent Uddhava, the *jīvas* are the separated parts of Me, who am one without a second and the non-dual Absolute Reality. Due to ignorance (*avidyā*), they have become bound, and by knowledge (*vidyā*), they attain liberation.

Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.5) also states, *yayā sammohito jīvaḥ*. “Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the modes of nature, thinks himself a material product. In this way, he undergoes the reactions of material suffering.”

By speaking this verse (*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke* – the living entity is My separated part) Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa herein refutes the illusory conception that the living entity himself is *brahma*, the Absolute Truth.

Also, by using the word *sanātanaḥ* (eternal), Śrī Bhagavān refutes the opinion of the *māyāvādīs* who claim that when *brahma* accepts the shelter of the external, deluding potency, *brahma* becomes the living entity; and when the living entity is freed from that potency, he again becomes *brahma*.

This verse serves to clarify that the *jīva* is an eternal entity. He cannot merge with anything, nor can he be destroyed. His individual existence is eternal, whether he is liberated or bound. Essentially, the *jīva* is always a *jīva*; it is not possible for him to become the Supreme (*brahma*). This fact has been established in the *Gītā* (2.23–24). Had the *jīva* ever been *brahma* or if he were actually identical with *brahma* in every respect, he would never have become bound to the material world. That is to say,

he would not suffer material miseries. “*Satyam jñānam anantam* – the Absolute Reality is eternal, full of knowledge and limitless.” According to this scriptural statement, it is impossible for *brahma* to be in illusion, or ignorance. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore told the famous monist, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, “Parameśvara is the controller of *māyā*, and the living entities are controlled by *māyā*. This is what scripture establishes. You are saying that the living entity and Īśvara are one and the same, but this is counter to scriptural statements.”

The Śrutis clearly affirm that the living entity is not *brahma*: “*vasanti yatra puruṣāḥ sarve vaikuṅṭha-mūrtayah* – people who are free from *māyā* can acquire a form suitable for residence in Vaikuṅṭha, where they serve Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the master of Vaikuṅṭha” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.15.14). In other words, after obtaining their spiritual nature and form (*sārūpya-mukti*) they serve Śrī Nārāyaṇa. In the present verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s words such as *jīva-bhūtaḥ*, *mamāṁśah* and *sanātanaḥ* also demonstrate the futility of the opinion that this material world is false and that the living entity and *brahma* are one.

Other *māyāvādīs* (*pratibimba-vādīs*) hold that the living entity and also inert matter are a reflection of *brahma*, but this conception, also, is speculative and without foundation:

- (1) If *brahma* is all-pervading, how can He have a reflection?
- (2) Who sees the reflection, and where exactly is He reflected? If one considers the *jīva* to be the seer and *avidyā*, or ignorance, the place of reflection, then one has to accept the existence of two objects that are separate from *brahma*: the *jīva* and *māyā* in the form of ignorance. How, then, can *brahma* be *ekam evādvitīyam* – one without a second, and how can He be all-pervading?
- (3) *Brahma* is not the object of perception, for He is without energy, transformation or qualities and is *nirguṇa*. How can transcendental *brahma* be divided if even the sky, which is a material element, cannot be divided?

Therefore, the *māyāvāda* philosophy, that *brahma* has divided into parts to become the *jīva* (*pariccheda-vāda*), is also completely baseless.

Scripture says that *brahma* is *avikārī*, devoid of transformation. This means He cannot transform into a *jīva* or into matter. We can therefore see that both concepts of the *māyāvādīs* – *pratibimba-vāda* (the philosophical

treatise that the living entity and inert matter are a reflection of *brahma*) and *pariccheda-vāda* (the opinion that *brahma* has divided into parts as the *jīva*) – are illusory. One may argue that this assertion contradicts Vedic statements such as “*sarvaṃ khalv idaṃ brahma* – everything is *brahma*”, and “*tat tvam asi* – you are that (you, the living entity, are *brahma*)”, but all scriptures, including the Upaniṣads and Vedānta, explain that it is Bhagavān’s potency (*śakti*) and not Bhagavān Himself that has transformed into the living entities and the universe. Bhagavān (*brahma*) is non-different from His potency, so in that sense, the living entity and this material world, which are transformations of the potency of *brahma*, are also non-different from *brahma*.

Śruti statements such as “*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām* – He is the supreme eternal among all eternal. He is the supreme conscious entity amongst all other conscious entities” clearly establish the difference between the *jīva*, *brahma* and Bhagavān. This is also established by various statements in the *Gītā*. For example, *Gītā* 15.18 states, “I am *puṣottama-tattva*, the Supreme Person, beyond both perishable and imperishable entities.”

Therefore, everything is composed of *brahma*. Parabrahma however, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself who is indeed beyond everything. The *māyāvādīs* falsely assert that the Upaniṣad statement *tat tvam asi* means ‘you are that’, but this speculation is against the conclusions of scripture. This statement’s actual import is, ‘you belong to Him; you are the servant of Bhagavān’. All the statements of the Vedas establish this as the actual meaning of *tat tvam asi*.

Śaṅkarācārya explains the following two statements:

ṛtaṃ pibanto sukṛtasya loke guhām praviṣṭau parame parārdhe
Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.3.1)

Having entered within the cave of the heart, both Paramātmā and the self-realized soul drink the nectar of the Truth for a very long time.

And:

guhām praviṣṭāv ātmānau hi tad-darśanāt
Brahma-sūtra (1.2.113)

Certainly the two souls have entered the cave so that the Supreme Lord can reveal Himself to the *jīvātmā*.

Śaṅkarācārya, what to speak of others, has accepted the existence of two separate *puruṣas* due to the grammatical construction of the word *ātmānu* in this verse. These two *puruṣas* are *vijñānātmā* (the living entity) and *Paramātmā* (the Supersoul). The difference between the *jīva* and *brahma* has been shown in various places in the Śrutis, which explain that *Parameśvara* is *vibhu* (all-pervading), and that the *jīva* is *aṇu* (atomic). Some examples of this are as follows:

- (1) *yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphulingā* – just as tiny sparks from a fire fly in all directions (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.1.20).
- (2) *bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca* – if the tip of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and if one part is again divided into one hundred, that is considered to be the size of the *jīva*. Such *jīvas* are declared to be eternal (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 5.9).
- (3) *eṣo ’nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo* – This tiny *ātmā*, who reposes on the five kinds of vital airs, should be understood through the mind. The entire consciousness of the living beings is extended throughout the body by those life-airs, and in the fully pure state of consciousness, that *ātmā* becomes manifest (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.9).
- (4) *yathā samudre vahavaś taraṅgā* – as in the ocean there are many waves (*Tattva-muktāvali* 10).
- (5) *aṇu hi jīvaṃ prati-deha-bhinnaṃ* – the living entities are certainly atomic in dimension; one living entity is situated in each body (*Daśa-śloki* by Śrī Nimbārka).
- (6) *hlādinyā samvidāśliṣṭaḥ sac-cid-ānanda īśvaraḥ svāvidyā-samvṛto jīvaḥ saṅkleśa nikarākaraḥ* – The Supreme Lord, the Supreme Controller, is the embodiment of eternity, cognizance and bliss and is accompanied by the pleasure (*hlādinī*) and cognizance (*samvit*) potencies. The conditioned soul, however, is always covered by ignorance and is thus a storehouse of all kinds of tribulations (Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī, cited in Śrīdhara Svāmī’s *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6).
- (7) *yah sarveṣu bhuteṣu tiṣṭhan sarvebhyo bhūtebhyo ’ntaro* – the living entity engrossed in ignorance of his true nature experiences helplessness amidst a multitude of sufferings (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.15).

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “If you doubt how the living entities attain these two states, then listen. I am

Bhagavān, the embodiment of complete eternality, knowledge and bliss. I have two types of expansions (*aṁśa*): *svāṁśa* and *vibhinnāṁśa*. As *svāṁśa*, I perform pastimes in forms such as Rāma and Nṛsimha. As *vibhinnāṁśa*, I manifest as *jīvas*, who are My eternal servants. In *svāṁśa-tattva*, the ego of being the Supreme exists fully. In My *vibhinnāṁśa*, however, I do not have the ego of being the Supreme, and therefore a separate individual appears. This living entity, *vibhinnāṁśa-tattva*, has two states: *mukta* (liberated) and *baddha* (bound). The *jīva* is eternal, regardless of whether he is liberated or conditioned. In the liberated state, the *jīva* is completely dependent upon Me and has no relationship with material nature. In the bound state, the *jīva* accepts the six senses (the mind and the five external senses) as his own and identifies with them while situated in the material body, which he also sees as himself.”

VERSE 8

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।
गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥८॥

śarīram yad avāpnoti yac cāpy utkrāmatīśvaraḥ
gṛhītvaitāni saṁyāti vāyur gandhān ivāśayāt

śarīram – to the body; *yat* – whichever; *āpnoti* – he accepts; *yat* – whichever; *ca api* – and also; *utkrāmati* – exits from; *īśvaraḥ* – the master (of the senses of the material body), the living entity; *gṛhītvā* – taking; *etāni* – these (the mind and the five senses); *saṁyāti* – he travels; *vāyur* – the wind; *gandhān* – scents; *iva* – just as; *āśayāt* – from a container (of flowers or other substances).

Just as the wind carries the aroma of flowers and other substances, so the embodied living entity, the master of the senses, carries the six senses from whichever body he abandons to whichever body he achieves.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What does he (the living entity) do when he is attracted by the senses?” Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān

speaks this verse beginning with *śarīram yad avāpnoti*. *Karma* controls whatever gross body is attained by the living entity, the master of the body and senses. He carries the senses, along with the subtle elements, from whichever body he leaves and then enters a new body, just as the wind carries an aroma from its source, such as a flower garland or sandalwood, to another place.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is explaining how a conditioned soul achieves another body. After death, his condition of being bound does not cease. Until a living entity becomes free from the material world by worshipping Śrī Bhagavān, he has to take repeated births in accordance with the impressions of his past actions. Śrī Bhagavān uses an analogy to explain the living entity's transit to a new body. The wind carries the aroma of a flower but not the flower itself, which remains where it is. Similarly, at the time of death, the living entity gives up his gross body and accepts the shelter of another gross body, taking with him the mind and its desires, along with the senses. In this way, he repeatedly accepts different bodies according to the actions he desires to perform. This is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.37):

*manah karma-mayaṁ nṛṇāṁ indriyaṁ pañcabhir yutam
lokāl lokam prayāty anya ātmā tad anuvartate*

It is indeed the mind, which carries the impressions of one's actions, that travels from one body to another along with the five senses. The soul is different from the mind, but it follows it, being driven by the false ego.

This is also stated by Kapiladeva in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.31.43):

*dehena jīva-bhūtena lokāl lokam anuvrajan
bhūñjāna eva karmāṇi karoty avirataṁ pumān*

Due to a particular type of body, the conditioned materialistic living entity wanders from one planet to another, following his material desires. In this way, he involves himself in fruitive activities and enjoys the result incessantly.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Death does not terminate one’s bound state. A living entity’s past actions determine his next gross body, and in due course of time, he will move on from that also. As he travels from one body to the next, he carries with him desires to perform bodily activities. Just as the wind carries an aroma from its source, such as flowers or sandalwood, to another place, the *jīva*, along with the subtle elements and the senses, travels from one gross body to another.”

VERSE 9

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ ९ ॥

*śrotram cakṣuḥ sparśanam ca rasanam ghrāṇam eva ca
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cāyaṁ viṣayān upasevate*

śrotram – ears; *cakṣuḥ* – eyes; *sparśanam* – the sense of touch; *ca* – and; *rasanam* – the tongue; *ghrāṇam* – of the nose; *eva* – especially; *ca* – and; *adhiṣṭhāya* – by taking shelter; *manaḥ* – of the mind; *ca* – and; *ayam* – this (*jīvātmā*); *viṣayān* – sense objects (sound, form, touch, etc.); *upasevate* – enjoys.

Taking shelter of the ears, eyes, tongue, nose, sense of touch and also the mind, the living entity enjoys various sense objects, such as sound.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Upon reaching the next body, what does the living entity do?” In response to this question, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *śrotram*. Taking shelter of the senses such as the ears and mind, he enjoys sense objects such as sound.

VERSE 10

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १० ॥

*utkrāmantam sthitam vāpi bhujñānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna-cakṣuṣaḥ*

utkrāmantam – when leaving (the body); *sthitam* – while situated (in the body); *vā api* – or even; *bhuñjānam* – while enjoying; *vā* – or else; *guṇa-anvitam* – possessed of senses; *vimūdhāḥ* – bewildered fools; *na anupaśyanti* – do not perceive in accordance with *śāstra*, *sādhu* and *guru*; *paśyanti* – can see; *jnāna* – of divine knowledge; *cakṣuṣaḥ* – those who have eyes.

The foolish, who are bereft of discrimination, cannot perceive with their senses the living entity when he leaves the body, while he dwells in the body, or even while he enjoys through his senses. Those who are wise, however, can see all this.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Arjuna may say, “I have not properly understood how the *jīva* leaves his body, how he dwells in it, and how he enjoys the sense objects while residing there.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *utkrāmantam*. “A person bereft of wisdom cannot understand the soul, along with the senses, either when he leaves the body, while he lives in the body, or while he enjoys the sense objects. But one with the eye of knowledge can realize it.

VERSE 11

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।
यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११ ॥

yatanto yoginaś cainam paśyanty ātmany avasthitam
yatanto 'py akṛtātmāno nainam paśyanty acetasaḥ

yatantaḥ – endeavouring; *yoginaḥ* – persons engaged in *yoga*; *ca* – indeed; *enam* – him (the soul); *paśyanti* – see; *ātmani* – in the body; *avasthitam* – situated; *yatantaḥ* – endeavouring; *api* – even though; *akṛta-ātmānaḥ* – those whose minds have not undergone spiritual cultivation; *na* – not; *enam* – him; *paśyanti* – they perceive; *acetasaḥ* – persons devoid of discrimination.

Endeavouring *yogīs* can see this soul, which is situated within the body, but those whose hearts are impure and who are bereft of discrimination cannot see the soul, even though striving to do so.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Only the striving *yogīs* who can properly discriminate know the soul, not those with impure hearts.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Wise *yogīs* can experience, or perceive, the soul situated within the body by endeavouring to practise *bhakti-yoga* in the form of hearing and chanting. But those whose hearts are impure and who are bereft of devotion to Bhagavān cannot know this incomprehensible science of the self, *ātma-tattva*.

VERSE 12

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।
यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥१२॥

yad āditya-gatam tejo jagad bhāsayate 'khilam
yac candramasi yac cāgnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam

yat – which; *āditya-gatam* – from the sun; *tejaḥ* – the splendour; *jagat* – universe; *bhāsayate* – illuminates; *akhilam* – the entire; *yat* – which; *candramasi* – in the moon; *yat* – which; *ca* – and; *agnau* – in fire; *tat* – that; *tejaḥ* – splendour; *viddhi* – you must understand; *māmakam* – Mine.

Know the splendour of the sun, which illuminates the entire universe, as well as the splendour of the moon and fire, to be Mine.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “It is I in the form of the sun, moon and so forth who delivers whatever the *jīva* needs in his bound state.” This is explained here, in this verse beginning with *yad āditya-gatam*, and also in the following two *Gītā* verses. “As the splendour of the morning sun rising from the Udaya mountain, I illuminate the universe so that the living entities can commence their execution of *karma* (prescribed duty), which fulfils their seen and unseen desires for sense enjoyment. The splendour of the moon and fire is also Mine, and I am also called *Sūrya* (the sun), *Candra* (the moon), etc. Being parts of My splendour, they have been counted as My opulences (*vibhūti*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: An ignorant person, who is bereft of *bhakti*, mistakes the body for the self. He cannot understand

that Parameśvara, the Supreme Controller, is the original cause behind the existence, or manifestation, of all objects, entities, feelings, elements, actions and qualities of this world. He thinks that the root cause of all existence is earth, water, fire, air, sky, moon, sun, electricity and so on. Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa clearly says that all these manifest from Him alone. It is Bhagavān alone who bestows enjoyment and liberation upon the living entity. He creates visible and invisible varieties of enjoyment for the *jīva* by infusing the sun, moon and so forth with a partial aspect of His splendour.

By following *vibhūti-yoga* as explained here by Bhagavān Himself, a living entity practising *bhakti-yoga* can easily comprehend the above truth. But a *jīva* who is bewildered by *māyā* can never realize this truth. Completely controlled by the false ego, he endeavours in vain to establish his command over everything – water, air, sun, moon, wind and so forth – so he can exploit them for his own material enjoyment. He is best advised to give up these futile endeavours and follow the process of *bhakti* by surrendering to Bhagavān. Only by this simple and easy process can he attain eternal peace and happiness, otherwise not.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “You may say, ‘A living entity in this material world cannot deliberate on anything but matter, so how can he possibly deliberate on conscious Reality?’ But the splendour of My spiritual existence is also in this material world. By taking its help, one can gradually attain a pure, spiritual state and one’s material state is destroyed. The splendour of the sun, moon and fire, which illuminate the whole world, is indeed only Mine; it is no one else’s.”

VERSE 13

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥१३॥

gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā
puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ

gām – the earth; *āviśya* – infusing; *ca* – and; *bhūtāni* – moving and non-moving entities; *dhārayāmi* – sustain; *aham* – I; *ojasā* – by My potency; *puṣṇāmi* – I

nourish; *ca* – and; *auśadhīḥ* – medicinal herbs; *sarvāḥ* – all; *somaḥ* – moon; *bhūtvā* – becoming; *rasa-ātmakaḥ* – the embodiment of nectar.

By infusing the earth with My potency, I alone sustain all moving and non-moving living beings. I nourish all medicinal herbs by becoming the moon, the embodiment of nectar.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “By infusing the earth with My own potency, I support all moving and non-moving living entities. I alone become Candra, the nectarean moon, and nourish all plant life.”

VERSE 14

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ १४ ॥

aḥam vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṃ deham āśritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pacāmy annam catur-vidham

aḥam – I; *vaiśvānaraḥ* – the fire of abdominal digestion; *bhūtvā* – becoming; *prāṇinām* – of living entities; *deham* – of the bodies; *āśritaḥ* – taking shelter; *prāṇa-apāna-samāyuktaḥ* – in conjunction with the in-coming and out-going life-air; *pacāmi* – I digest; *annam* – of food; *catur-vidham* – the four kinds (foods that are chewed, drunk, licked and sucked).

As the fire of digestion in the bodies of the living entities, I combine with the in-coming and out-going breaths to digest the four types of foodstuffs.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “In the form of the digestive fire combined with its stimulator, the in-coming and out-going airs, I digest the four types of foodstuffs, those that are chewed, drunk, licked and sucked.” Foods that are broken with the teeth, such as chickpeas, etc., are chewed foodstuffs. Sugar candy is licked, sugar cane is sucked and sugar cane juice is drunk.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All embodied beings, from a worm to a human, do not even have the independence to digest their

foodstuffs. Śrī Bhagavān says, “In the form of the fire of digestion, I digest the food within the body of the *jīva*.” What, therefore, can one who is even incapable of digesting his food actually do? It is essential that one surrender to the lotus feet of Bhagavān and give up the worthless false ego of depending on his own strength and intelligence. It should also be understood that it is Parameśvara only who enters the earth and sustains all living entities by His potency. Nothing is possible without His potency.

VERSE 15

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५ ॥

sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

sarvasya – of all (living beings); *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *hṛdi* – in the hearts; *sanniviṣṭaḥ* – (situated) as the indwelling witness; *mattaḥ* – from Me; *smṛtiḥ* – remembrance; *jñānam* – knowledge; *apohanam* – forgetfulness, the destroyer (of the other two); *ca* – and; *vedaiḥ* – by the Vedas; *ca* – and; *sarvaiḥ* – by all; *aham* – I; *eva* – only; *vedyaḥ* – am to be known; *vedānta-kṛt* – the compiler of the Vedānta; *veda-vid* – one who knows the Vedas; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *aham* – I.

I am situated as the indwelling Supersoul in the hearts of all living entities. From Me come remembrance, knowledge and the destruction of both. By all the Vedas I alone am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Just as I am the digestive fire in the stomach, I, the Supersoul, have entered the hearts of all moving and non-moving living entities as the principle of memory. From Me comes remembrance of the objects one has previously experienced, and when one’s senses contact sense objects, knowledge comes. Loss of

memory and knowledge also occur because of Me.” After Śrī Bhagavān explains the assistance He gives the *jīva* in his bound state, He goes on to explain His arrangements for the *jīva* to attain the liberated state. “Through My incarnation as Vedavyāsa I am the compiler of Vedānta, and therefore, I alone know the meaning of the Vedas. In other words, nobody knows that meaning but Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I am situated as the Supersoul, or Īśvara, in the hearts of all living entities. According to the results of the living entities’ past actions, they acquire memory, knowledge and forgetfulness of both. Therefore, I am not only the impersonal *brahma*, who pervades the whole universe, I am also Paramātmā, situated in the hearts of the living beings and bestowing the fruit of their *karma* upon them. Furthermore, I am not just the living entities’ worshipable *brahma* and Paramātmā, but I am also their instructor, and I bestow eternal auspiciousness upon them. I am Bhagavān, and I alone am to be known by all the Vedas. I am the compiler and knower of Vedānta. Therefore, I manifest as *brahma*, pervading the material world for the auspiciousness of all living entities. As Īśvara, or Paramātmā, I pervade the hearts of all living entities, and as Bhagavān, I bestow the supreme transcendental goal. In these three manifestations, I deliver the conditioned souls.”

VERSE 16

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho 'kṣara ucyate

dvau – two; *imau* – these; *puruṣau* – persons; *loke* – within the (fourteen planetary systems of this) world; *kṣaraḥ* – the fallible; *ca* – and; *akṣaraḥ* – the infallible; *eva* – only; *ca* – and; *kṣaraḥ* – the fallible; *sarvāṇi* – all; *bhūtāni* – (moving and non-moving) living entities; *kūṭa-sthaḥ* – the unchangeable personality (*brahma*); *akṣaraḥ* – infallible; *ucyate* – it is said.

In the fourteen planetary systems, two *puruṣas* are famous: the fallible and the infallible. All moving and non-moving living entities are said to be fallible, and the immutable person (*kūṭa-stha*) is called infallible (*akṣara*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Since it is I alone who know all the Vedas, I will speak their essence in brief. Listen carefully.” Śrī Bhagavān thus speaks this and the next two verses beginning here with *dvāv imau*.

In this universe, consisting of fourteen planetary systems, there are two conscious *puruṣas* (beings). Who are they? In answer to this, Śrī Bhagavān says, “He who fails to act according to his constitutional identity is *kṣara-jīva*, the fallible living entity, and He who never falls from His own *svarūpa* is *akṣara-brahma*, the imperishable and infallible entity.” The Śrutis say, “*Brāhmaṇas*, who know *brahma*, the Supreme Spirit, call Him *akṣara*.” Also in the Smṛtis, only *brahma* is referred to as *akṣara*: *akṣaram brahma paramam*.

To specifically explain the meanings of the words *kṣara* and *akṣara*, Śrī Bhagavān again says *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*. It is only due to ignorance, which has existed since time immemorial, that the living entity fails to act in accordance with his original, spiritual identity. Being bound by his *karma*, he wanders throughout all species of life, from Lord Brahmā down to the non-moving beings. However, the second *puruṣa* is *akṣara* (infallible) and *kūṭa-stha* (unchanging). According to the *Amara-koṣa*, *kūṭa-stha* means ‘one whose eternal *svarūpa* never changes but always remains the same’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “If you say that *prakṛti*, material nature, is one, then you, Arjuna, have actually understood. But you may have not understood how many conscious *puruṣas* there are. In that case, listen. In reality, there are only two types of *puruṣas* in this world: fallible (*kṣara*) and infallible (*akṣara*). The conscious living entities emanating as Śrī Bhagavān’s separated parts (*vibhinnāmśa*) are *kṣara-puruṣa*. The living entity is known as such because he is *taṭastha*, or marginal, by nature; thus he has the tendency to fall from his constitutional position. The infallible personal expansions of the

Lord, *svāmśa-tattva*, never fall from Their *svarūpa*. They are called *akṣara-puruṣa*.” Another name for *akṣara-puruṣa* is *kūṭa-stha-puruṣa* (the unchangeable personality). There are three manifestations of this unchangeable person:

- (1) *Brahma* – the *akṣara-puruṣa* who pervades the entire universe upon creating it and who is the negative aspect of the manifested universe. *Brahma* is not an independent truth.
- (2) *Paramātmā* – the partial manifestation of transcendence and the refuge and indwelling witness of the conscious *jīva* within the material universe. Since He is related only to the universe, He, also, is not an independent truth.
- (3) Śrī Bhagavān – the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, or *bhagavat-tattva*, is the third manifestation of *kūṭa-stha*. This will be explained in the eighteenth verse.

VERSE 17

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥

uttamaḥ puruṣas tu anyaḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ
yo loka-trayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ

uttamaḥ – superior; *puruṣaḥ* – personality; *tu* – however; *anyaḥ* – another (who is different from the two previously mentioned); *parama-ātmā* – the Supersoul; *iti* – thus; *udāhṛtaḥ* – described; *yaḥ* – who; *loka-trayam* – within the three worlds; *āviśya* – enters; *bibharti* – maintains; *avyayaḥ* – the immutable, without transformation; *īśvaraḥ* – the controller.

There is, however, yet another infallible person who is even more superior to the previously mentioned *kṣara* (fallible) and *akṣara* (infallible). He is known as the Supersoul, the unchanging controller, who enters within the three worlds and sustains them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān has explained *brahma*, the worshipable reality of the *jñānīs*. Now, in this verse beginning with *uttamaḥ*, He explains *Paramātmā*, the worshipable object of the *yogīs*. The word

tu (but) indicates a characteristic that is distinct from the previously described *akṣara-puruṣa* (*brahma*). It was said in the *Gītā* (6.46) that *yogīs* are superior to *jñānīs*: *jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī*. From this statement, it is understood that the Absolute Reality manifests in a superior and specific way according to the advancement and speciality of the worshipper.

Paramātmā-tattva is explained as follows: He who is the controller (*Īśvara*) and He who enters, supports and maintains the three worlds but who is without transformation (*avyayaḥ*), is *Paramātmā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “The second infallible person is *Paramātmā*, and He is superior to the first infallible person, *brahma*. He is *Īśvara* and He enters the three worlds and becomes situated there as their maintainer.”

VERSE 18

यस्मात् क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
 अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १८ ॥
yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ
ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

yasmāt – because; *kṣaram* – to the fallible; *atītaḥ* – transcendental; *aham* – I; *akṣarāt* – to the infallible; *api* – even; *ca* – and; *uttamaḥ* – superior; *ataḥ* – therefore; *asmi* – I am; *loke* – in the world; *vede* – in the Vedas; *ca* – both; *prathitaḥ* – renowned; *puruṣa-uttamaḥ* – the Supreme Person.

Since I am transcendental to the fallible living entities and also superior to the other two infallible beings, *brahma* and *Paramātmā*, I am renowned both in this world and in the Vedas as *Puruṣottama*, the Supreme Person.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: After explaining *Paramātmā*, the worshipable object of the *yogīs*, Śrī Bhagavān describes *bhagavat-tattva*, the fundamental truth of the Supreme Lord, who is the worshipable deity of the devotees. “I, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, am Bhagavān, and I am renowned as *Puruṣottama*. My

svarūpa is superior to all other forms.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yasmāt* to explain the term Puruṣottama and His supremacy. His form is transcendental to the fallible *kṣara-puruṣa*, the *jīvātmā*. He is also superior to impersonal *akṣara-brahma* and even to the immutable Paramātmā. According to the *Gītā* (6.47) “*yoginām api sarveṣāṃ mad-gatenāntarātmanā* – he who constantly worships Me with full faith, always contemplating Me exclusively, is in My opinion the topmost of all *yogīs*.”

The superiority of the *sādhaka* establishes the superiority and speciality of his worshipable deity. Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme manifestation of Absolute Reality, a person who worships Him is the topmost *yogī*. The use of the word *ca* establishes Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the topmost of all worshipable Realities (*bhagavat-tattva*), superior even to Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī says: “Some personalities are His portions, or parts of His portions, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is Svayam Bhagavān.” According to this statement of Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Reality.

Although the three words *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān explain the one Transcendental Reality, who is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss, there is no difference in Their true constitutional natures. Also, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.9.36) states “*svarūpa-dvayābhāvāt* – within You there are not two *svarūpas*.” Yet, due to the differences in *sādhana* and also in the results obtained by those who worship *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān, there seems to be disparity in that one transcendental Reality. *Jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti* are the respective means by which the *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and *bhaktas* attain their particular goals: *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. In fact, the result of *jñāna* and *yoga* is only to attain liberation, whereas the result of *bhakti* is to become a loving associate of Bhagavān. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.12), it is said, “*Brahma-jñāna*, spiritual knowledge in the form of freedom from material affinity, does not appear very beautiful or auspicious when it is bereft of *bhakti* to Bhagavān.” And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.5), it is said, “O great Personality, in previous times, the *yogīs* of this world offered all their activities to Your lotus feet when, by the processes of *yoga* and so forth, they were

unable to achieve You. After doing so, they attained *bhakti* to You, by which they realized Your eternal form and very easily attained Your supreme abode.”

From these statements, it is understood that without *bhakti*, one cannot attain liberation by the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*. It is imperative for the worshippers of *brahma* and Paramātmā to perform *bhakti* to the Supreme Person in order for them to achieve perfection in their respective practices. But there is no need for the worshippers of Bhagavān to worship *brahma* or Paramātmā to attain perfection in their goal. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.31) states, “For a person in this world who is engaged in *bhakti-yoga* to Me, the processes of knowledge and renunciation are not considered the means to attain the highest perfection.” Furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–33) states: “Whatever result one attains by such processes as prescribed duties, knowledge, austerity and renunciation, My devotees can easily attain by the process of *bhakti*, be that result attainment of the heavenly planets, liberation, My abode of Vaikuṅṭha or anything else they desire. A person who takes shelter of Śrī Nārāyaṇa achieves the four goals of human life (religiosity – *dharma*, material prosperity – *artha*, material sense enjoyment – *kāma*, and liberation – *mokṣa*) without performing separate practices to achieve them.”

It is seen that by the worship of Bhagavān, one can achieve residence in the heavenly planets, liberation or *prema* (love of God), but by the worship of *brahma* and Paramātmā, one cannot attain *prema*. Even though *brahma* and Paramātmā do not differ from Bhagavān on the basis of *tattva*, still, Bhagavān is considered superior.

A flame, a lamp and a big fire are all luminous objects and thus non-different in nature, yet to remove the miseries of those suffering from cold, the large fire is the most effective. And superior to the blazing fire is the sun. Similarly, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost Absolute Reality. Liberation, in the form of *nirvāṇa*, or merging with *brahma*, the effulgence emanating from Kṛṣṇa’s form, is attained by perfectly worshipping *brahma*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa even grants this to those who are envious of Him and who are highly sinful, such as Aghāsura, Bakāsura and Jarāsandha. Therefore, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on the statement, “I am the support of *nirviśeṣa-brahma*” (Gītā 14.27) is most appropriate.

Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has also established the supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows: “*Sādhakas* who want to initiate their eternal good fortune should constantly perform worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, whose form is described in the Śrutis as composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, whose complexion is the hue of fresh rain-clouds, who is the very ornament of the *vraja-gopīs*, who is the means by which intelligent people can cross over the ocean of the material world, and whose incarnations perform pastimes to remove the burden of the Earth. I do not know any other Reality superior to lotus-eyed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has a face like a full moon, who is adorned with a flute in His hands, who wears yellow garments and whose lips are reddish like a *bimba* fruit. Various scriptures give evidence of the wonderful glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who cannot tolerate this are fools and destined for hell.”

Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has thus established Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s excellence. It is improper to voice one’s disagreement with this explanation of these three *Gītā* verses (15.16–18) beginning from *dvāv imu*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This subject has been described more clearly in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11):

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

Those who know the Absolute Reality describe that ultimate non-dual substance as the Supreme Truth. Some know this same non-dual Absolute Truth as *brahma*, some as Paramātmā and others as Bhagavān.

Jñānīs, through their practice of *jñāna-yoga*, experience that same Absolute Truth as *brahma*. *Yogīs* realize that Reality as Paramātmā, and *bhaktas*, through their practice of *bhakti-yoga*, see Him as Bhagavān. By devotion that is filled with reverence for Bhagavān’s majestic feature, devotees realize Him as Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, and render service to Him. And by pure loving devotion imbued with a mood of sweetness, or worship in the wake of the moods of Vraja, devotees realize and serve Him as Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. Realization of *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān is not one and the same. There is a gradation. By constitutional nature, water, ice and mist

are one – water. Yet water is not called ice or mist, nor is ice called mist or water. In the same way, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the pinnacle of *para-tattva*. The first realization of that *para-tattva* is *brahma*, the second realization is Paramātmā, and the third is Svayam Bhagavān. These three perceptions are not the same. Therefore, scripture describes Parabrahma as superior to *brahma*. This has been very clearly explained in the *Gītā* (14.27), “*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* – this is true because I alone am the basis and refuge of that undifferentiated, impersonal *brahma*.” The use of the adjective *param* before *brahma* and also before *ātmā* establishes the superiority of Parabrahma and Paramātmā over *brahma* and the *ātmā* respectively. But the adjective *param* is never used before the word Bhagavān. Therefore, Svayam Bhagavān alone is the topmost limit of *para-tattva*. Paramātmā and *brahma* are just His two manifestations. The bodily effulgence of Kṛṣṇa is called *brahma*, and the portion of His portion is called Paramātmā.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “The third and topmost infallible being is called Bhagavān. I am that very *bhagavat-tattva*. I am transcendental to *kṣara-puruṣa* (the *jīva*), and I am even superior to the two other infallible beings, *brahma* and Paramātmā. I am therefore celebrated as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person, both in this world and in the Vedas. This *siddhānta* should be understood: there are two *puruṣas*: *kṣara* (fallible) and *akṣara* (infallible). *Akṣara-puruṣa* has three manifestations. The general manifestation is *brahma*, a higher manifestation is Paramātmā, and the supreme manifestation is Bhagavān.”

VERSE 19

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥ १९ ॥

yo mām evam asammūḍho jānāti puruṣottamam
sa sarva-vid bhajati mām sarva-bhāvena bhārata

yaḥ – who; *mām* – Me; *evam* – thus; *asammūḍhaḥ* – undeluded; *jānāti* – knows; *puruṣa-uttamam* – the Supreme Person; *saḥ* – he; *sarva-vid* – one who knows all (truths); *bhajati* – he worships; *mām* – Me; *sarva-bhāvena* – wholeheartedly; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata.

O descendant of Bharata, one who is not deluded and who knows Me to be Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person, knows everything and engages wholeheartedly in worship of Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Someone may raise the doubt that philosophers will disagree with the meaning that Bhagavān has established. In response Śrī Bhagavān says, “They argue because they are bewildered by My deluding, external energy. *Sādhus*, however, are not deluded.” To explain the characteristics of such saintly persons, He speaks this verse beginning with *yo mām*. *Asammūḍhaḥ* means ‘those who are not deluded by the opinions of different philosophers’. “Those who know Me as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person, may not have studied the scriptures, but in fact they know all things, simply because they know the true meaning of all scriptures. But those who study all the scriptures and teach them to others without understanding Me in this way are deluded and completely foolish. Those who actually know Me as the Supreme Person worship Me with every part of their being. Others are not actually worshipping Me, although they may seem to be.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After explaining *paramātmata-ttva*, the worshipable object of the *yogīs*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself now explains His *puruṣottama-tattva* (the essential truth regarding the Supreme Person) and its glories. Because He is transcendental to *kṣara-puruṣa* (the living entity), and also superior to the other two *akṣara-puruṣas* (*brahma* and *Paramātmā*), He is famous as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person. He is therefore the shelter of both the *jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*. This has been established in different places in the *Gītā*. The quality of the worshipper is understood by the excellence of his worshipable deity. *Gītā* 6.47 also states, “*śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ* – those *bhakti-yogīs* who engage in the worship of Bhagavān with faith are said to be superior to all types of *yogīs*.” Therefore, the supremacy of Bhagavān, the worshipable object of the devotees, is established over all others. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) states, “*ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁśaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* – Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead.”

And *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Eastern Division, 2.32) states that although from the point of view of *tattva* there is no difference between the *svarūpa* of Śrī Nārāyaṇa and that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, from the perspective of *rasa*, the *svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is superior:

*siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi śrīṣa-kṛṣṇa svarūpayoh
rasenokṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitiḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Eastern Division (2.32)

Although, according to *siddhānta*, there is no difference between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Nārāyaṇa, from the perspective of *rasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is superior. This is the position of *rasa*.

VERSE 20

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बृद्धिमान् स्यात् कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ २० ॥

*iti guhyatamam śāstram idam uktam mayānagha
etat buddhvā buddhimān syāt kṛta-kṛtyaś ca bhārata*

iti – in this way; *guhyatamam* – most confidential; *śāstram* – scripture; *idam* – this; *uktam* – has been spoken; *mayā* – by Me; *anagha* – O sinless one; *etat* – this; *buddhvā* – having understood; *buddhimān* – enlightened; *syāt* – one becomes; *kṛta-kṛtyaḥ* – completely fulfilled; *ca* – and; *bhārata* – O Bhārata.

O sinless descendant of Bharata, I have hereby revealed the most confidential secret of the Vedic scriptures, understanding which, intelligent persons can become even more blessed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this chapter with this verse beginning with *iti*. He says, “In these twenty verses, I have fully expounded the most secret teachings of the scriptures.” After deliberation on spirit and matter in this chapter, it is concluded that among the threefold manifestations of *akṣara-puruṣa*, Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Reality.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā (the commentary that gives pleasure
to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
on the Fifteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In concluding this subject, Śrī Bhagavān says that the part of scripture delineating *puruṣottama-yoga*, as described in this chapter, contains the most confidential knowledge. The import of this statement is that no one except the devotees can comprehend this knowledge. Since Arjuna is a very dear devotee of Bhagavān, Śrī Bhagavān is revealing knowledge of this most confidential reality to him only. The lives of those who are able to attain knowledge of this confidential truth by the mercy of the devotees are blessed.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O sinless one, this *puruṣottama-yoga* is indeed the most confidential instruction in the scriptures. Upon knowing it, an intelligent *jīva* becomes enlightened and blessed. O Bhārata, all impediments in connection with the proper understanding of *āśraya* (the abode of *bhakti*, the living entity) and *viśaya* (the object of *bhakti*, Bhagavān) are dispelled when one understands this *yoga*. *Bhakti* is the blissful activity of the soul. To correctly execute the process of *bhakti*, two factors are most necessary: the purity of the living entity, who is the abode of devotion, and the complete manifestation of Bhagavān, who is the object of devotion. As long as the *jīva* believes that *brahma* and Paramātmā are equal to Bhagavān (*bhagavat-tattva*), he cannot adopt the process of pure devotion. The process of *bhakti* is executed in its purest form only when he realizes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Puruṣottama and the highest Reality.

“In *bhakti-yoga*, during the stage of *sādhana*, four great *anarthas* (hindrances to one's spiritual goal) are to be removed by the power of taking shelter of the Lord, that is, performing the limbs of pure devotion, and by *sādhu-saṅga*. Of these four, the third is *hṛdaya-daurbalya*, or weakness of heart, which arises from attachment to the material world. Within *hṛdaya-daurbalya*, the *jīva*'s first weakness of heart is his desire to enjoy the material energy by misusing the freedom that Bhagavān bestowed upon him in his pure condition.

Later on, while wandering in the material world, he develops his second weakness of heart, which is an attachment to sense objects. All other *anarthas* are generated from these two weaknesses of heart.”

The first five verses explain the characteristics of pure renunciation that destroy these weaknesses. From the sixth verse to the end of this chapter a deliberation on the fundamental truth of the Supreme Person, along with appropriate renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*), which is generated from *bhakti*, is given. This chapter describes the difference between inert matter and spirit and presents a deliberation on different manifestations of conscious Reality.

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Fifteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Daivāsura Sampada-Yoga

Yoga Through Discerning
Divine and Demoniatic Qualities

VERSES 1-3

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥१॥

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥२॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhiḥ jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaś ca yajñāś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam

ahimsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ mārdavaṁ hrīr acāpalam

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nāti-mānitā
bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya bhārata

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the Supreme Lord said; *abhayaṁ* – freedom from fear; *sattva-saṁśuddhiḥ* – purification of one’s existence (and subsequent joyfulness); *jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ* – becoming firmly situated in the process of union with God through transcendental knowledge; *dānam* – charity; *damaḥ* – subduing the external senses; *ca* – and; *yajñāḥ* –

performance of sacrifice; *ca* – and; *svādhyāyaḥ* – contemplation of the Vedic literature; *tapah* – celibacy; *ārjavam* – simplicity; *ahiṃsā* – non-violence; *satyam* – truthfulness; *akrodhaḥ* – freedom from anger; *tyāgaḥ* – renunciation (of possessiveness towards wife, sons and so forth); *śāntiḥ* – peacefulness; *apaiśunam* – avoiding fault-finding; *dayā* – mercy; *bhūteṣu* – to all beings; *aloluptvam* – freedom from greed; *mārdavam* – gentleness; *hriḥ* – modesty; *acāpalam* – freedom from being whimsical (steadfastness); *tejaḥ* – vigour; *kṣamā* – forgiveness; *dhṛtiḥ* – determination; *śaucam* – cleanliness (both internal and external); *adrohaḥ* – giving up hatred; *nāti-mānitā* – freedom from excessive self-importance; *bhavanti* – these appear; *sampadam* – qualities; *daivīm* – of divine; *abhijātasya* – for one born; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Fearlessness, joyfulness of heart, becoming firmly established in the process of acquiring knowledge, charitableness, sense control, performance of sacrifice, scriptural study, penance, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger, detachment from wife, sons and so forth, peacefulness, avoidance of fault-finding, kindness to all beings, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, giving up the tendency to act whimsically, vigour, forgiveness, patience, internal and external cleanliness, and complete absence of hatred and conceit – these are the divine qualities, O Bhārata, which manifest in a godly person who appears in this world at an auspicious moment.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: In the Sixteenth Chapter, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes divine and demoniac qualities. He also describes the disposition of the two types of created beings that correspond with these qualities.

The first verse of the Fifteenth Chapter, *ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākhām*, describes the *aśvattha* tree of the material world, but it does not mention its fruits. Remembering this, in the present chapter Śrī Bhagavān explains the tree's fruits, which are of two types: one that liberates and one that binds. In the first three verses, Śrī Bhagavān explains the fruit that bestows liberation.

“How will I ever live alone in the forest without my wife and family?” To be free from this type of anxiety is called *abhayam*, fearlessness.

Happiness of heart is called *sattva-saṁsuddhiḥ*. Steadiness in the process of acquiring knowledge, such as being free from pride, is *jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ*. *Dānam* means ‘to offer foodstuffs meant for oneself to others after dividing it properly’. *Damaḥ* means ‘controlling the external and internal senses’. *Yajñah* means ‘worship of the demigods’. *Svādhyāyah* means ‘study of the Vedas’. *Tyāgaḥ* means ‘giving up a feeling of possessiveness toward wife and family’. *Aloluptvam* means ‘to be free from greed’. The meaning of the rest of the words is clear.

These twenty-six qualities beginning with fearlessness indicate a *sāttvika* disposition, a nature in the mode of goodness, and they are attained by one who takes birth at a time that illuminates that *sāttvika* nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The divine and demoniac qualities and propensities that were described briefly in the previous chapter are now being explained in detail. Being trapped in the network of *māyā*, persons of a demoniac nature take birth in various demoniac species of life, which results in misery and pain. On the other hand, those of a divine nature, being endowed with noble qualities, easily cross over the miserable ocean of birth and death and gradually make advancement on the path of *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān. Finally, they taste the happiness of nectarean service to Him in His abode. Such liberated persons never again fall into this material world. The host of divine qualities mentioned herein can only manifest in exalted persons who take birth at an auspicious time from parents who have auspicious qualities and who underwent the *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*, the process of conceiving progeny according to Vedic injunctions. This is the secret meaning of the word *abhijātasya* in the above verse. Parents should not produce children as cats and dogs do. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has said in the *Gītā* that He is that sex life which produces good children. Therefore, sex life is not forbidden, but when it is solely for sense enjoyment like that of the animals, it is of a hellish nature.

In the *varṇāśrama* system, a *sannyāsī* is considered to be the foremost *guru* of society’s four *varṇas* and *āśramas*. [*Varṇas*, or occupational divisions, include *brāhmanas* – the priestly class, *kṣatriyas* – administrators and warriors, *vaiśyas* – farmers and tradesmen, and *śūdras* – artisans.

Āśramas, or stages of life, include *brahmacarī* – celibate student, *gṛhastha* – matrimony, *vānaprastha* – retirement, and *sannyāsa* – the renounced order.] The *brāhmaṇa* is the *guru* of the other three *varṇas* – *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *sūdra*. Only a real *sannyāsī* who possesses all divine qualities is the *guru* of the *brāhmaṇa*.

All such good qualities are visible in pure devotees. A surrendered practitioner of *bhakti* must be fearless and have the firm conviction, “Bhagavān is my protector and He is always with me. He sees and knows everything and He sustains me.” When a devotee develops this type of faith, he remains completely fearless, wherever he may live, be it at home or in the forest. Prahlāda Mahārāja, Draupadī, the five Pāṇḍavas and Haridāsa Ṭhākura are examples of this. Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura remained fearless, even while being beaten by low-class, cruel persons in twenty-two market places in Navadvīpa, which was then under the strict rule of fanatical Muslims. After beating him, they threw him in the river Gaṅgā, but he emerged from the current with a healthy body as before and returned to the small hut where he performed *bhajana*. When the Muslim ruler and others saw this, they were amazed. Therefore, the *sādhaka*, or practitioner of *bhakti*, should always be fearless.

Sattva-saṁsuddhi means ‘the purity of the self’. The conduct of one who practices *bhakti* is pure. In particular, *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, who have given up home, wife and children, should not keep intimate relationships with women. It is forbidden for them to joke with or even talk to a woman in a solitary place. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was very strict in this regard. This does not mean that He felt malice towards women in general. He made this regulation for *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs*, who have renounced their family lives. For men, the intimate association of women is forbidden, and for women, the intimate association of men is forbidden. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave up His dear devotee Choṭa Haridāsa forever because he associated with a woman. In one sense, *strī-saṅga* (loosely associating with women) means to look upon any object with a desire to enjoy it. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Enjoyer of everyone, and everyone is meant for His enjoyment. A *sādhaka* should remain pure and consider himself to be Kṛṣṇa’s servant.

To remain engaged in the cultivation of *tattva-jñāna*, knowledge of the Absolute, is called *jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ*. *Saṅkīrtana-yajña* has been accepted as the foremost of all sacrifices, or *yajñas*. *Himsā* means ‘violence to the *jīva*’. To not cause pain to any *jīva*, either by body, mind or words is actual non-violence. Specifically, one should not be violent to animals. It is violent to block any *jīva*’s progress toward higher levels of consciousness. When an embodied being experiences an untimely death, he has to take birth again in the same species of life, and after remaining in that body for the rest of the allotted time, he enters another species. One should not stop the progress of any living entity for one’s personal liking, or selfish purpose. To not do so is non-violence.

The twenty-six qualities described in this verse are divine. By developing them, one can gradually reach the highest platform of self-realization.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, “Śrī Bhagavān says, ‘Now, Arjuna, you may doubt the validity of various statements of scripture that one should cultivate *sāttvika* qualities while striving for *jñāna*.’ To dispel this doubt, Śrī Bhagavān says, ‘The *aśvattha* tree of the material world has two fruits. One fruit strongly binds the living entity to the material world, while the other liberates him from it. When the *jīva*’s existence is completely purified he becomes fearless. The living entity’s very existence is composed of pure spirit (*śuddha-sattva*), but in the bound state, this pure nature is dominated by the three modes of nature. All scriptures have given the process of *jñāna-yoga* with the intention of purifying one’s existence. The quality of goodness is conducive for cultivating knowledge, which leads to liberation. All these qualities are divine opulences that assist the living entity in realizing his pure existence. Anything that blocks the living entity from attaining his pure state is demoniac (*āsuri-sampad*). Fearlessness, purity of existence, *jñāna-yoga*, charitableness, sense control, sacrifice, penance, simplicity, study of the Vedas, non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, giving up criticism of others, kindness, absence of greed, gentility, shyness, lack of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness and lack of envy and pride are the twenty-six divine qualities called *daivī-sampad*. If one takes birth at an auspicious moment, he receives these qualities.’”

VERSE 4

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

*dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca
ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm*

dambhaḥ – hypocrisy (practising religion for fame); *darpaḥ* – false pride due to wealth, learning, etc.; *abhimānaḥ* – desiring to be worshipped by others; *ca* – and; *krodhaḥ* – anger; *pāruṣyam* – cruelty; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *ajñānam* – lack of discrimination; *ca* – and; *abhijātasya* – for one born; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *sampadam* – qualities; *āsurīm* – demoniac.

O Pārtha, pride, hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, cruelty and lack of discrimination are found in those born with demoniac qualities. Those who are born at an inauspicious moment receive these qualities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the fruits that bind one to material existence. To pose as a religious person while being irreligious is called *dambhaḥ*, hypocrisy. Pride in one's wealth and education is called *darpaḥ*, or arrogance. To desire respect from others and to be attached to wife and children is called *abhimānaḥ*, conceit. The meaning of the word *krodhaḥ* (anger) is clear. *Pāruṣyam* means 'to be cruel or hard-hearted'. *Ajñānam* means 'lack of discrimination'. *Āsurī-sampad* (demoniac qualities) also indicates *rākṣasī-sampad* (the qualities of a Rākṣasa). One who takes birth at a time that gives rise to qualities in the modes of passion and ignorance receives such qualities, accordingly.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those whose time of birth is inauspicious, their parents having failed to perform the auspicious purificatory rites (*saṁskāras*), are of a demoniac nature. Such people make a show of religion and advancement in spiritual life, and in this way they cheat simple and innocent people. They consider that the goal of life is to acquire wealth, women and prestige. Although they themselves do not follow the instructions of scripture, they possess

immense pride. They are angered by petty matters and possess not a scent of humility. They are hard-hearted and devoid of discrimination. All these qualities are *āsuri*ka, or demoniac, and at all times one should try to protect oneself from them.

VERSE 5

दैवी सम्पद्धिमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।
मा शुचः सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥५॥

daivī sampad vimokṣāya nibandhāyāsūrī matā
mā śucaḥ sampadam daivīm abhijāto 'si pāṇḍava

daivī – divine; *sampat* – qualities; *vimokṣāya* – lead to liberation; *nibandhāya* – to bondage; *āsūrī* – the demoniac; *matā* – considered; *mā śucaḥ* – do not lament; *sampadam* – qualities; *daivīm* – a divine; *abhijātaḥ* – born; *asi* – you are; *pāṇḍava* – O son of Pāṇḍu.

Divine qualities are the cause of liberation, and demoniac qualities are the cause of bondage. O son of Pāṇḍu, do not lament, for you are born with divine qualities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now, in this verse beginning with *daivī*, Śrī Bhagavān is showing how these two natures function. Arjuna may lament, “Alas, alas! I must possess demoniac qualities like hard-heartedness and anger, for I desire to kill my relatives with arrows.” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says “*mā śucaḥ* – do not lament” and so forth, to give him solace. “You are born in a dynasty of *kṣatriyas*. Scriptures that deal with morality (*dharma-śāstra*) allow a *kṣatriya* to be hard-hearted and angry while at war, but to be violent, etc., in other circumstances is demoniac.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “It is only by divine qualities that one can endeavour for liberation, and it is only by demoniac qualities that one becomes bound to this world. O Arjuna, by cultivating *jñāna-yoga* while following *varṇāśrama-dharma*, one achieves the purification of

one's existence. You are blessed with divine qualities, being born in a noble *kṣatriya* family. It is not demoniac to kill one's relatives in a religious war, to shoot them with arrows, or to perform other such activities in accordance with the injunctions of scripture. Now, having heard this instruction, you should give up your grief."

VERSE 6

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥६॥

*dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu*

dvau – two types; *bhūta-sargau* – of created beings; *loke* – world; *asmin* – in this; *daivaḥ* – divine; *āsuraḥ* – demoniac; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *daivaḥ* – the divine; *vistaraśaḥ* – at length; *proktaḥ* – have been spoken of; *āsuram* – of the demoniac; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *me* – from Me; *śṛṇu* – now hear.

O Pārtha, in this world there are two types of created beings: the divine and the demoniac. The divine qualities have been described at length. Now hear from Me about the demoniac nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is giving the despondent Arjuna a detailed description of demoniac qualities. The divine qualities have been described in detail in the series of verses beginning with *abhayaṁ sattva-saṁsuddhi*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is now giving a detailed description of demoniac qualities so that one can know what they are and completely give them up. The *Padma Purāṇa* states:

*dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
viṣṇu-bhaktaḥ smṛto daiva āsuras tad-viparyayaḥ*

Devotees, who worship Bhagavān, are called demigods. Conversely, those who are envious of Bhagavān and His devotees are called

demons. Those who follow the instructions of scripture, who are free from mundane attachment and hatred, and who engage in *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān, should be considered as *devas*, or demigods. Those who violate the instructions of scripture due to being guided by material attachment and hatred and who engage in irreligious activities are called *asuras*, or demons.

VERSE 7

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥७॥

*pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ
na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate*

pravṛttim – tendency towards virtue; *ca* – and; *nivṛttim* – refraining from vice; *ca* – and; *janāḥ* – persons; *na viduḥ* – do not comprehend; *āsurāḥ* – demoniac; *na* – neither; *śaucam* – cleanliness; *na* – nor; *api* – even; *ca* – and; *ācāraḥ* – good conduct; *na* – nor; *satyam* – truthfulness; *teṣu* – in them; *vidyate* – exists.

Those who are demoniac do not comprehend virtuous tendencies nor how to abstain from vice. Cleanliness, proper conduct and truthfulness are not found in them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *pravṛtti* means ‘inclination to virtue’ (*dharma*), and *nivṛtti* means ‘abstaining from vice’.

VERSE 8

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत् कामहेतुकम् ॥८॥

*asatyam apratiṣṭham te jagad āhur anīśvaram
aparaspara-sambhūtam kim anyat kāma-hetukam*

asatyam – falsity, or illusion; *apratīṣṭham* – without a cause; *te* – they; *jagat* – the world; *āhuḥ* – say; *anīśvaram* – without a controller; *aparaspara-*

sambhūtam – born of sexual union, or automatically produced; *kim* – what?; *anyat* – other; *kāma-hetukam* – caused by lust.

The demons describe the world as unreal, without basis and godless. They say it is the product of sexual union, or that it is self-generated. Not only this, they even say that it is the result of lust.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is describing the philosophy of the demons. “They say that the material world is *asatyam*, unreal, and a result of illusion. That which has no shelter, or basis, is called *apraṭiṣṭha*. They say that just as a flower in the sky has no basis, in the same way this material world has no basis.” *Anīśvaram* means that since the world is unreal, it has not been created by the Supreme Lord; rather, it has come about accidentally, without any mutual union: ‘Just as perspiration and so forth appear, so do the living entities.’

“Not only this, they say that this world is only the result of lust, the desire to procreate. Since they claim that this world is unreal, they feel that they have license to give speculative explanations about it. Furthermore, some claim that the evidence given in the Vedas and Purāṇas is false. Demonic persons say, “*trayo vedasya karttāro muni-bhaṇḍa-niśācarāḥ* – thinkers, jesters, jackals and owls have composed the Vedas.”

Apraṭiṣṭham means that *dharma* and *adharmā* are not established in the Vedas and that both are the result of illusion. *Anīśvaram* means that even Īśvara has been concocted as a result of illusion. “If somebody says that this material world seems to manifest from the union of male and female, then in response the demons say, *aparaspāra-sambūtam*, that there is no such cause and effect behind it and that the birth of a child from parents is also an illusion. They say that when a potter makes a pot from mud, he knows what he is doing, but when parents procreate a child, they do not know how it happens; therefore, the process of begetting a child is also illusion. O Arjuna, what more can I say? Demons say that the only cause of the universe is selfish desire. According to their logic, atoms, the deluding material energy, the Supreme Lord and anything else is the cause of the creation of the world.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the philosophy of those who possess a demoniac nature. The essence of Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s commentary on this verse is as follows:

- (1) According to the opinion of the *māyāvādīs*, this material world is *asatya*, *apratīṣṭhita* and *anīśvara*. They say it is *asatya* because it is an illusion, just as a rope can be taken for a snake. They say it is *apratīṣṭhita* because it has no basis, like a flower in the sky, and that it is *anīśvara*, because Īśvara is not the cause of creation.
- (2) According to a particular sect of Buddhists – the *svabhāvavādīs* – the material world is *aparaspara-sambūtam*, not born of mutual union between male and female but comes from nature. They say that the natural and necessary action of substances according to their inherent properties produce and sustain the universe.
- (3) According to the philosopher Cārvāka, this material world is *kāma-haitukam*, born from the flow of lust between male and female.
- (4) According to the Jains, selfish desire is the cause of this world. On the basis of their speculative logic, they disregard the authoritative Vedic literatures and uselessly endeavour to ascertain the cause of this material world.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s statement, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram* (Gītā 9.10), very clearly explains that this entire material world consisting of moving and non-moving beings has been created by material nature (*prakṛti*) under His supervision. Since this world has been created by the will of Bhagavān, who is *satya-saṅkalpa*, He whose desires must come to pass, it is also real but changeable and perishable. The demons concoct various types of temporary atheistic philosophies because they are bereft of pure and perfect wisdom.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Those of a demoniac temperament call this world *asatya* – illusory; *apratīṣṭhita* – without basis; and *anīśvara* – without a Supreme Being. Their philosophy is that there is no purpose in accepting the existence of a Supreme Controller, since the relationship of cause and effect is not the basis of the creation of the universe. Some say that Īśvara does exist, but when He created the world, He was influenced by His selfish desires, and therefore He is not qualified to be the object of our worship.”

VERSE 9

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।
प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥९॥

*etām dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno'ḷpa-buddhayaḥ
prabhavanty ugra-karmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ*

etām – this; *dṛṣṭim* – philosophy; *avaṣṭabhya* – taking shelter; *naṣṭa-ātmanāḥ* – without knowledge of the soul (in the bodily conception of life); *alpa-buddhayaḥ* – of meagre intelligence; *prabhavanti* – take birth; *ugra-karmāṇaḥ* – engaged in cruel activities, etc.; *kṣayāya* – for the destruction; *jagataḥ* – of the world; *ahitāḥ* – the harmful demons [the impersonalist nihilistic philosophers who write speculative commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra*].

Since they are bereft of knowledge of the soul, foolish demons consider the body to be the self. Accepting shelter of this demoniac view, they take birth solely for the destruction of this world and engage in cruel activities for that purpose.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this way, some of these demons have become completely lost. Some have very little intelligence, and others engage in wicked acts, are frivolous and are destined for hell. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking eleven consecutive verses, the first of which begins here with *etām*. *Avaṣṭabhya* means ‘taking shelter’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Demons are bereft of knowledge of the self, or *ātma-jñāna*. They invent various types of machines on the pretext of advancing human civilization. An abundance of weapons and apparatus are being devised to kill the maximum amount of people in the minimum amount of time, even those in distant continents. The demons are quite proud of such inventions, which can destroy this world at any moment. Demoniac society has no faith in Īsvara or the Vedas, and therefore they are working to destroy the world, not to produce peace and happiness for society.

VERSE 10

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।
मोहाद्गृहीत्वाऽसद्ग्राहान् प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥ १० ॥

kāmam āśritya duṣpūram dambha-māna-madānvitāḥ
mohād gr̥hītvā 'sad-grāhān pravarttante 'śuci-vratāḥ

kāmam – lust; *āśritya* – taking shelter; *duṣpūram* – of insatiable; *dambha* – hypocrisy; *māna* – pride; *mada* – and arrogance; *anvitāḥ* – filled with; *mohāt* – out of delusion; *gr̥hītvā* – accepting; *asad-grāhān* – temporary sense objects; *pravarttante* – they engage (in the worship of insignificant demigods); *aśuci-vratāḥ* – sworn to depravity.

Driven by insatiable desires and filled with hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, these deluded persons always hanker after temporary sense objects. Sworn to depravity, they engage in the worship of insignificant demigods.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Asad-grāhān pravarttante* means that they become inclined to follow bogus ideology, and *aśuci-vratāḥ* refers to those who have given up pure conduct and behave in an abominable manner.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Persons of a demoniac temperament, who do not accept a Supreme Controller and the Vedic conclusions, consider that the success of human life is only to accumulate wealth, and by it, fulfil their selfish desires. For this reason, they remain attached to impure activities such as drinking wine, eating meat, having illicit sex and gambling. They deride the Vedic conclusions, being completely intoxicated by pride and false ego. Only people like this are glorified in modern atheistic society. Although they are pushing society to the threshold of destruction, they proudly consider themselves to be highly intelligent.

VERSES 11-12

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।
कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११ ॥

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।
ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ १२ ॥

cintām aparimeyām ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ
kāmopabhoga-paramā etāvad iti niścitāḥ

āsā-pāśa-śatair baddhāḥ kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ
īhante kāma-bhogārtham anyāyena-rtha-sañcayān

cintām – anxiety; *aparimeyām* – in unlimited; *ca* – and; *pralaya-antām* – until death; *upāśritāḥ* – taking shelter; *kāma-upabhoga* – to enjoy the material senses; *paramāḥ* – the highest (goal of life); *etāvat* – thus; *iti* – that; *niścitāḥ* – determining; *āsā* – of desire; *pāśa* – of ropes; *śataiḥ* – by hundreds; *baddhāḥ* – bound; *kāma-krodha* – in lust and anger; *parāyaṇāḥ* – absorbed; *īhante* – they endeavour; *kāma-bhoga* – of sensual pleasures; *artham* – for the purpose; *anyāyena* – by completely unjust means; *artha* – of wealth; *sañcayān* – for accumulation.

Since they believe sense enjoyment to be the ultimate purpose of life, they remain beset with unlimited anxieties until the time of death. Bound by the ropes of unlimited desires and always absorbed in lust and anger, they endeavour to secure wealth by any unjust means, for the sake of indulging in sensual pleasures.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Pralayāntām* means ‘until death’. *Etāvad iti* refers to those who have concluded from scripture that the senses should remain drowned in sense enjoyment. “Why should we worry for anything else?”

VERSE 13

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिदं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।
इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ १३ ॥

*idam adya mayā labdham idam prāpsyē manoratham
idam astīdam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam*

idam – this; *adya* – today; *mayā* – by me; *labdham* – has been obtained; *idam* – this; *prāpsyē* – I shall obtain; *manah-ratham* – desire; *idam* – this; *asti* – is (mine); *idam* – this; *api* – also; *me* – mine; *bhaviṣyati* – will be; *punah* – increase; *dhanam* – of wealth.

They think, “Today I have attained so much, and also in the future I will fulfil all my cherished desires. So much wealth is now mine, and it will increase in the future more and more.”

VERSE 14

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।
ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान् सुखी ॥ १४ ॥

*asau mayā hataḥ śatruḥ haniṣyē cāparān api
īśvaro ’ham aham bhogī siddho ’ham balavān sukhī*

asau – this; *mayā* – by me; *hataḥ* – has been slain; *śatruḥ* – enemy; *haniṣyē* – I shall slay; *ca* – and; *aparān* – the other enemies; *api* – also; *īśvaraḥ* – the lord; *aham* – I; *aham* – I; *bhogī* – the enjoyer; *siddhaḥ* – perfect; *aham* – I; *balavān* – powerful; *sukhī* – happy.

“I have slain this enemy and I shall also slay others. I am a great controller and enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful and happy.”

VERSE 15

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्ये इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ १५ ॥

*ādhyo ’bhijanavān asmi ko ’nyo ’sti sadṛśo mayā
yakṣyē dāsyāmi modiṣya ity ajñāna-vimohitāḥ*

ādhyah – wealthy; *abhijanavān* – of noble birth; *asmi* – I am; *kah* – who?; *anyah* – else; *asti* – is there; *sadṛśah* – equal; *mayā* – with me; *yakṣyē* –

I shall sacrifice; *dāsyāmi* – I shall give in charity; *modiṣye* – I shall be happy; *iti* – thus; *ajñāna-vimohitāḥ* – persons illusioned by ignorance.

“I am wealthy and of noble birth. Who is equal to me? I will perform ritualistic sacrifices, and give in charity; thus I shall enjoy great happiness.” Deluded by ignorance, they speak in this way.

VERSE 16

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६ ॥

aneka-citta-vibhrāntā moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ
prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣu patanti narake 'śucau

aneka – by many; *citta* – anxieties; *vibhrāntāḥ* – perplexed; *moha* – of delusion; *jāla* – in a net; *samāvṛtāḥ* – caught; *prasaktāḥ* – excessively attached; *kāma-bhogeṣu* – sense enjoyment; *patanti* – they fall; *narake* – hell; *aśucau* – unclean.

Perplexed by many desires and anxieties, entangled in a net of delusion, and excessively attached to sensual pleasures, they fall into an impure hell.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Aśucau narake* means ‘in the hells such as Vaitaraṇī’ [an endless river of blood, pus and urine].

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Demoniac persons consider themselves to be Īśvara, the Supreme Controller, even though they are agitated by various petty anxieties and bound in a net of delusion. They even become instructors and teach their followers their own abominable conceptions: “You yourself are the Supreme Controller and you can do whatever you like. Only a fool believes in any other Controller. There is no such entity.”

These people imagine that they can manufacture a special airplane by which they can go to any higher planet. They do not have faith in Vedic sacrifices and rituals, nor in the process of *bhakti*. Among such demons, Rāvaṇa was prominent. He had made a plan to build a staircase to the

heavenly planets so that an ordinary person could go there without performing any Vedic sacrifice. But he was killed by Śrī Rāmacandra and his plan thus thwarted.

At present, those with a demoniac disposition are endeavouring to reach higher planets in various types of spacecraft. They do not know that they are on a path of destruction. Here, the words *moha-jāla-samāvṛtāḥ* mean that due to the voracious nature of the tongue, a fish becomes caught in a net and loses its life. In the same way, those of demoniac nature fall into a network of delusion from which there is no escape. Thus, they meet destruction.

VERSE 17

आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।
यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥

ātma-sambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ
yajante nāma-yajñais te dambhenāvidhi-pūrvakam

ātma-sambhāvitāḥ – self-conceited; *stabdhāḥ* – without humility; *dhana* – due to wealth; *māna-mada-anvitāḥ* – intoxicated with desire to be honoured; *yajante nāma-yajñaiḥ* – perform sacrifices in name only (without a mood of sacrifice); *te* – they; *dambhena* – full of hypocrisy, ostentatiously; *avidhi-pūrvakam* – without following the injunctions prescribed in scripture.

Filled with pride, unsubmitiveness, arrogance and the intoxication of false prestige due to wealth, these demons perform ostentatious ritualistic sacrifices in name only, disregarding all the injunctions of scripture.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ātma-sambhāvitāḥ* means that they consider themselves to be worshipable; therefore, they are *stabdhāḥ*, not humble but arrogant. However, no *sādhu* gives them respect. *Nāma-yajñaiḥ* means ‘acts that are Vedic sacrifices in name only’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having understood the symptoms and activities of those with divine and demoniac natures, Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa, “Some people give up the rules and regulations of

scripture and whimsically worship insignificant demigods according to their own speculative ideas. How can their worship be categorized?" Currently, most persons worshipping the demigods and other personalities do so according to their own speculative whims, disregarding the injunctions of scripture. In this regard, we must hear the instructions given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

VERSE 18

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८ ॥

ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ
mām ātma-para-deheṣu pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ

ahaṅkāraṁ – of the false ego; *balaṁ* – physical strength; *darpaṁ* – insolence, pride; *kāmaṁ* – lust; *krodhaṁ* – anger; *ca* – and; *saṁśritāḥ* – taking shelter; *mām* – Me; *ātma-para* – of those who are dedicated to the Supreme Soul; *deheṣu* – in the bodies; *pradviṣantaḥ* – they hate; *abhyasūyakāḥ* – and envy (attributing faults to the good qualities of saints).

Taking shelter of false ego, bodily strength, pride, lust and anger, the demons hate Me, the Supreme Soul, who resides within the bodies of the saints, whose hearts are always dedicated to serving Me. They attribute faults to the saintly persons' good qualities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: "They envy Me, Paramātmā, by disregarding Me. Or, *ātma-parāḥ*, they despise the saintly persons because I always dwell within the bodies of those devoted to Paramātmā. Thus to envy a *sādhu* is indeed to envy Me." *Abhyasūyakāḥ* means 'to see the good qualities of saintly persons as faults'.

VERSE 19

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।
क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीश्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९ ॥

*tān aham̐ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmi ajasram aśubhān āsurīśv eva yoniṣu*

tān – those; *aham̐* – I; *dviṣataḥ* – because they are envious of saints; *krūrān* – cruel; *saṁsāreṣu* – into materialistic; *nara-adhamān* – degraded men; *kṣipāmi* – cast; *ajasram* – forever; *aśubhān* – and inauspicious works; *āsurīśu* – demoniac; *eva* – certainly; *yoniṣu* – wombs (species).

Because they are envious of such saints, I perpetually cast those cruel and degraded persons, who perform most inauspicious acts, into mundane existence among various demoniac species.

VERSE 20

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २० ॥

*āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani
mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānty adhamām gatim*

āsurīm – demoniac; *yonim* – births; *āpannā* – receiving; *mūḍhā* – those fools; *janmani janmani* – birth after birth; *mām* – Me; *aprāpya* – not attaining; *eva* – certainly; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *tataḥ* – then; *yānti* – go; *adhamām* – the vilest; *gatim* – destination.

O son of Kuntī, accepting birth after birth in the demoniac species, such fools can never attain Me, and so they descend further into the lowest and most vile destinations.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “*Mām aprāpyaiva* means that by not attaining Me they fall to a degraded species of life. However, when I appear at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, in the twenty-eighth *catuṛ-yuga* of Vaivasvata Manu, those such as Kaṁsa who envy Me will attain liberation upon coming before Me. I, who am an ocean of unlimited compassion, bestow that rare liberation attained in the matured stage of *bhakti-miśra-jñāna*, knowledge mixed with devotion, even to sinners such as Kaṁsa. It is said in the prayers of the Personified Vedas in the *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam (10.87.23), ‘O Prabhu! Simply by constantly thinking of You, Your enemies have attained the same Supreme Absolute Reality as the great sages fixed in *yoga* who worship You by residing in a solitary place, completely controlling their breath, mind, senses and so forth.’ Thus My supremacy, as described earlier, is established.” This is also found in a verse from *Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, which states that, as long as those who envy Kṛṣṇa do not attain Him, they remain in a degraded species of life. This is very clear.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the nineteenth verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said that He throws people who are envious of *sādhus* and who are cruel, being the most degraded of human beings, into miserable demoniac species of life. From this statement, someone may question Bhagavān’s behaviour and say that He is not impartial but quite the opposite. However, although Īśvara is able to do anything and everything, “*karttum akarttum anyathā karttum samarthah* – the Lord can do or undo anything He chooses to,” usually the living entity tastes the results of his own activities. Therefore, sinful people who are opposed to the Vedas, the devotees and Bhagavān must enter demoniac species of life again and again, to undergo the result of their actions. Due to repeated demonic births, they do not get a chance to become free from their offences. If the offences and sins that are committed in human life are not atoned for in human life, a person does not get the chance to clear them when he goes to the lower species, such as birds and beasts. A birth in all species except the human species is only meant for reaping the results of past *karma*. In this regard, Śrīla Madhusūdana Sarasvatī writes:

*ihaiva naraka-vyādheś cikitsām na karoti yaḥ
gatvā nirauśadham sthānam sarujaḥ kim kariṣyati*

If a person cannot cure the disease of sinking to hellish life while living in this human body, what will he do when he goes to where no remedy exists, namely, a lower species of life?

God, or Īśvara, is never partial. This was explained in detail earlier. Here, one should note that those such as Hiranyakaśipu, Hiranyākṣa,

Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Śiśupāla and Dantavakra took birth in *kṣatriya* dynasties because they were cursed to do so. In that birth, they directly opposed Bhagavān's incarnations such as Śrī Nṛsimha, Śrī Varāha, Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering Them to be their enemies. But because they were killed by these incarnations, they attained an auspicious destination and abandoned their demoniac nature. Those who were killed specifically by Śrī Kṛṣṇa attained the highest destination. Furthermore, it should be noted that all of these personalities had faith in the Vedas and Vedic activities, and all had performed Vedic sacrifices. They indirectly believed in a supreme controller, the time factor and the Supreme Lord.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supremacy over all incarnations of the Lord, His glorious position and His specific quality of bestowing the highest liberation upon anyone He kills is thus established. When the demons, who are envious of Bhagavān, are killed by incarnations other than Kṛṣṇa Himself, they attain immense enjoyment in the heavenly planets and other places, or they take birth in a high-class family. But when they are killed personally by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the source of all incarnations, they attain liberation, or *mukti*, achieving either a form similar to the Lord's (*sārūpya*), residence on the same planet with the Lord (*sālōkyā*), opulences like those of the Lord (*sārṣṭi*) or close association with the Lord (*sāmīpya*). They may even attain service to Him as one of His associates. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is said to be the fountainhead of all incarnations: “*ete cāmsa-kalā pumsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* – all the incarnations mentioned are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28). Kṛṣṇa even awarded Pūtānā the position of His wet nurse. And when He descended in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He bestowed pure love for Bhagavān on Jagāi, Madhāi and Chānd Kāzī.

In the phrase *mām aprāpyaiva*, Kṛṣṇa Himself is expressing this deep secret with the word *eva*, which means ‘certainly’. “It is certain that as long as a person does not attain Me or the path that leads to Me, there is no chance of his being completely liberated from miserable material life.”

VERSE 21

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१ ॥

*tri-vidham narakasyedam dvāram nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

tri-vidham – three kinds; *narakasya* – to hell; *idam* – this; *dvāram* – of gates; *nāśanam* – they cause the destruction; *ātmanaḥ* – of the soul; *kāmaḥ* – lust; *krodhaḥ* – anger; *tathā* – and; *lobhaḥ* – greed; *tasmāt* – therefore; *etat* – these; *trayam* – three; *tyajet* – one should give up.

Lust, anger and greed are the three gates that lead to hell, and they cause the destruction of the soul. Therefore, one should completely renounce them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The demoniac qualities have now been explained in detail. “O Arjuna, do not grieve, for you have been born with divine qualities” (*Gītā* 16.5). This statement is certainly correct. These evil faults (lust, anger and greed) are natural only for the demons; therefore, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *tri-vidham*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The demoniac qualities described above are both self-destructive and the gateways to hell. Three of these qualities – lust, anger and greed – are the root of all other demoniac qualities. Therefore, every human being who desires his own welfare should give them up completely. It is not even possible for *karmīs*, *jñānīs* or *yogīs* to control these tendencies, despite their various endeavours, but a pure devotee, by the powerful influence of saintly association (*sādhū-saṅga*), easily engages these three enemies in the service of Śrī Hari, and thus displays an extraordinary example of subduing them.

VERSE 22

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

**etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamo-dvāraḥ tribhir naraḥ
ācaraty ātmanaḥ śreyas tato yāti parām gatim**

etaiḥ – from these; *vimuktaḥ* – fully liberated; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *tamo-dvāraiḥ* – gates to hell; *tribhiḥ* – three; *naraḥ* – a man; *ācarati* – practises; *ātmanaḥ* – for himself; *śreyas* – auspiciousness; *tataḥ* – there-after; *yāti* – he attains; *parām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination.

O son of Kuntī, a person who is liberated from these three gateways to hell acts for the welfare of his own self. By this he attains the supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Becoming free from these three gateways to darkness, a person should act for the upliftment of his soul. By doing so, he will achieve the supreme destination.” The import is that by practising religiosity, or *dharma*, and by following a regulated life as a means of self-purification, one attains *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, which is the supreme destination. The scriptures have described *karma* and *jñāna* as the means and the end, but their real intention in doing so is to establish that it is only by maintaining a proper relationship with pure work (*karma*) and pure knowledge (*jñāna*) that the *jīva* can attain fearlessness in the form of pure, spiritual existence. This is the *mukti* that is a maidservant of Bhakti-devī.”

VERSE 23

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्त्तते कामचारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥

**yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya varttate kāma-cārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukham na parām gatim**

yaḥ – who; *śāstra-vidhim* – the codes of scripture; *utsṛjya* – puts aside; *varttate* – behaving; *kāma-cārataḥ* – by the influence of desire; *na* – nor; *saḥ* – he; *siddhim* – perfection; *avāpnoti na* – neither attains; *sukham* – happiness; *na* – nor; *parām* – the supreme; *gatim* – destination.

He who discards the injunctions of scripture and acts according to his whimsical desires, attains neither perfection, happiness, nor the supreme destination.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Theism is most auspicious. For this purpose, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *yaḥ*. *Kāma-cārataḥ* means 'to act whimsically' and it leads one to hell. Only those who are theists are *sādhus* and only they attain the supreme destination. Those who are atheists go to hell. This is the essence of this chapter.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā* (the commentary that gives pleasure to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons) on the Sixteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Unrestrained people who disregard the codes of scripture cannot attain the highest destination. It is stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.101):

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhim vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*

Although engaged in exclusive devotion to Śrī Hari, if one transgresses the regulations mentioned in the Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇas and *Nārada-pañcarātra*, great misgivings (*anarthas*) are produced.

VERSE 24

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

*tasmāc chāstram pramāṇam te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau
jñātvā śāstra-vidhānoktam karma kartum ihārhasi*

tasmāt – therefore; *śāstram* – scripture; *pramāṇam* – authority; *te* – your; *kārya* – what should be done; *akārya* – what should not be done; *vyavasthitau* – in ascertaining; *jñātvā* – by knowing; *śāstra* – of the Vedic scriptures; *vidhāna* – in the precepts; *uktam* – what is spoken; *karma* – your work; *kartum* – perform; *iha* – in this world; *arhasi* – you should.

Therefore, scripture is the authority regarding proper and improper activity. Thus aware of the instructions of the scripture concerning the performance of your prescribed duties, simply be an instrument.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having become conversant with the injunctions of *śāstra*, it is proper for those who desire eternal auspiciousness to cultivate *bhakti* to Śrī Hari under the guidance of the disciplic succession of spiritual masters (*guru-varga*), according to their respective qualification. It is not the duty of an intelligent person to act against the codes of *śāstra* by considering the imaginary ideas of so-called teachers, who are glorified by non-devotees, to be authoritative. The Śrutis are the only authority for verifying what is duty and what is not, because they are *apauruṣeyā*, not composed by any human being, and they are free from the four defects of illusion, negligence, imperfect senses and the desire to cheat others. The instructions of a person who has these four defects are not authoritative.

Special Instruction: The root offence of the living entity is his voluntary aversion to the service of Śrī Bhagavān. As a result, *māyā*, who is a maidservant of Bhagavān, places the *jīva* in bondage. Bound by *māyā*, he gives up that *sāttvika* nature which enables him to understand Bhagavān. Thus, by accepting the qualities of ignorance, the *jīva* becomes demoniac. At that time, many offences manifest, such as criticizing *sādhus*, maintaining the conception that there are many gods or that there is no God, disobeying the *guru*, disregarding the scripture, thinking that the glory of *bhakti* as described in scripture is imaginary, proposing that *karma* and *jñāna* are actually *bhakti*, not having faith in *bhakti*, and instructing unqualified people in *bhakti*.

The teaching of this chapter is that after giving up this demonic nature, it is obligatory to engage in the practice of the nine types of *bhakti* with faith, following the principles described in scripture.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Therefore, only scripture is authoritative in determining what is correct and what is not correct, and the conclusion of scripture is that one should perform *bhakti*. Knowing this, you should become qualified to act. Theists

attain the supreme destination by their faith in Bhagavān, and the faithless atheists go to hell. This is the meaning of this chapter.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Sixteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.



Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga

Yoga Through Discerning
the Three Types of Faith

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

य शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ

teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *ye* – who; *śāstra-vidhim* – the injunctions of scripture; *utsṛjya* – giving up; *yajante* – worship; *śraddhayā anvitāḥ* – with faith; *teṣāṁ* – their; *niṣṭhā* – condition; *tu* – indeed; *kā* – what?; *kṛṣṇa* – O Kṛṣṇa; *sattvam* – goodness; *āho* – or; *rajaḥ* – passion; *tamaḥ* – darkness.

Arjuna inquired: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the position of those who give up the injunctions of scripture but still perform worship with faith? Is their condition in goodness, passion or ignorance?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this Seventeenth Chapter, Śrī Bhagavān explains that which is in goodness, passion or ignorance, in response to the following question of Arjuna: “You described the nature of the demons and then concluded by saying that those who transgress scriptural regulations and act whimsically do not attain perfection, happiness or

the supreme destination (*Gītā* 16.23). Now I have a question. What is the basis of faith, or *niṣṭhā*, of those who transgress the injunctions of scripture and, free from a mood of enjoyment and endowed with faith, whimsically perform sacrifices – such as austerity, *jñāna* and *mantra* (*japa*)? Is it *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika*? Please explain this.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura comments that upon hearing the conclusion of the last chapter, Arjuna said, “O Kṛṣṇa, I have a doubt. Previously (in *Gītā* 4.39), You said that only men of faith achieve *jñāna*. Then You said (in *Gītā* 16.23) that those who transgress the injunctions of scripture and, impelled by mundane desires, engage in fruitive acts do not attain perfection, happiness or the supreme destination. My question is, ‘What is the position of those who faithfully cultivate something that is opposed to scripture? Do people with such whimsical faith achieve purity of existence, which is the result of *jñāna-yoga* and other *yoga* processes? Please tell me clearly about the resolve of those who give up the injunctions of scripture but who perform worship with faith. Is it in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance?’”

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु॥२॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

*tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehinām sā svabhāva-jā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tāṁ śṛṇu*

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the Supreme Lord said; *tri-vidhā* – of three kinds; *bhavati* – is; *śraddhā* – the faith; *dehinām* – of human beings; *sā* – that (faith); *svabhāva-jā* – born of one’s nature formed in previous lives; *sāttvikī* – goodness; *rājasī* – passion; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *tāmasī* – ignorance; *ca* – and; *iti* – about; *tām* – that; *śṛṇu* – now hear.

Śrī Bhagavān replied: The faith of human beings is of three types: in goodness, passion and ignorance, and it arises due to past life impressions. It has been formed through the collective impressions made upon one's consciousness through one's experiences in many lives. Now hear about this.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: "O Arjuna, first hear about the *niṣṭhā*, or resolve, of those who perform *bhajana* in accordance with the codes of scripture. I will then speak about the *niṣṭhā* of those whose worship violates those rules. The word *sva-bhāva-jā* means 'that which is born of past impressions'. It is also of three types."

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Some think that it is difficult to follow the injunctions of scripture, while others give up following them out of laziness and a mundane faith that have arisen from past life impressions, and they whimsically worship various demigods. The faith of these people is of three types: in goodness, passion or ignorance (*sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika*). However, faith that is aimed at cultivating *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān under the guidance of pure devotees, who are well versed in scripture, is *nirguṇa*, or transcendental to the modes. There is something to consider in this regard. In the initial stages, the faith of a *bhakti-sādhaka* may be in the mode of goodness, but by the influence of saintly persons, it quickly becomes firmly fixed in transcendence. At that time, while meticulously following the rules and regulations of scripture and engaging with strong faith in hearing, chanting and remembering of the holy name and *hari-kathā*, a *sādhaka* progresses on the path of *bhakti*.

VERSE 3

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥३॥

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śraddhāmayo 'yaṁ puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ

sattva – with their inner mental state; *anurūpā* – in accordance; *sarvasya* – of everyone; *śraddhā* – faith; *bhavati* – comes into being; *bhārata* – O descendant of King Bharata; *śraddhāmayaḥ* – imbued with faith; *ayam* – that; *puṛuṣaḥ* – person; *yaḥ* – who; *yat-śraddhaḥ* – whichever object of faith; *saḥ* – that; *eva saḥ* – same (nature).

O descendant of Bharata, everyone’s faith is determined by the disposition of their inner mental state. Every person has faith, and they develop a disposition corresponding with the worshipful object of their faith.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Sattvam* refers to the internal sense, the mind, or *citta*. It is of three types: in goodness (*sāttvika*), passion (*rājasika*) or ignorance (*tāmasika*). A person whose heart is *sāttvika* possesses *sāttvika* faith, a person whose heart is *rājasika* possesses *rājasika* faith, and one whose heart is *tāmasika* has *tāmasika* faith. *Yac-chraddhaḥ* means that one’s nature develops according to one’s worshipable object. This means that a person’s nature corresponds with the nature of the person he worships – demigod, demon or Rākṣasa.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A living entity’s inherent asset is the faith or *rati* he has in his constitutional position. That faith is related to Bhagavān only, and it is unquestionably beyond the modes of nature. However, in the bound state, the constitutional nature of the living entity becomes distorted. When the living entity associates with matter and consequently performs either auspicious or inauspicious activities, the result is distorted faith, and this faith is known as *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika* in accordance with who that living entity’s worshipable deity is.

Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Bhārata, everyone has faith. A person’s faith corresponds with his disposition of mind, and it develops according to the nature of the deity he has placed his faith in. In reality, the living entity is without material qualities, being constitutionally My *aṃsa*, or part, but having forgotten his relationship with Me, he has become bound by the modes of nature. That materialistic nature is acquired as a result of

past impressions formed at the time of becoming averse to Me, and it is this aversion that molds the nature, or disposition, of the mind (*citta*, or *sattva*). When it is purified, the result is fearlessness. The faith of a purified heart is the seed of *bhakti*, which is *nirguṇa*, beyond the modes of nature, whereas the faith of an impure heart is *saguṇa*, bound by the modes. As long as this faith does not become *nirguṇa* or directed toward *nirguṇa* (Bhagavān), it is called *kāma*, lust. I will now explain faith within the modes of nature, characterized by material desires. Please listen.”

VERSE 4

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षसि राजसाः ।
 प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥४॥

yajante sāttvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ
pretān bhūta-gaṇāṁś cānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ

yajante – worship; *sāttvikāḥ* – those in goodness; *devān* – the demigods; *yakṣa* – a type of celestial entity capable of bestowing great wealth; *rakṣāṁsi* – demons; *rājasāḥ* – those in passion; *pretān* – ghosts; *bhūta-gaṇān* – spirits; *ca* – and; *anye* – others; *yajante* – worship; *tāmasāḥ* – in darkness; *janāḥ* – persons.

Persons in the mode of goodness worship the demigods, whose disposition is similar to their own. Those in the mode of passion worship Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, who are of like nature, and those in mode of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits, being akin to them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is elaborating on the subject mentioned previously. Those whose mind is in the mode of goodness are endowed with faith in that mode. They worship the demigods, who are *sāttvika*, or in goodness, in accordance with the injunctions of scriptures in the mode of goodness. Because their faith is in the demigods, they are also called demigods, since they develop the same nature and qualities. This principle also applies to those whose minds are *rājasika* and *tāmasika*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the varieties of mundane faith of persons who worship the various demigods. According to scripture, Śrī Bhagavān is the only worshipable entity, but impelled by various types of material desires, some people place their faith in the worship of various demigods and other entities. That faith is of three kinds: in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance. Those whose faith is in the mode of goodness worship demigods such as Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Candra and Sūrya. Similarly, those whose faith is in the mode of passion worship Durgā, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and so on, and those whose faith is in the mode of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.

Sometimes, one demigod is worshipped by those in the three different modes. For example, Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi's worship of Lord Śiva at the time of devastation was in the mode of goodness, as was Kāgabhuṣuṇḍi's worship of him. As a result of their *sāttvika* worship, Mārkaṇḍeya Ṛṣi remained alive for one entire day of Lord Brahmā and acquired knowledge of the creation of the universe, etc., and Kāgabhuṣuṇḍi attained *bhakti* to Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra. The worship of Lord Śiva performed by Bānāsura and Rāvaṇa, etc., is *rājasika*, and the worship of him by Bhasmāsura, etc., is *tāmasika*. Durgā devī is also worshipped by those with three types of faith. By the influence of saintly association, however, faith in the mode of ignorance can transform into faith in the mode of passion. That faith can then be transformed into faith in the mode of goodness, which in turn can transform into transcendental faith, beyond the modes of nature.

The faith of *nirviśeṣavādīs*, those who worship the featureless aspect of the Absolute, is also in the mode of goodness. They consider *brahma*, the Absolute Truth, to be formless and featureless, and they imagine the forms of the five demigods to be representations of that formless reality, and thus they worship them. In this way, they endeavour to purify their heart and then attain *jñāna*.

VERSES 5-6

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः

कामरागबलान्विताः ॥५॥

कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।
 मा चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान् विद्म्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६ ॥

aśāstra-vihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ
dambhāhaṅkāra-samyuktāḥ kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ

karśayantaḥ śarīra-stham bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ
mām caivāntaḥ-śarīra-stham tān viddhy āsura-niścayān

aśāstra-vihitam – not enjoined in scripture; *ghoram* – terrible; *tapyante* – perform; *ye* – who; *tapāḥ* – austerity; *janāḥ* – persons; *dambhāhaṅkāra* – pride and false ego; *samyuktāḥ* – united with; *kāma* – desire; *rāga* – attachment; *bala* – strength; *anvitāḥ* – absorbed in; *karśayantaḥ* – they inflict pain; *śarīra-stham* – situated within the body; *bhūta-grāmam* – on the elements; *acetasaḥ* – who are not discriminating; *mām* – to Me; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *antaḥ-śarīra-stham* – situated within the body; *tān* – those; *viddhi* – you should know; *āsura-niścayān* – faith in demonic forms of religion.

Endowed with pride, false ego, lust, attachment and strength, they inflict pain upon the elements of their bodies and also upon Me, who am situated within the heart of their hearts. They perform severe austerities not recommended in scripture and have faith in demoniac forms of religiosity.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Kṛṣṇa said, “O Arjuna, you have asked about the status of those who discard the injunctions of scripture yet perform worship endowed with faith; are such persons in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance? Now hear My reply in the two verses beginning with *aśāstra*. Faith and renunciation of selfish desires also manifest in those who perform severe austerities, characterized by unauthorized *mantras*, *yajñas* and so forth, which create fear in living beings. Those who are proud and egotistical will surely violate the rules of scripture. *Kāma* refers to desires such as the desire for eternal youthfulness, immortality and a kingdom. *Rāga* means attachment to austerities, and *bala* means the capacity to perform austerities like Hiranyakaśipu. From the very beginning of their performance of austerity, such persons

torture the *bhūta-grāmam*, the group of elements such as earth, which constitute the body, and cause unnecessary pain to Me, as well as to My partial expansion, the *jīva*. The disposition of such persons is *āsurika*, or demoniac.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is telling Arjuna that those who disregard scripture and perform severe austerities, such as fasting to fulfil their material desires, are not included among those who perform the *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika* activities explained previously. Such people are very unfortunate. Being influenced by the association of pretenders, they perform severe austerities that intimidate common people and that are not recommended in scripture. Austerities such as worthless, painful fasts, offering in sacrifice one’s bodily flesh, a human being or an animal and performing other such violent acts cause pain to one’s self and also to Paramātmā. Such people, whose natures are cruel, should be considered demoniac.

In current times, some people observe fasts that are not recommended in scripture out of some selfish or political interest. The scriptures’ provision for fasting is solely to facilitate the attainment of the transcendental goal. On Ekādaśī, for example, one can fast from everything, even from water, and remain awake throughout the night, performing *hari-kīrtana*. Such a fast is not for political or social purposes. But nowadays, people stay awake at night and eat flesh, drink wine and sing vulgar and contemptible songs. In this way, they violate the rules of scripture. Such activity is not included within the three types of *śraddhā*, or faith, and it simply gives suffering; it does not benefit anyone. In fact, such activities are performed out of pride, ego, lust and excessive attachment to material sense enjoyment. One who performs such austerity causes unnecessary pain to the body and disturbs one’s inner peace, as well as the peace of others. Sometimes persons even die from performing these fanatical fasts. While wandering repeatedly throughout the demonic species of life, they reap only misery. But if by the will of providence, they receive the association of a pure devotee, they can attain auspiciousness. Examples of this are Nalakūvera, Maṅigrīva and Mahārāja Surat.

VERSE 7

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥७॥

*āhāras tv api sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyaḥ
yajñas tapas tathā dānam teṣāṁ bhedam imam śṛṇu*

āhāraḥ – the food; *tu* – indeed; *api* – even; *sarvasya* – of all living beings; *tri-vidhaḥ* – according to the three qualities; *bhavati* – is; *priyaḥ* – dear; *yajñāḥ* – sacrifice; *tapāḥ* – austerity; *tathā* – also; *dānam* – charity; *teṣām* – all of these; *bhedam* – division; *imam* – this; *śṛṇu* – now hear.

Even the food that is dear to a person is of three kinds, in accordance with that person's individual qualities. The same is true of sacrifice, austerity and charity. Now hear of the distinctions between them.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who discard the injunctions of scripture and act whimsically enter the demoniac species of life. This was mentioned in the previous chapter. This chapter describes how those of a demoniac nature who worship Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and spirits also enter the demoniac species of life. One can categorize people as divine or demoniac according to the type of food they eat. This will be explained in thirteen consecutive verses beginning here with *āhāras tu*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having explained the three categories of *śraddhā*, or faith, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the specific food, sacrifices and so forth corresponding to each. Those who are of a particular mode are inclined to food, sacrifices, austerities and charities in the same mode. Nowadays, some people imagine that food has no relationship with religious principles, while others think that protecting and maintaining the body is the basis of all religious practice (*śarīram ādyaṁ khalu dharma sādhanam*). One should thus note that those who accept sense enjoyment as the only purpose of human life feel great satisfaction in drinking wine and eating meat, eggs and even cow-flesh. Fortunately, some people understand that the living entity's tendency for sense enjoyment has caused his bondage

to *māyā*, by which he is undergoing so much misery life after life. For those who yearn to become free from all miseries, it is imperative to abandon the desire to indulge in sense enjoyment. Only those in this human life who have developed such awareness understand the need to accept pure *sāttvika* food. In their endeavour to transcend the three modes of the material energy, they first try to surmount the mode of ignorance by coming to the mode of passion; they then destroy the mode of passion by coming to *sattva-guṇa*, the mode of goodness. Finally they eliminate the mundane quality of goodness and come to the platform of pure spirituality, *śuddha-sattva*, being free from the modes of nature.

Saintly persons and scripture both state that control of the mind is indeed the root of all religion. The body's nearest relative is the mind, and thus one's inclination of mind becomes good or bad, depending on the type of food one takes. Evidence of this is common. Most people in the world today consume inedible and demoniac foodstuffs and indulge in acts of illicit sex, cheating, duplicity and violence. Proper moral conduct is rare. Therefore, after careful consideration, those who are wise should only accept such foodstuffs that nourish the body and purify the intelligence. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān has described the three types of foodstuffs that manifest the three modes. It is seen that those who aim to adopt the mode of goodness become disinterested in foods that are in the modes of passion and ignorance, being attracted to *sāttvika* foods only.

While commenting on this verse concerning foodstuffs, Śrī Rāmānujācārya has cited two sources of evidence from the Śrutis. (1) “*Annamayam hi saumya-manah* – one who eats grains will have a peaceful mind” and (2) “*Āhāra-śuddhau sattva-śuddhiḥ* – if one's food is pure, then one's existence will become purified.” The Śrutis have also cautioned us that purity of food determines purity of the mind. This can be easily understood by these proofs. We must, therefore, give up any food that scripture prohibits. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has lucidly explained this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.28):

*pathyam pūtam anāyas tam āhāryam sāttvikam smṛtam
rājasam cendriya-preṣṭham tāmasam cārtti-dāsuci*

Food that is wholesome, pure and obtained without difficulty is in the mode of goodness. That which is very pungent, sour and salty and meant only to gratify the senses is in the mode of passion, and food that is collected from an impure place, contaminated and causes distress is in the mode of ignorance. But that food approved by scripture and offered to Me is beyond the modes of nature.

From the word *ca* (and) in this verse (11.25.28), both Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī have concluded that any object that is offered to Bhagavān is *nirguṇa*. Those who violate these instructions of scripture and accept any type of impure food based on their fancy certainly fall into the category of *asuras* (demons).

VERSE 8

आयुःसत्त्व-बलारोग्य-सुख-प्रीति-विवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥८॥

āyuh-sattva-balārogya-sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ
rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā-hṛdyā āhārāḥ sāttvika-priyāḥ

āyuh – life span; *sattva* – enthusiasm; *bala* – strength; *ārogya* – good health; *sukha* – happiness; *prīti* – satisfaction; *vivardhanāḥ* – which augment; *rasyāḥ* – tasty; *snigdhaḥ* – fattening; *sthirāḥ* – sustaining; *hṛdyāḥ* – pleasing to the heart; *āhārāḥ* – foods; *sāttvika-priyāḥ* – dear to those situated in goodness.

Foods that augment one's life span, enthusiasm, strength, health, happiness and satisfaction, and which are juicy, fattening, sustaining and pleasing to the mind, are dear to persons in the mode of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this world, it is a well-known fact that by eating food in the mode of goodness, one's duration of life increases. The word *sattvam* means 'to energize'. *Rasyā* refers to substances like unrefined sugar, which although tasty (*rasyā*) are dry. Śrī Bhagavān next mentions foods like milk and cream, which are both tasty (*rasyā*) and fatty (*snigdha*) but not solid (*sthirāḥ*). He then speaks of foods that

are tasty, fatty and solid, such as jackfruit. Although jackfruit fits into the above categories, it is not good for the heart and stomach; therefore, Śrī Bhagavān specifically mentions food that is beneficial for the heart as well as the belly. Cow products like milk and yogurt, as well as sugar and grains like wheat and *śali* (a type of rice), have four *sāttvika* qualities. This is why they are appreciated by people in the mode of goodness. This should be understood. *Sāttvika* people do not like impure food, even if it has the above-mentioned four characteristics. For this reason, the adjective *pavitra* (pure) is used in this verse. In *Gītā* 17.10, the adjective *amedhya* (impure) is used for people who like food in the mode of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is informing Arjuna that a mode of nature corresponds with the type of foodstuff consumed. A person who desires his own welfare should only accept food in the mode of goodness, as it is not only beneficial for the health but increases the duration of life. Moreover, because it is pure, it is favourable for the execution of religious life. And since it purifies the body and mind, it is auspicious in every respect. Drinking milk has a distinctly different effect on the mind than drinking wine. Bad association, improper knowledge and lack of proper impressions are causing people to abandon the consumption of food in the mode of goodness.

VERSE 9

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरुक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥९॥

kaṭv-amlā-lavaṇāty-uṣṇa-tīkṣṇa-rukṣa-vidāhinaḥ
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā duḥkha-śokāmayā-pradāḥ

kaṭu – bitter; *amla* – sour; *lavaṇa* – salty; *aty-uṣṇa* – very pungent; *tīkṣṇa* – sour; *rukṣa* – dry; *vidāhinaḥ* – burning; *āhārāḥ* – foods; *rājasasya* – the person in passion; *iṣṭāḥ* – dear; *duḥkha* – pain; *śoka* – grief; *āmaya* – disease; *pradāḥ* – they give.

Foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry or burning, and which give rise to pain, misery and disease, are liked by people of a passionate nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *ati* (very) is used for seven words, the first being *kaṭu*. Foods that are very bitter (like neem), very sour, very salty, very hot, very spicy (such as radish), poison, black pepper and other spices, or those that are very dry (like asafoetida, or hing) or very burning (like roasted black gram) are the cause of pain, disease and grief. Here, the word *duḥkha* refers to the instant misery caused to the eyes, throat and so forth while eating, and the word *śoka* refers to anxiety about reactions to come. The word *āmaya* means 'disease'.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: One immediately gets a burning sensation in the tongue, throat and belly by eating foodstuffs in the mode of passion, and wind and indigestion follow. After that, the mind becomes disturbed by unpleasant thoughts and anxiety, and various types of diseases develop. In this way, life becomes miserable. Aside from this, the mind becomes distracted from religious activities and disinterested in them. People of a *sāttvika* nature, therefore, do not accept such food.

VERSE 10

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

*yātayāmaṁ gata-rasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat
ucchiṣṭam api cāmedhyam bhojanam tāmasa-priyam*

yāta-yāmam – food which has been cooked and then become cold; *gata-rasam* – tasteless; *pūti* – bad smelling; *paryuṣitam* – putrid; *ca* – and; *yat* – which; *ucchiṣṭam* – food already eaten by others; *api ca* – and also; *amedhyam* – impure; *bhojanam* – food; *tāmasa-priyam* – dear to those in the quality of darkness.

People influenced by the mode of ignorance are pleased by food cooked more than three hours before being eaten, by food that is

cold, foul smelling, tasteless, putrid and stale, and by food that has been partly eaten by others and impure.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *yāta-yāmam* means food that has been cooked three hours prior to being eaten and that has become cold. *Gata-rasam* means ‘that which has lost its natural taste’, or ‘that from which the juice has been extracted’, like the peel or pit of a cooked mango. *Pūti* means ‘foul smelling’. *Paryuṣitam* means ‘cooked the previous day’. *Ucchiṣtam* means ‘someone’s remnants’. This does not refer to the remnants of highly respected persons such as revered spiritual masters. *Amedhya* means ‘that which is not fit to be consumed’, like meat or tobacco. Therefore, those who are concerned about their own welfare should eat only *sāttvika* food. Vaiṣṇavas, however, should not even accept *sāttvika* food if it is not offered to Bhagavān. It is understood from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that food offered to Bhagavān is *nirguṇa*, transcendental to the modes of nature. This food alone is dear to the devotees.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The purpose of food is to keep the body healthy and strong, make the mind pure, increase the life span and engage a person in his spiritual welfare. In ancient times, those who were learned and wise would only accept food that kept them healthy and increased their life span. Milk, yogurt, sugar, rice, wheat, fruit and vegetables are dear to *sāttvika* people.

Many people think that there is no harm in eating foods such as meat and wine that they have offered in their worship of the demigods. Although scripture makes provision for such acts, these thoughts are in complete illusion. The provision in scripture for killing animals or drinking wine in sacrifice is only for those deeply sunk in the mode of ignorance and who are completely attached to sense indulgence. It is a temporary provision so as to expertly bring them to abstention from such acts. This is also confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.11):

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā
nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña
surā-grahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā*

It is seen that people in the material world are naturally inclined to drinking wine, eating meat and having sex. Scripture never encourages this. To some extent, provision has been granted for sex-life within a sanctified marriage, and for eating meat and drinking wine in a sacrifice called *śautrāmaṇi*. The purpose of these provisions is to control one's unrestrained nature and fix it within moral boundaries. The actual, deep import of the Vedas is to encourage people to become completely renounced.

Furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.13) says:

*yad ghrāṇa-bhakṣo vihītaḥ surāyās
tathā paśor ālabhanaṁ na himsā*

Scripture ordains the smelling of wine at the time of a sacrifice but not the drinking of it, and only for the above-mentioned purpose of gradually attaining complete renunciation. In the same way, scripture does not authorize anyone to kill an animal and eat meat. It permits one to touch the animal only and then release it.

Some people think that although it is sinful to eat meat, no sin is incurred in eating fish because fish are like the flowers or fruits of the water. However, *Manu-saṁhitā* completely forbids the eating of fish:

*yo yasya māmsam aśnāti sa tan-māmsād ucyate
matsyādaḥ sarva-māmsādas tasmān matsyān vivarjayet*

Those who eat the meat of a particular animal are known as eaters of that particular animal, but those who eat fish eat the meat of everything, because a fish eats the meat of all living entities such as cows and pigs. It even consumes rotten things. Those who eat fish actually eat the meat of all beings.

Eating fish should, therefore, be abandoned entirely. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.14) further states:

*ye tv anevaṁ-vido 'santaḥ stabdhāḥ sad-abhimāninaḥ
paśūn druhyanti visrabdhāḥ pretya khādanti te ca tām*

Those who are ignorant of religious principles, short sighted, intoxicated by false ego and who fearlessly eat animals after killing them will be eaten by those same animals in their next life.

Regarding the meaning of the word *māmsa* (meat), *Manu-samhitā* says:

*mām sa bhakṣayitāmutra yasya māmsam ihādmy aham
etan māmsasya māmsatvaṁ pravādanti manīṣiṇaḥ*

‘That which I am eating here will eat me in my next life.’ For this reason, the learned say that meat is called *māmsa* (a repeated act: I eat him; he eats me).

Here it should also be understood that eating food in the mode of goodness enhances one’s quality of goodness, but even consuming such food is not completely free from sin, because there is also life in creepers, vegetables, plants and trees. A touch of sin therefore remains in the preparation of vegetarian food because, to some degree, it involves violence. For this reason, pure devotees only accept *mahā-prasāda*, food that has been offered to Bhagavān. Only *mahā-prasāda* is fit to be eaten because it is transcendental to the modes of nature and completely free from sin. Food that has not been offered should be shunned totally. This is also written in the *Brahma-vaivarta* and in the *Padma Purāṇa*: “*annaṁ viṣṭhā jalam mūtraṁ yad viṣṇor anivedanam* – taking food and water that is not offered to Śrī Viṣṇu is compared to eating stool and drinking urine.”

VERSE II

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदिष्टो य इज्यते ।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

*aphalākāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhi-diṣṭo ya ijyate
yaṣṭavyam eveti manaḥ samādhāya sa sātṭvikaḥ*

aphala-ākāṅkṣibhiḥ – by persons without desires for the result; *yajñaḥ* – sacrifice; *vidhi-diṣṭaḥ* – which is directed by the injunctions (of scripture); *yaḥ* – which; *ijyate* – is performed; *yaṣṭavyam* – sacrifice should be dutifully performed; *eva* – certainly; *iti* – thus; *manaḥ* – the mind; *samādhāya* – resolving; *saḥ* – that; *sātṭvikaḥ* – in goodness.

“The performance of sacrifice (*yajña*) is obligatory.” When sacrifice is executed in accordance with with such firm resolution of mind,

within the directions of scriptural injunction and without expectation of reward, it is in the mode of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is describing the three types of sacrifice (*yajña*). If one questions how one engages in *yajña* without expecting the result, then Śrī Bhagavān says, “He concludes that it is imperative to perform *yajña* because it is his duty and because it has been prescribed in the scriptures as his duty.”

VERSE 12

अभिसन्धाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ १२ ॥

*abhisandhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārtham api caiva yat
ijyate bhārata-śreṣṭha taṁ yajñam viddhi rājasam*

abhisandhāya – with desire; *tu* – however; *phalam* – for the results; *dambha-artham* – out of pride; *api ca* – and also; *eva* – certainly; *yat* – which; *ijyate* – is performed; *bharata-śreṣṭha* – best of Bharata’s line; *taṁ* – that; *yajñam* – sacrifice; *viddhi* – you should understand; *rājasam* – the quality of passion.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, you should understand that the sacrifice that is executed with the desire for its fruit, and that is pretentiously performed to glorify oneself, is governed by the quality of passion.

VERSE 13

विधिहीनमसृष्टात्रं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥ १३ ॥

*vidhi-hīnam asṛṣṭānam mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam
śraddhā-virahitam yajñam tāmasam paricakṣate*

vidhi-hīnam – disregarding the precepts of scripture; *asṛṣṭa* – where there is no distribution; *annam* – of *prasādam* (food sanctified by being offered

to God and accepted as His blessing); *mantra-hīnam* – without the utterance of *mantras*, sacred names of God, to purify the mind; *adaḥṣṇam* – wherein no gifts are given to the priests; *śraddhā-virahitam* – without faith; *yajñam* – that sacrifice; *tāmasam* – in the quality of darkness; *paricakṣate* – is said (to be).

That sacrifice in which the injunctions of scripture are disregarded, no sanctified foodstuffs are distributed, no Vedic *mantras* are chanted and no gifts are given to the priests, and which is performed without faith, is described by the learned to be influenced by the quality of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Asṛṣṭānnam* means ‘without distribution of foodstuffs’.

VERSE 14

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शरीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४ ॥

deva-dviija-guru-prājñā-pūjanam śaucam ārjavam
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca śārīram tapa ucyate

deva – of the demigods (the 33 million universal administrators); *dviija* – the *brāhmaṇas*; *guru* – the spiritual preceptors; *prājñā* – the wise; *pūjanam* – worship; *śaucam* – cleanliness; *ārjavam* – simplicity; *brahmacaryam* – celibacy; *ahimsā* – non-violence; *ca* – and; *śārīram* – of the body; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *ucyate* – is said (to be).

Austerity of the body consists of offering respect to the demigods, to the *brāhmaṇas*, to one’s *gurus* and to learned persons. In addition, cleanliness, honesty, celibacy and non-violence are also bodily austerities.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Austerities are of three types. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān first explains austerities in the mode of goodness, in three consecutive verses beginning with *deva-dviija*.

VERSE 15

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

*anudvega-karam vākyaṃ satyaṃ priya-hitam ca yat
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva vāṅ-mayaṃ tapa ucyate*

anudvega-karam – non-agitating; *vākyaṃ* – speech; *satyaṃ* – which is true; *priya-hitam* – beneficial; *ca* – and; *yat* – which; *svādhyāya* – of recitation of the Vedic literatures; *abhyasanam* – the practice; *ca* – also; *eva* – certainly; *vāṅ-mayaṃ* – of speech; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *ucyate* – is said to be.

Speaking words that cause no agitation and that are truthful, pleasing and beneficial, as well as reciting the Vedas, are all said to be austerities of speech.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Anudvega-karam* means ‘speech that does not cause agitation to others’.

VERSE 16

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

*manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṃ maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
bhāva-samśuddhir ity etat tapo mānasam ucyate*

manaḥ-prasādaḥ – mental satisfaction; *saumyatvaṃ* – simplicity; *maunam* – silence; *ātma-vinigrahaḥ* – discipline of the mind; *bhāva-samśuddhiḥ* – non-duplicitous behaviour; *iti* – as follows; *etat* – this; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *mānasam* – of the mind; *ucyate* – is said to be.

Austerities of the mind consist of satisfaction, simplicity, silence, maintaining mental discipline and non-duplicitous behaviour.

VERSE 17

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्रिविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

*śraddhayā parayā taptam tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ sāttvikam paricakṣate*

śraddhayā – faith; *parayā* – with great; *taptam* – executed; *tapas* – austerity; *tat* – this; *tri-vidham* – threefold, in goodness, passion and ignorance; *naraiḥ* – by men; *aphala-ākāṅkṣibhiḥ* – without desire for results; *yuktaiḥ* – of concentrated and undivided mind; *sāttvikam* – in the quality of goodness; *paricakṣate* – is said to be.

This threefold austerity performed with great faith and one-pointed attention by those who are free from desire for remuneration is said by learned persons to be governed by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *tri-vidham* refers to austerities of body, speech and mind that are endowed with the symptoms described above.

VERSE 18

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ १८ ॥

*satkāra-māna-pūjārtham tapo dambhena caiva yat
kriyate tad iha proktam rājasam calam adhravam*

satkāra – recognition; *māna* – honour; *pūjā* – adoration; *artham* – for the purpose of achieving; *tapas* – austerity; *dambhena* – with pride; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *yat* – which; *kriyate* – is performed; *tat* – that; *iha* – within this world; *proktam* – is declared; *rājasam* – in the quality of passion; *calam* – temporary; *adhravam* – uncertain.

Austerity that is performed with pride for the sake of recognition, honour and adoration is said to be governed by the quality of passion. It is temporary and its benefits are uncertain.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *satkārah* means ‘to worship someone with flattery, by telling him that he is saintly or honouring him with flowery words’. *Māna* means ‘bodily worship, such as standing up to greet a person when he arrives and following him to the door when he leaves’. Here, *pūjā* means ‘to worship by mind with the hope of gaining wealth and other material facilities’. The austerities that are proudly performed for these purposes are *rājasika*. The word *calam* means ‘that which stays only for a short period’, and *adhruvam* means that the result attained, such as recognition, is temporary.

VERSE 19

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १९ ॥

mūḍha-grāheṇātmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ
parasyotsādanārtham vā tat tāmasam udāhṛtam

mūḍha-grāheṇa – due to foolish obstinacy; *ātmanaḥ* – one’s self; *yat* – which; *pīḍayā* – giving pain; *kriyate* – performed; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *parasya* – to another; *utsādana* – bringing ruin; *artham* – with the purpose; *vā* – or; *tat* – that; *tāmasam* – the quality of darkness; *udāhṛtam* – is said to be.

Austerity that is performed out of foolish obstinacy and that gives pain to oneself or intended to cause another’s ruin is known to be governed by the quality of darkness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Mūḍha-grāheṇa* means ‘due to accepting foolishness’. *Parasya utsādanārtham* means that austerity performed to destroy others is in the mode of ignorance.

VERSE 20

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २० ॥

dātavyam iti yad dānam dīyate ’nupakāriṇe
deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānam sāttvikam smṛtam

dātavyam – should be given; *iti* – determining thus; *yat* – which; *dānam* – charity; *dīyate* – is given; *anupakāriṇe* – to one who cannot give in return; *deśe* – at a proper place such as a holy place; *kāle* – at an auspicious time; *ca* – and; *pātre* – to a worthy recipient; *ca* – and; *tat* – that; *dānam* – giving of charity; *sāttvikam* – in the quality of goodness; *smṛtam* – is said to be.

“Charity is to be given to one who cannot return it, at a holy place, at an auspicious time and to a worthy person.” Charity given with this resolve is considered to be governed by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The word *dātavyam* means ‘determining the qualified recipient of charity and giving it at the proper time’. Charity given with expectation of some return is not charity.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains the three types of charity. He says that charity is in the mode of goodness if it is given out of duty, without expectation of any reward, to a person who is selfless and who never performs activities for his own welfare, or to one who does not have the ability to perform welfare to others. In this regard, it is also necessary to consider the proper time, place and person.

VERSE 21

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ २१ ॥

*yat tu pratyupakārārtham phalam uddiśya vā punaḥ
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam tad dānam rājasam smṛtam*

yat – which; *tu* – but; *pratyupakāra* – getting return; *artham* – with the desire; *phalam* – attaining some benefit; *uddiśya* – the intention; *vā* – or; *punaḥ* – furthermore; *dīyate* – given; *ca* – and; *parikliṣṭam* – begrudgingly; *tat* – that; *dānam* – charity; *rājasam* – in the quality of passion; *smṛtam* – is said to be.

But that charity which is offered with the expectation of some remuneration or which is given begrudgingly is said to be governed by the quality of passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Parikliṣṭam* means that after giving in charity, a person repents, “Why have I given so much?” It also means ‘to give on the order or request of superiors, such as the *guru*, although not willing to give’. Here the word *parikliṣṭam* means that a charitable object or act that is tainted by such unbeneficial feelings is in the mode of passion.

VERSE 22

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

adeśa-kāle yat dānam apātrebhyas ca dīyate
asat-kṛtam avajñātam tat tāmasam udāhṛtam

adeśa-kāle – at an improper place and time; *yat* – which; *dānam* – charity; *apātrebhyas* – to unworthy recipients; *ca* – and; *dīyate* – is given; *asat-kṛtam* – without respect; *avajñātam* – with contempt; *tat* – that; *tāmasam* – in the quality of darkness; *udāhṛtam* – is said to be.

Charity given at an impure place and an improper time to an unworthy recipient, in a mood of contempt and disrespect, is said to be governed by the quality of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Asat-kārah* means ‘the result of disrespect’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Charity that is given at an impure place and an improper time to an unqualified person, like a dancer or prostitute, to one who does not need it, or to a sinful person, is in the mode of ignorance. Charity that is disrespectfully given to a worthy person is also in the mode of ignorance.

VERSES 23–24

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।
 ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ २३ ॥
 तस्माद् ॐ इत्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
 प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४ ॥

*om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ
 brāhmaṇās tena vedās ca yajñās ca vihitāḥ purā
 tasmād om ity udāhṛtya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
 pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satataṁ brahma-vādinām*

om tat sat – the transcendental syllables, or names, *om*, *tat* and *sat*; *iti* – thus; *nirdeśaḥ* – indicating; *brahmaṇaḥ* – the Supreme *brahma*; *tri-vidhaḥ* – of three types; *smṛtaḥ* – it is said; *brāhmaṇāḥ* – the *brāhmaṇas*, who are conversant with the Supreme *brahma*; *tena* – by this (utterance); *vedāḥ* – the Vedas; *ca* – and; *yajñāḥ* – sacrifices; *ca* – and; *vihitāḥ* – were created; *purā* – in ancient times; *tasmāt* – therefore; *om* – the sacred syllable *om*; *iti* – thus; *udāhṛtya* – while uttering; *yajña* – of sacrifice; *dāna* – charity; *tapaḥ* – and austerity; *kriyāḥ* – activities; *pravartante* – performed; *vidhānoktāḥ* – according to the scriptures; *satatam* – always; *brahma-vādinām* – of those who follow the Vedic version.

It is said that *om*, *tat* and *sat* are three names used to indicate *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute Reality. The *brāhmaṇas*, the Vedas and sacrifices were originally created from these three words. Therefore, dedicated followers of the Vedas always commence the performance of sacrifice, charity, austerity and other religious activity prescribed in the scriptures, by uttering the sacred syllable *om*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is generally explained that every human being can perform one of the three types of austerities, sacrifices, etc., according to their qualification. Among those who are in the mode of goodness, the *brahmavādīs* begin their performance of sacrifice with an invocation to *brahma*, or God. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān says that

saintly persons remember and honour Him by the threefold invocation of *brahma*: *om*, *tat*, *sat*.

Throughout the invocations of the Vedas, the renowned, sacred syllable *om* is prominent and is certainly the name of *brahma*. *Tat* (*brahma*) is well known as the cause of the universe. It also removes *atat* (*māyā*). *Sat* is described in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.2.1) as follows: “O gentle one, in the beginning there was only *sat* (the Supreme Absolute Eternal Reality).”

The *brāhmaṇas*, the Vedas and a host of sacrifices were created solely from *brahma*, the Supreme Lord, who is represented by the names *om*, *tat* and *sat*. Consequently, the current followers of the Vedas perform *yajñas* by uttering the sacred syllable *om*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Please listen as I explain the import of these verses. The performance of austerity, sacrifice, charity and taking food are each of three types: *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. The faith with which the conditioned living entities perform these activities, be it first, second or third class, remains contaminated by the modes and is worthless. These activities only become purposeful in attaining the stage of fearlessness, in the form of the purification of one’s existence, when they are performed with *nirguṇā-śraddhā*, that is, with faith that gives rise to *bhakti*. It is ordained throughout scripture that prescribed duties should be performed with such transcendental faith, or *śraddhā*. Scripture contains three principles that indicate *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute Truth: *om*, *tat* and *sat*. These three names also describe the *brāhmaṇas*, the Vedas and sacrifice.

“*Śraddhā*, or faith, that causes one to neglect the codes of scripture is contaminated by the modes of nature. It does not even remotely aim to attain the Supreme and will only yield the desired material result. Therefore, in the performance of scripturally prescribed activities, unflinching faith is imperative. Your doubt in scripture and your lack of faith arise due to a lack of proper discrimination. Therefore, followers of the Vedas, who have *brahma* as the goal, perform all their activities as prescribed in scripture, such as sacrifice, charity and austerities, by chanting the sacred syllable *om*.”

VERSE 25

तदित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाक्षिभिः ॥ २५ ॥

*tad ity anabhisandhāya phalam yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
dāna-kriyāś ca vīvidhāḥ kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ*

tat – the syllable *tat*; *iti* – thus; *anabhisandhāya* – without desiring; *phalam* – of the fruit [of their activities]; *yajña-tapaḥ* – sacrifice, austerities; *kriyāḥ* – religious practices; *dāna-kriyāḥ* – charitable deeds; *ca* – and; *vīvidhāḥ* – various kinds; *kriyante* – are done; *mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ* – those desirous of liberation.

While uttering the syllable *tat*, those seeking liberation perform various types of austerities, sacrifice, charity and other such religious activities without any desire for the fruit.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: As described in the previous verse, *yajña* and other religious activities should be performed by uttering the word *tat*. The word *anabhisandhāya* means that one should perform one's various prescribed duties without desiring their result.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The word *idam* refers to this visible world, and *tat* refers to *brahma* (Reality), which is beyond this world. *Yajñas* must only be performed for the purpose of attaining *para-tattva*, the Supreme Reality.

VERSE 26

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत् प्रयुज्यते ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ २६ ॥

*sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyate
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sac-chabdaḥ pārtha yujyate*

sat-bhāve – in the sense of the quality of *brahma*, the Supreme Absolute Truth; *sādhu-bhāve* – in the sense of the nature of the *sādhu*, the devotee of *brahma*; *ca* – and; *sat* – the word *sat*; *iti* – thus; *etat* – this; *prayujyate* –

is used; *praśaste* – in auspicious; *karmani* – activities; *tathā* – also; *sat-sabdah* – the word *sat*; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *yujyate* – is used.

O Pārtha, the word *sat* refers to the defining quality of the Supreme Absolute Truth and His worshippers. *Sat* is also used in connection with auspicious acts.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The word *sat* represents *brahma* and is used in auspicious or praiseworthy acts, both material and transcendental. To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking these two verses, the first beginning with *sad-bhāve*. *Sad-bhāve* (having the nature of eternal Reality) is an appropriate description for *brahma* and for the worshippers of *brahma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: The sacred syllable *om* is the name of the Absolute Truth. He is also called *tat*. In the same way, the word *sat* indicates that He exists eternally and that He is the cause of everything. He alone is the true entity, *sat-vastu*. This is also stated in the Śrūtis: “*sad eva saumya idam agra āsīta* – O gentle one, previously this material world existed within Him, who is one without a second, and before the creation, there was only Him, who has an eternal (*sat*) form” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1). When this eternal truth (*sat*) is all that exists in a person’s heart, that person is a *sādhu*. It is also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25) *satām prasaṅgān*. Here also the word *sat* is used to indicate those devotees of Bhagavān who have realized the Absolute Truth. In general, auspicious acts in this material world are also known as *sat-kārya*. In *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, a prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and the protector of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava scriptural conceptions, defines *sat* as follows: “The one-pointed devotees of Śrī Govinda are devoted to *sat* (eternal) thoughts. Thus, because all their activities are performed for the pleasure of Bhagavān, their activities are called *sat*. All other activities are *asat*, and therefore, they are forbidden.”

In this regard, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining the meaning of the word *sat* in these two verses, the first beginning with the word *sad-bhāve*. “O Pārtha, the word *sat* is used for *sad-bhāva* (that which aims at *brahma*) and also for *sādhu-bhāva* (the supremely virtuous nature

and activities of Kṛṣṇa's one-pointed and surrendered devotees). In the same way, the word *sat* is also used for auspicious acts.”

The word *sat* is used for *brahma*, the Absolute Truth. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is omnipotent, the cause of all causes and the support and basis of all *rasa*, is Himself the complete eternal entity. The word *sat* is also used for His associates, His abode, all of His incarnations (*avatāras*), the abodes of those *avatāras*, His pure, one-pointed devotees, the presiding deity of the *gāyatrī-mantra*, *brāhmaṇas*, *bhakti* and so forth. It is also used for Śrī Bhagavān's name, qualities, form, pastimes and so forth. *Om tat sat* is uttered while giving initiation (*dīkṣā*) to a faithful person or while giving him the sacred thread. Śrī *gurudeva*, who bestows the *gāyatrī-mantra* and *hari-nāma*, is also called *sat* (i.e. he is *sad-guru*, a bona fide spiritual master). The disciple who accepts these *mantras* is called *sat-śiṣya*, and the process of *dīkṣā* is called *sat*, or *sad-anuṣṭhāna* – spiritual rite, or ceremony. In this way, scripture accepts the use of the word *sat* in all devotional sentiments (*bhāvas*), services, activities and objects related to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

VERSE 27

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७ ॥

yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sad iti cocyate
karma caiva tad-arthīyaṁ sad ity evābhidhīyate

yajñe – in sacrifice; *tapasi* – in austerity; *dāne* – in charity; *ca* – and; *sthitiḥ* – sacrifices and other religious acts; *sat* – spiritual, virtuous, or eternal; *iti* – as; *ca ucyate* – is also spoken of; *karma* – actions (like cleaning the temple of the Lord); *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *tad-arthīyam* – appropriate for the service of *brahma* (the Supreme Lord); *sat* – *sat*; *iti* – as; *eva abhidhīyate* – certainly described.

Steadiness in the performance of sacrifice, austerity and charity is also known as *sat*. And activities such as cleansing the temple for the pleasure of *brahma* (Śrī Bhagavān) are also called *sat*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Sthitiḥ* means ‘being steadfast in the performance of sacrifice, etc’. *Tad-arthīyaṁ karma* means ‘serving *brahma* (Śrī Bhagavān) by performing activities such as cleaning the temple’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura says, “The import of the word *sat* can also be applied to sacrifice, austerities and charity, if they are performed for the satisfaction of *brahma* if not, they are all *asat* (useless). All mundane activities are contrary to the *jīva*’s *sva-rūpa*, or intrinsic, spiritual nature. When one resolves to serve *brahma*, one engages in those activities that arouse transcendental devotion. They then become useful in purifying the living entity’s existence, that is, in bestowing perfection, or service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, upon him.”

VERSE 28

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत्।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ २८ ॥

*aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha*

aśraddhayā – without faith; *hutam* – sacrificial fire (as an oblation to Śrī Bhagavān); *dattam* – charity; *tapah* – austerity; *taptam* – undergone; *kṛtam* – done; *ca* – and; *yat* – which; *asad* – impermanent; *iti* – as; *ucyate* – is described; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *na* – nor; *ca* – and whatever else; *tat* – that; *pretya* – in the next world; *na u* – nor; *iha* – in this world.

O son of Pṛthā, sacrifice, austerity, charity or any other acts performed without faith are called *asad*. Such activities give no transcendental result, either in this world or the next.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “I have heard about *sat-karma*, spiritually virtuous deeds, but what is *asad-karma*?” Expecting this question from Arjuna, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *aśraddhayā*. All fire *yajñas* (*hutam*), charity (*dattam*), penances (*tapah*) and anything else that is done without faith, is *asad*. This means that

although *yajña* may be performed, it is not a *yajña* in truth; charity may be given, but it is not really charity; austerities may be performed, but it is not actually austerity; and whatever else may be done is in fact useless, if performed without faith. It does not even give good results in this world, what to speak of the next: *tat na pretya no iha*.

The present chapter explains that the various types of prescribed activities performed with *śraddhā* in the mode of goodness lead to liberation, or *mokṣa*.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's
Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā (the commentary that gives pleasure
 to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons)
 on the Seventeenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: All activities performed with the purpose of serving Bhagavān, *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas, such as collecting alms, digging wells and ponds, making flower and Tulasī gardens, planting trees and building temples, are *tad-arthīyam-karma*, activities performed for His satisfaction, and they are *sat*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, all activities, sacrifices, charity and austerities that are performed without *nirguṇā-śraddhā*, faith that is transcendental to the modes, are *asat*, temporary and useless. Such activities never bring any benefit either now in this world, or in the future, in the next world. Therefore, scripture instructs us in *nirguṇā-śraddhā*. If one discards the injunctions of scripture, it means that he has abandoned *nirguṇā-śraddhā*, which is the seed of the wish-fulfilling creeper of devotion.”

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
 by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
 on the Seventeenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



Mokṣa-Yoga

The Yoga of Liberation

VERSE I

अर्जुन उवाच—

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम्।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

arjuna uvāca –

*sannyāsasya mahā-bāho tattvam icchāmi veditum
tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pṛthak keśi-niṣūdana*

arjuna uvāca – Arjuna said; *sannyāsasya* – of renunciation of action; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed; *tattvam* – principle; *icchāmi* – I desire; *veditum* – to know; *tyāgasya* – of renunciation of the fruits of action; *ca* – and; *hr̥ṣīkeśa* – O master of the senses; *pṛthak* – distinctly; *keśi-niṣūdana* – O slayer of the Keśi demon.

Arjuna said: O mighty-armed one, O slayer of Keśi, O Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses, I wish to understand clearly the distinction between the principle of renunciation of action (*sannyāsa*) and the principle of renouncing the fruits of action (*tyāga*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This chapter explains the following subjects: the three types of *sannyāsa*, *jñāna* and *karma*, the conclusive understanding of liberation (*mukti*) and the most confidential essence of *bhakti*.

In the previous chapter, Śrī Bhagavān said, “After becoming devoid of all material desires, those who seek liberation perform various types of sacrifice, give in charity and engage in penances, while uttering the

word *tat*” (*Gītā* 17.25). In Śrī Bhagavān’s statement, *mokṣa-kāṅkṣī* (a seeker of liberation) is used to indicate a *sannyāsī* only. But if this word refers to someone other than the *sannyāsī*, then who is that person? Śrī Bhagavān says in the *Gītā* (12.11), “*sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān* – with a controlled mind, you should engage in your prescribed duty, renouncing the fruit of all action.”

Arjuna is now inquiring from the Supreme Lord about those who renounce the fruits of all their activities (referred to in *Gītā* 12.11). Of what kind is the renunciation (*tyāga*) of such renunciants? And of what kind is the *sannyāsa* of such *sannyāsīs* (referred in *Gītā* 17.25)? Arjuna, being inquisitive and wise, spoke this verse beginning with *sannyāsasya* in order to understand these topics clearly. He has used the word *pṛthak* to mean, “If the words *sannyāsa* and *tyāga* have different meanings, then I wish to know the truth of their respective natures. Even if, in Your opinion or in the opinion of others, they have the same meaning, I still wish to understand the difference between the two. O Hṛṣikeśa, You alone are the prompter of my intelligence, so therefore, this doubt has only arisen by Your inspiration. O Keśi-niṣūdana, killer of the Keśi demon, kindly destroy this doubt of mine in the same way that You destroyed Keśi. O mighty-armed one, You are supremely powerful, whereas my power is miniscule. The relationship between us is one of friendship because we have some similar qualities; but my qualities cannot compare to Your qualities, such as omniscience. I am only able to ask You this question without hesitation because You have bestowed upon me a little of Your mood of friendship (*sakhya-bhāva*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In some parts of the *Gītā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given instructions about renunciation of action (*karma-sannyāsa*), and in other parts He has given the instruction to not completely abandon action but to renounce fruits of all action. From a superficial perspective, there seems to be a contradiction between these two instructions. Arjuna wants Kṛṣṇa to remove the doubts of those people with gross, mundane intelligence, so he is asking these questions about the real meaning of *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*, about the difference between them, and about their unique characteristics.

The names Keśi-niṣūdana, Hṛṣīkeśa and Mahā-bāhuḥ used by Arjuna in this verse have specific deep meanings. Kṛṣṇa killed a frightening and wicked demon called Keśi; therefore, He is called Mahā-bāhuḥ, ‘supremely powerful’. Arjuna thus says, “O Śrī Bhagavān, You are fully capable of annihilating the demon of my doubts. This doubt has arisen in my heart only by Your inspiration, because You, Hṛṣīkeśa, are the prompter and master of all my senses. Only You can completely remove all my doubts and illuminate the truth of the soul (*ātma-tattva*), the truth of the Supreme Lord (*bhagavat-tattva*) and the truth of devotional service (*bhakti-tattva*) within my heart.” This is the hidden meaning behind these three terms of address. If, like Arjuna, a person surrenders to Bhagavān and prays to Him for transcendental knowledge, that is *premā-bhakti*, then Śrī Bhagavān will surely fulfil his desire.

VERSE 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

śrī bhagavān uvāca –

kāmyānām karmanām nyāsam sannyaśam kavayo viduḥ

sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam prāhus tyāgam vicakṣaṇāḥ

śrī bhagavān uvāca – the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *kāmyānām* – of fruitive; *karmanām* – activities; *nyāsam* – the abandonment; *sannyaśam* – as renunciation; *kavayaḥ* – the sages; *viduḥ* – understand; *sarva-karma-phala* – of the fruit of all activities; *tyāgam* – giving up; *prāhuḥ* – they declare; *tyāgam* – detachment; *vicakṣaṇāḥ* – enlightened.

Śrī Bhagavān said: According to enlightened sages, completely giving up all fruitive action is renunciation (*sannyāsa*), whereas to abandon the fruits of all action is called detachment (*tyāga*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: At first, to explain the different meanings of the two words *sannyāsa* and *tyāga* on the basis of the ancient doctrines, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *kāmyānām*.

The term *sannyāsa* means to completely give up all *kāmya-karma* (materially motivated action), such as performing a *yajña* to beget a son or attain the heavenly planets. But it does not imply that one should give up *nitya-karma* (obligatory duties), such as remembering *gāyatrī-mantras*.

The term *tyāga* refers to abandoning the fruits of all materially motivated action and obligatory actions but not abandoning the activities themselves. Even the performance of *nitya-karma* (one's obligatory duties) yields fruit, such as the attainment of *Pitṛ-loka*, the planet of the forefathers, and getting free from sin. This is expounded throughout the Śrutis. Therefore, *tyāga* means to perform all actions without desiring their result. *Sannyāsa*, however, means to perform all one's obligatory duties (*nitya-karma*) without desiring the results and to give up fruitive action altogether. This is the difference between these two terms.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān gives the opinion of highly exalted personalities who are fully conversant with the true principle. Renunciation (*sannyāsa*) certainly means to not completely abandon one's obligatory duties (*nitya-karma*) or occasional religious duties incurred by specific circumstances (*naimittika-karma*), but to give up fruitive action (*sakāma-karma*) altogether. And detachment (*tyāga*) means to not abandon fruitive action (the selfishly motivated execution of that duty) or obligatory and occasional actions altogether but to simply give up their results. Deliberation on both of these concepts is visible in various places throughout scripture. However, here, by knowing the opinion of Śrī Bhagavān Himself, as well as that of His devotees, who are conversant with the principles of Truth, it is possible to have absolute reconciliation of the above mentioned concepts.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by making Uddhava the object of His instruction, has explained the three types of *yoga*, namely *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*, according to the eligibility of different individuals. For those who are attached to *karma* and its results, He instructs (*niṣkāma*) *karma-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through offering the fruit of one's prescribed action to the Lord. For those supremely renounced persons who are completely detached from the

results of *karma*, prescribed duties, He instructs *jñāna-yoga*, the path of spiritual advancement through transcendental knowledge. But for those moderate persons who are neither overly attached to the results of their prescribed duty nor who are dry renunciants, He instructs *bhakti-yoga*, the path of loving devotion to the Supreme Lord.

Generally, in the initial stages, a conditioned soul only has the qualification (*adhikāra*) to perform *karma*, his prescribed duty. In order to make him enter the stage (*adhikāra*) of *jñāna*, the instruction to relinquish the results of prescribed action (*karma-phala-tyāga*) and renounce action altogether (*karma-sannyāsa*) has been imparted. First, one should practise completely abandoning fruitive action (*sakāma-karma*) and then gradually, one should also renounce the fruits of obligatory and occasional duties (*nitya-* and *naimittika-karma*). A person's heart is purified after performing this practice for some time and he becomes situated on a higher platform, *jñāna*. His qualification to perform his prescribed duty (*karma*) then ceases. In that stage it becomes possible for him to renounce *karma* completely. According to the statement “*jñānam ca mayi sannyaset – jñāna* must also be renounced to attain Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.19.1), even *jñāna* should be renounced upon achieving perfection in it. However, unlike the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, those who practice *bhakti* do not need to renounce *bhakti* upon attaining perfection in it. Rather, in the perfected stage, *bhakti* is executed in its purest, most developed manner.

Therefore, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has made the following statements: “*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta* – one should continue to perform *karma* as long as he is not satiated by it or has not developed *śraddhā* in hearing and reciting topics about Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.9); “*jñāna-niṣṭho virakto vā* – the conduct of those dedicated to cultivating transcendental knowledge and thus detached and the conduct of My exclusive devotees is beyond the range of rules and regulations.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.18.28); “*yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād* – a person who delights in the self, however, who remains contented and satisfied in the self, has no duties to perform” (*Gītā* 3.17); and “*sarva-dharmān parityajya* – completely abandon everything and take exclusive shelter of Me” (*Gītā* 18.66). The *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha* also states “*na karmāṇi tyajeta yogī karmabhist yajyate hy asāv iti* – a *yogī* should not give up his

prescribed duty because the prescribed duty itself will renounce the *yogī* when he has attained an elevated level.”

Generally, scripture does not instruct conditioned souls to give up their prescribed duty; rather, it instructs them to just give up fruitive actions or the results of their actions. This is because generally, the living entity in his bound state is very much attached to performing fruitive action (*sakāma-karma*). If, in the beginning stage of his practice, he is instructed to give up the fruit of his action, he will not be able to embrace this. Therefore, such instructions are given to gradually bring him to a higher platform.

Through this step-by-step process, by first practising the renunciation of the fruits of action, the heart becomes purified. Thereafter, it is only possible to give up action completely when one achieves *ātma-rati* (the happiness of the self). For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān gives the instruction *na buddhi-bhedam janayet...* – one should not instruct less intelligent people, who are attached to *karma*, or scripturally prescribed action, to give it up. Due to their immature intelligence, they will become confused and deviate from the spiritual path. Rather, by example, you should instruct them how to work without attachment” (*Gītā* 3,26). However, one should also remember that only for a person who has developed the qualification to engage in *kevalā-bhakti*, it is possible to completely give up all prescribed action (*nitya-karma*, *naimittika-karma* and *kāmya-karma*).

It is for this reason alone that the verse *sarva-dharmān parityajya* is spoken at the end of this chapter. In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, “When a person becomes qualified to perform unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord, then, as a result of the good fortune that has come about through the mercy of great saints, he is not inflicted by fault or sin even if he does not perform any of his regular prescribed duties (*nitya-karma*). In fact, if in that state he continues to engage in his scripturally prescribed regular and occasional duties (*nitya-naimittika-karma*), he incurs sin, because by doing so, he transgresses My instruction. In other words, the performance of *nitya-naimittika-karma* is not favourable to the execution of *kevalā-bhakti*.”

Here, *nitya-karma* refers to daily obligatory activities such as the worship of various demigods and goddesses as described in the section of the Vedas dealing with path of *karma* (fruitive activity). *Naimittika-karma* means ‘occasional religious activities’ such as the worship of the forefathers and demigods in the *śrāddha* ceremony (performed for deceased family members).

A person enters into the divine realm of pure devotion (*kevalā-bhakti*) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa only when he completely abandons these activities.

By studying *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* by Śrīmad Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, the great Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* and protector of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava conceptions, we can understand that no authoritative scripture gives any injunctions for the pure, one-pointed devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to worship the forefathers and demigods, regardless of the devotees’ *varṇa* or *āśrama*. Rather, if the exclusive devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa engage in the worship of the forefathers or demigods, it becomes an offence to devotional service (*sevā-aparādha*) and to the holy name (*nāma-aparādha*).

Śrīmad Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī uses evidence from scriptures to prove that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is pleased by a person’s exclusive devotion, that devotee does not incur any sinful reaction or commit the fault of negligence, even if he gives up all other prescribed action. Such one-pointed devotees attain an auspicious position, whether they are situated in this universe or beyond it.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “*Sannyāsa* means to completely give up all materially motivated fruitive activity (*kāmya-karma*) and perform regular (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) duties without desiring their fruit. *Tyāga* means to give up the fruit of all types of *karma* – regular (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) and fruitive (*kāmya*). Learned people explain this to be the difference between *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*.”

VERSE 3

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।
यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥३॥

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

tyājyaṁ – should be renounced; *doṣa-vat* – as a fault; *iti* – that; *eke* – some; *karma* – action; *prāhuḥ* – say; *manīṣiṇaḥ* – the intelligent (proponents of *sāṅkhya*); *yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma* – sacrifice, charity, austerity and action; *na tyājyaṁ* – should not be given up; *iti* – that; *ca* – and; *apare* – other followers of *mīmāṃsaka*.

Some thinkers, such as the *sāṅkhyavādīs*¹, say that since every action is covered by fault, action should be given up. Others, like the *mīmāṃsakas*², say that acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should never be given up.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is again discussing varying opinions regarding renunciation, in this verse beginning with *tyājyaṁ*. Some *sāṅkhyavādīs* have the opinion that *karma* should be completely given up because it possesses faults, such as violence. Others, like the *mīmāṃsakas*, say that activities such as sacrifice are not to be relinquished, because they are prescribed in scripture.

VERSE 4

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।
त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥४॥

*nīścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata-sattama
tyāgo hi puruṣa-vyāghra tri-vidhaḥ saṁprakīrtitaḥ*

nīścayaṁ – definite conclusion; *śṛṇu* – hear; *me* – My; *tatra* – on this point; *tyāge* – concerning renunciation; *bharata-sattama* – O best of Bharata's line; *tyāgaḥ* – renunciation; *hi* – indeed; *puruṣa-vyāghra* – O foremost among men; *tri-vidhaḥ* – of three kinds; *saṁprakīrtitaḥ* – declared.

¹ *Sāṅkhyavādīs* analyze matter and conclude that matter is the cause of creation. Therefore, their philosophy is atheistic.

² The *mīmāṃsaka* philosophers emphasize pious action, which they think obliges God to reciprocate. In fact, they declare this to be the path to God.

O best of the Bharatas, hear My conclusive opinion concerning renunciation. O foremost among men, renunciation is said to be of three kinds.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is stating His opinion in this verse beginning with *nīścayam*. Renunciation is of three kinds: *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. Śrī Bhagavān says in the *Gītā* (18.7) that it is not appropriate to renounce scripturally prescribed regular duties (*nitya-karma*). The renunciation of those who give up those duties due to bewilderment is described as having the quality of ignorance. In the *Gītā* (18.7), renunciation is referred to as *sannyāsa*. Therefore, according to the opinion of Śrī Bhagavān, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa* are synonymous.

VERSE 5

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥५॥

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

yajña – sacrifice; *dāna* – charity; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *karma* – action; *na tyājyam* – should not be given up; *kāryam eva* – should be performed; *tat* – that; *yajñaḥ* – sacrifice; *dānam* – charity; *tapaḥ* – austerity; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *pāvanāni* – purifiers (of the heart); *manīṣiṇām* – of the wise.

The practice of sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be given up, for these activities are obligatory. Indeed, sacrifice, charity and austerity purify the hearts of even the wise.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: According to the opinion of Śrī Bhagavān, even within *kāmya-karma*, or selfishly motivated prescribed duties, the *sāttvika* acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should all be performed without desiring their results. He says that the performance of sacrifice and so forth is obligatory because it purifies the heart.

VERSE 6

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

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

etāni – these; *api tu* – however; *karmāṇi* – activities; *saṅgam* – attachment (the feeling that one is the doer); *tyaktvā* – giving up; *phalāni* – to the results; *ca* – and; *kartavyāni* – should be performed; *iti* – such; *me* – My; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *niścitam* – definite; *matam* – opinion; *uttamam* – supreme.

O Pārtha, one should perform all of these activities, having given up the ego of being the doer and abandoning attachment to the results of action. This is My definite and supreme opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with *etāny api*, Śrī Bhagavān is now explaining how these activities can purify the heart. The word *saṅgam* means that one should perform prescribed duties without any desire for the result and without maintaining the false ego of being the doer of action. *Tyāga* is when both fruitive desires and the ego of being the doer are relinquished. It is also called *sannyāsa*.

VERSE 7

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।
मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥७॥

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

niyatasya – of obligatory action; *tu* – indeed; *sannyāsaḥ* – renunciation; *karmaṇaḥ* – *nitya-karma*, daily purifactory action (such as *sandhya-vandana*, chanting of *gāyatrī-mantra*); *na* – not; *upapadyate* – to be done; *mohāt* – out of delusion; *tasya* – of that; *parityāgaḥ* – renunciation; *tāmasaḥ* – governed by the quality of darkness; *parikīrtitaḥ* – is described.

Indeed, renouncing obligatory duties is not proper. If out of delusion a person does so, he is said to be controlled by the quality of darkness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Of the three types of renunciation, renunciation in the mode of ignorance is being explained here. *Mohāt* refers to renunciation that is performed in ignorance of the purport of scripture. A *sannyāsī* can relinquish the performance of selfishly motivated fruitive activity (*kāmya-karma*), considering it unnecessary, but it is not proper for him to give up his regular prescribed duty (*nitya-karma*). This is implied by the word *tu*. *Mohāt* means ‘ignorance’. The result of *tāmasika* renunciation is also ignorance, and the desired knowledge is not achieved.

VERSE 8

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।
 स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥८॥
duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāya-kleśa-bhayāt tyajet
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam naiva tyāga-phalam labhet

duḥkham – a cause of misery; *iti* – as; *eva* – certainly; *yat* – which; *karma* – work; *kāya-kleśa-bhayāt* – out of fear of bodily suffering; *tyajet* – may give up; *sah* – one; *kṛtvā* – having performed; *rājasam* – in the quality of passion; *tyāgam* – renunciation; *na eva* – certainly does not; *tyāga-phalam* – the result of renunciation; *labhet* – obtain.

When a person considers his *karma* (scripturally prescribed duty) to be a source of misery and relinquishes it out of fear of bodily discomfort, then his renunciation is considered to be in the mode of passion, and he fails to obtain the actual result of renunciation.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is compulsory to perform one’s regular prescribed duty, the performance of which incurs a good result. No fault is incurred by its performance. Despite knowing this, some persons think, “But why should I perform that duty and give

unnecessary pain to my body?” The renunciation of such persons is in the mode of ignorance. They do not attain knowledge, which is the result of renunciation.

VERSE 9

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।
सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥९॥

kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate 'rjuna
saṅgam tyaktvā phalaṁ caiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ

kāryam – understanding it to be a duty; *iti* – as; *eva* – certainly; *yat* – which; *karma niyatam* – *nitya-karma*, obligatory action; *kriyate* – is performed; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *saṅgam* – the ego of being the doer; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *phalam* – desiring the result; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *saḥ* – that; *tyāgaḥ* – renunciation; *sāttvikaḥ* – the mode of goodness; *mataḥ* – considered.

O Arjuna, the renunciation of one who performs his obligatory responsibilities out of a sense of duty, renouncing all attachment to the fruits of action as well as to the ego of being the doer, is considered to be in the mode of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: ‘It is imperative to do this.’ When *nitya-karma*, or obligatory action, is performed with this disposition, it is in the mode of goodness. Such people attain knowledge, which is the desired result of renunciation.

VERSE 10

न द्वेष्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।
त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥१०॥

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

na dveṣṭi – does not hate; *akuśalam* – troublesome; *karma* – work; *kuśale* – work that gives happiness; *na* – nor; *anuṣajjate* – is he attached; *tyāgī* –

renunciant; *sattva-samāviṣṭaḥ* – absorbed in the quality of goodness; *medhāvī* – fixed intelligence; *chinna-saṁśayaḥ* – whose doubts are dispelled.

That renunciant who is immersed in the quality of goodness, whose intelligence is steady and who is free from all doubts, neither hates work that is troublesome nor becomes attached to work that gives happiness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In this verse beginning with the words *na dveṣṭy*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the characteristics of those who are steadfast in *sāttvika* renunciation. *Akuśalam* means that they are not adverse to performing activities that cause pain or discomfort, such as taking a morning bath in winter. And *kuśale* means they do not become attached to activities that give pleasure, such as taking a cold bath in summer.

VERSE 11

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११ ॥

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

na – not; *hi* – certainly; *deha-bhṛtā* – by an embodied being; *śakyam* – possible; *tyaktum* – to renounce; *karmāṇi* – activities; *aśeṣataḥ* – completely; *yaḥ* – who; *tu* – however; *karma-phala-tyāgī* – renounces the results of his activities; *saḥ* – he; *tyāgī* – a renunciant; *iti* – as; *abhidhīyate* – is said to be.

An embodied being cannot entirely renounce action, but he who gives up attachment to the results of his actions is said to be a true renunciant.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Since it is impossible for the embodied *jīva* to completely renounce all activity, he should only perform the activities prescribed in the scriptures. Śrī Bhagavān speaks the verse beginning with *na hi* to emphasize this. To abandon all activity is impossible.

Previously, in the *Gītā* (3.5), Śrī Bhagavān said, “*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt* – one cannot exist for even a moment without performing work.”

VERSE 12

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥१२॥

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

aniṣṭam – undesired (hell); *iṣṭam* – desired (heaven); *miśram* – mixed (the middle planets such as Earth); *ca* – and; *tri-vidham* – the threefold; *karmaṇaḥ* – of action; *phalam* – results; *bhavati* – exist; *atyāginām* – for those who are not renounced; *pretya* – after death; *na* – not; *tu* – but; *sannyāsinām* – for the renunciants; *kvacit* – at any time.

After casting off the mortal coil, those who have not practised renunciation as previously described attain three kinds of results: hell, the heavenly planets or a human birth in this world. Those who are true renunciants, however, never attain such a result.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Fault is incurred when one does not perform renunciation like this. One receives misery in hell (*aniṣṭam*), temporary happiness in the higher planets (*iṣṭam*) or the combined happiness and misery of human life (*miśram*). This only applies to those who are not renunciants. It does not apply to the renunciants themselves. *Pretya* means ‘the next world’.

VERSE 13

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥१३॥

*pañcāitāni mahā-bāho kāraṇāni nibodha me
sāṅkhyae kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām*

pañca – five; *etāni* – these; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed Arjuna; *kāraṇāni* – causes; *nibodha* – be informed; *me* – from Me; *sāṅkhye* – in the analysis of action within Vedānta; *kṛta-ante* – for ending the actions and reactions (of fruitive work); *proktāni* – described; *siddhaye* – for the accomplishment; *sarva-karmaṇām* – of all actions.

O mighty armed Arjuna, now hear from Me of the five causes involved in the accomplishment of any action. They are described in the Vedānta, and understanding them assists one in cutting the entanglement of the action and reaction of fruitive work.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: How can a person who performs his prescribed duty not receive its result? Expecting this question, Śrī Bhagavān is now speaking five verses beginning with *pañcāitāni* to establish that when one becomes free from the false ego of thinking oneself the doer, one does not become implicated in the results of *karma*. “Hear from Me about the five causes of action, which are responsible for the completion of all activities.”

That which fully explains Paramātmā is called *sāṅkhya* [*saṅ* – completely; *khyā* – describes], also known as *Vedānta-śāstra*. *Sāṅkhya* explains how to nullify the reaction to activity that has already been performed.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is impossible for the embodied conditioned soul to relinquish all work. Furthermore, it is detrimental and inauspicious for an unqualified person to relinquish all types of work. Those in the initial stage of *yoga* practice are only qualified to engage in *karma*, prescribed duty. For this reason, they are instructed to abandon *akarma*, the non-performance of those duties, and *vikarma*, forbidden acts, and to perform their regular and occasional duties (*nitya-* and *naimittika-karma*). When a person’s attachment to the fruits of his prescribed duty gradually ceases, it is auspicious for him to continue to perform the *karma* prescribed in scripture, simply as a matter of duty. According to Kṛṣṇa, the symptom of a *sannyāsī* and a *yogī* is that they perform *karma* as a matter of duty, with no desire to enjoy the results. Those who can do this are real *sannyāsīs* and *yogīs*. When such persons obtain the association of

Vaiṣṇavas, they can enter the realm of *bhakti* and very quickly attain the supreme destination.

VERSE 14

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम्।
विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥१४॥

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

adhiṣṭhānam – the body; *tathā* – also; *kartā* – the doer (the soul and dull matter bound together by the knot of the false ego); *karaṇam* – the senses; *ca* – and; *pṛthak* – distinct; *vidham* – various; *vividhāś* – manifold; *ca* – and; *pṛthak* – distinct; *ceṣṭāḥ* – activities (such as the actions of the incoming and outgoing breaths); *daivam* – the indwelling witness, the Supersoul; *ca eva atra* – certainly amidst these other causes; *pañcamam* – the fifth.

The body, the doer, the senses, the various types of endeavours, and in the midst of them, the indwelling prompter (*Antaryāmī*), are the five causes of action mentioned in Vedānta.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān now enumerates those causes of action. *Adhiṣṭhānam* means the body, and *kartā* (the agent, or doer) refers to the knot of false ego, which ties the conscious soul to inert matter. *Karaṇam* means ‘the senses such as the eyes and ears’, *pṛthag-vidham* means ‘various types of endeavours’, that is, the function of the life-air such as the incoming and outgoing breath, and *daivam* means ‘*Antaryāmī*, the indwelling prompter of everyone’. These are the five causes of action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The five causes of action mentioned in the previous verse are explained here in detail. It should be understood that the word *adhiṣṭhānam* in this verse means ‘this body’, for action can only be performed when a conditioned soul becomes embodied. The soul situated in this body is called the doer, because it is he who performs action (*karma*), even though in

reality the pure soul has nothing to do with action. Due to his false ego only, he thinks himself the doer, and in this way he becomes the enjoyer of the results of his action.

Therefore, the soul is called both the knower and the doer. This is also mentioned in the Śrutis: “*eṣa hi draṣṭā sraṣṭā* – it is actually the soul who sees and acts” (*Praśna Upaniṣad* 4.9). The *Vedānta-sūtra* also states, “*jñō 'ta eva* – the soul is truly the knower” (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.3.17), and “*karttā śāstrārthavattvāt* – the *jīvātmā* is understood as the doer, as confirmed in scripture” (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.3.31). All these statements substantiate the above conclusion. The senses are the instruments used to perform action. The soul accomplishes various types of work only with the help of the senses. Each activity involves a separate endeavour, but each activity depends on the sanction of Parameśvara, who is situated within everyone’s heart as a witness, friend and controller. Therefore, Parameśvara alone is the supreme cause. Those who are inspired by an exalted, perfected personality who is fully conversant with scriptural conclusions, and also by Parameśvara, are able to ascertain what action is obligatory for them and what is not. Thus they engage in the performance of *bhakti* and very quickly attain the supreme destination. They are not bound by the reactions of their good or bad deeds.

VERSE 15

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १५ ॥

*śarīra-vāṅ-manobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ
nyāyyam vā viparītam vā pañcaite tasya hetavaḥ*

śarīra-vāṅ-manobhiḥ – with his body, words or mind; *yat* – whatever; *karma* – activity; *prārabhate* – undertakes; *naraḥ* – a man; *nyāyyam* – virtuous; *vā* – or; *viparītam* – improper; *vā* – or; *pañca* – five; *ete* – these; *tasya* – for; *hetavaḥ* – the causes.

These are the five causes behind whatever virtuous or improper actions a person may perform with his body, speech or mind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: *Śarīra-vān-manobhiḥ*. There are three types of action: action performed by the body (*kāyika*), action performed by speech (*vācika*) and action performed by the mind (*mānasika*). That action can further be categorized as virtuous (*dharmika*) or wicked (*adharmika*). These are the five causes of action.

VERSE 16

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।
पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १६ ॥

*tatraivaṁ sati kartāram ātmānam kevalam tu yaḥ
paśyaty akṛta-buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatih*

tatra – then; *evam sati* – although this is so; *kartāram* – doer; *ātmānam* – himself; *kevalam* – the only; *tu* – indeed; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyati* – considers; *akṛta-buddhitvāt* – due to impure intelligence; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *paśyati* – properly see; *durmatih* – the foolish.

Although this is so, a foolish person whose intelligence is impure cannot properly understand this and considers that he alone performs all his actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Śrī Bhagavān says that although these five causes are behind all action, he who sees the pure soul – the living entity who has no association with matter – as the only doer is understood to be foolish (*durmatih*) due to impure intelligence. He does not see properly. Indeed, such an ignorant person is said to be blind.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: An ignorant person cannot understand that a separate, individual entity known as Paramātmā is situated in his heart as a witness, controller and friend, regulating all his activities. Even though the body, the doer, the various endeavours and the senses are all material causes of action, the prominent cause is Paramātmā. Thus, one should see that Paramātmā, who is situated within the heart, is the supreme cause of action, not just that these four material causes accomplish an action. Those who are unable to see

in this way think it is they who perform action, and thus they always remain agitated.

VERSE 17

यस्य नाहङ्कृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाल्लोकात्र हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ १७ ॥

yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvāpi sa imāl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate

yasya – whose; *na ahaṅkṛtaḥ* – without false ego as the doer; *bhāvaḥ* – consciousness; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *yasya* – whose; *na lipyate* – is unattached (to the result of action); *hatvā* – killing; *api* – even though; *saḥ* – he; *imān* – these; *lokān* – people; *na hanti* – does not slay; *na* – nor; *nibadhyate* – he is bound (by the result of action).

Even if he kills living beings, he who is free from the ego of being the doer and whose intelligence is not attached to the results of his activities does not truly kill, nor is he bound by the result of his action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Who, then, has purified intelligence, and who actually sees?” In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks the verse beginning with *yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvaḥ*. “One who does not possess the false ego of being the doer does not become attached to thinking, ‘This is pleasing; this is not pleasing.’ Therefore, he does not become bound by the results of *karma*. What more can I say in this regard? Whether the work he performs is auspicious or inauspicious, in reality, he is not the doer of that work. From a material perspective, it may seem that he kills these people, but from his own perspective he does not, because he is not motivated by selfish desires. Therefore, he does not become bound by the results of *karma*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Those who know themselves to be subservient to Parameśvara and who perform their work without a desire to reap the fruits and without the false ego of being the doer, are certainly intelligent. The results of *karma* cannot bind them.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O Arjuna, you were only in illusion about this battle because of your false ego. Had you been aware that the five factors I have described are the cause of all action, you would not have become so bewildered. Therefore, those whose intelligence is not implicated by the false ego of being the doer do not kill, even if they kill all of humanity; nor do they become bound by the result of such killing.”

VERSE 18

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ १८ ॥

jñānam jñeyam pariñātā tri-vidhā karma-codanā
karaṇam karma karteti tri-vidhaḥ karma-saṅgrahaḥ

jñānam – knowledge; *jñeyam* – the knowable; *pariñātā* – the knower; *tri-vidhā* – the three types; *karma-codanā* – impulses of action; *karaṇam* – the instrument; *karma* – the activity; *kartā* – the agent; *iti* – thus; *tri-vidhaḥ* – the threefold; *karma-saṅgrahaḥ* – basis of action.

Knowledge, the knowable and the knower constitute the threefold impetus to perform action. The instrument, the activity and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Therefore, in the opinion of Śrī Bhagavān, *sannyāsa*, or renunciation in the mode of goodness, is instructed for the *jñānīs*. But for devotees, however, complete renunciation of *karma-yoga* is recommended. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.32), Śrī Bhagavān says, “O Uddhava, those who give up their occupational duty as prescribed by Me in the Vedas, having carefully analyzed the positive and negative aspects of pious and sinful action, and who thus engage in worship of Me, are indeed *sattamaḥ*, the best among men.” Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has explained the meaning of this verse as follows: “Those who perform worship of Me, completely giving up their occupational duty as instructed by Me in the Vedas, are the best amongst men.”

Here a question arises. “If someone gives up his prescribed occupational duty out of ignorance or an atheistic propensity, will he still be considered as *sattamaḥ*, the best among men?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “No. Those who are *sattamaḥ* understand that favourable qualities such as purity of existence resulting from the performance of religious activities (prescribed duties according to *varṇa* and *āśrama*), as well as the discrepancies caused by the neglect of such activities, distract one from meditating upon Me. Those who understand this are *sattamaḥ*. They possess the firm determination that everything can be achieved by performing *bhakti* to Me, and they solely engage in worship of Me, giving up all other religious activities.”

The words *dharmam santyajya* in the above *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse (11.11.32) do not mean to merely give up the results of *dharma*, but to give up *dharma* itself. One should understand that there is no discrepancy involved in giving up the results of *dharma*. This is the opinion given in the statements of Bhagavān, and it is supported by those who have explained them. *Jñāna* certainly relies on purification of the heart. The performance of *niṣkāma-karma*, the selfless performance of prescribed action to achieve *jñāna*, enables one to achieve different levels of such purification, and *jñāna* increases in proportion to purity of heart. There is no other way for *jñāna* to appear. Therefore, it is even imperative for *sannyāsīs* to practise *niṣkāma-karma* for *jñāna* to appear in their hearts.

When the performance of *karma* has completely purified the heart, *karma* is no longer required. As also stated in the *Gītā* (6.3), “*Karma* is the *sādhana* for those who desire *jñāna-yoga*, but for those already situated in *jñāna*, the *sādhana* is to renounce this *karma*, since it causes a distraction.” Moreover, the *Gītā* (3.17) says, “There is no prescribed duty for one who derives pleasure from the self and who is satisfied and happy in the self alone.”

Bhakti, being supremely independent and extremely powerful, does not depend upon purity of heart. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39) states: “Those with transcendental faith, who hear Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes with the *gopīs* of Vraja, attain transcendental devotion to Him and thus very quickly become free from the disease of the heart: mundane lust.” How can this happen? First, transcendental devotion enters the heart of a person suffering from material lust and purifies it. Consequently,

the lust and unwanted desires (*anarthas*) of such a qualified person are destroyed. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.8.5) further states: “Kṛṣṇa enters the lotus-like hearts of the devotees through the ear and removes all their impurities, just as the autumn season purifies the rivers.”

Why, then, should the devotees engage in *karma* if *bhakti* alone purifies the heart? To clarify this point, the present verse is now spoken. Simply knowing that the soul is separate from the body does not comprise *jñāna*. Rather, one is to also understand *ātma-tattva*, the fundamental truth of the soul. The only real *jñānis* are those who have taken shelter of such knowledge. But the three constituents of *jñāna*, namely knowledge (*jñāna*), the object of knowledge (*jñeya*), and the knower (*jñātā*), also have a relationship with *karma*. To understand this is the duty of the *sannyāsīs*. For this purpose, Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with the word *jñānam*. Here the word *codanā* means ‘injunction’ or ‘process’. Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī says that the words *codanā* (injunction), *upadeśa* (instruction) and *vidhi* (rules and regulations) are synonymous.

Now Bhagavān Himself is explaining the second half of this verse, starting with *karaṇam karma*. *Jñāna* is that which helps us to know something. According to this definition, *jñāna* is the instrument of knowledge; *jñeya* (*jīvātma-tattva*) is the known; and one who knows this truth about the *jīvātmā* is *jñātā*, the knower, or possessor of knowledge.

There are three ingredients in an action: *karaṇa* (the object or instrument of action), *karma* (the action itself) and *kartā* (the subject or performer of action). These three factors, known as *karma-saṅgrahaḥ*, are related to *niškāma-karma*. This is the explanation of the compound word *karma-codanā*. In other words, the performance of *niškāma-karma-yoga* is based on these three principles: knowledge (*jñāna*), the object of knowledge (*jñeya*) and the knower (*jñātā*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The soul is an entity beyond the modes of nature, devoid of any material qualities. The inspiration for *karma*, the basis of *karma* and the result of *karma* are all products of the three modes of nature, so they have no constitutional relationship with the soul. The exclusive devotees of Bhagavān, who are completely surrendered to Him, have perfect knowledge of the soul. Although they

perform activities – by the will of Kṛṣṇa or for His pleasure – they are never called *karmīs* (materialists). The only appellation that adorns them is ‘*bhakta*’; therefore, they do not get entangled in the web of *karma*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “Knowledge (*jñāna*), the object of knowledge (*jñeya*) and the knower (*jñātā*) are the three impulses of action known as *karma-codanā*.

“The instrument (*karāṇa*), the object (*karma*) and the doer (*kartā*) comprise the threefold basis of *karma* known as *karma-saṅgrahaḥ*. Whatever action a person performs has two states: inspiration (*codanā*) and basis (*saṅgrahaḥ*). The process that precedes any action is called *codanā*. Inspiration is the subtle existence of action, and it is the faith that exists in the mind before the gross state of action manifests.

“The stage that precedes action is divided into three parts: (1) knowledge of the instrument of action; (2) the knowable object of action and (3) the knower of action. The external manifestation of action has three divisions: (1) *karāṇa* (the instrument), (2) *karma* (the object) and (3) *kartā* (the subject).”³

VERSE 19

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।
प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ १९ ॥

jñānam karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇa-bhedataḥ
procyate guṇa-saṅkhyāne yathāvac chr̥ṇu tāny api

jñānam – knowledge; *karma* – action; *ca* – and; *kartā* – the agent; *ca* – and; *tridhā* – threefold; *eva* – certainly; *guṇa-bhedataḥ* – according to the divisions of the three material qualities; *procyate* – are declared to be; *guṇa-saṅkhyāne* – in the scriptures which analytically describe the three

³ Example: The student picks up the book. In this action there is knowledge of the instrument of action (the student’s hand), the knowable object of action (a book and how to pick it up) and the knower (the student). Then there is the activity itself. These three combined are known as *saṅgrahaḥ*. The student’s hand is the instrument (*karāṇa*), the book is the object (*karma*), and the student is the subject (*kartā*).

qualities of material nature; *yathāvat* – as they are; *śṛṇu* – you should hear; *tāni* – of these; *api* – also.

The scriptures that analytically discuss the three qualities of nature also say that knowledge, action and the performer of action are governed by the qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance. Now hear from Me about their factual condition.

VERSE 20

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २० ॥

sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikam bhāvam avyayam īkṣate
avibhaktam vibhakteṣu taj jñānam viddhi sāttvikam

sarva-bhūteṣu – living beings; *yena* – by which knowledge; *ekam* – one; *bhāvam* – nature; *avyayam* – imperishable; *īkṣate* – one sees; *avibhaktam* – undivided; *vibhakteṣu* – among the divided; *tat* – that; *jñānam* – knowledge; *viddhi* – you should understand; *sāttvikam* – the quality of goodness.

By knowledge in the mode of goodness, one sees that the numerous souls in various bodies, such as humans, demigods, animals and birds, are all indivisible and imperishable, and that they all possess the same quality of consciousness, although they are each individually experiencing the different results of their actions.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Here, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining knowledge in the mode of goodness. *Ekam bhāvam* means that the same soul sequentially accepts different forms, such as that of a demigod, a human being or that of an animal, bird, etc., in the lower species, in order to undergo the various results of their individual *karma*. Although the soul lives in the midst of that which is perishable, he is not perishable. Individually, the various living entities are different (*vibhakteṣu*), and at the same time they are all identical (*eka-rūpam*) because they possess the same conscious nature. The understanding by which one sees everything in relation to individual *karma* is in the mode of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse has a very deep meaning. The cause of all causes, the controller of all controllers, and the source of everyone is the primeval Lord, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although He is one, He manifests in this universe as various incarnations. They are all one in essence, both in terms of Their *svarūpa* and *tattva*, but each has unique characteristics that gradate Them according to *rasa* (transcendental mellows) and *vilāsa* (divine pastimes). And yet They are one. The *jīvas* manifest from Him as separated parts, or *vibhinnāmśa*, and are very subtle entities. They are unlimited in number. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (5.9) states:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate*

It is said that the living entity is the size of one-hundredth the tip of a hair that is again divided into a hundred parts. Such living entities are declared to be eternal.

As explained earlier, *jīvas* are of two types: *baddha* (bound) and *mukta* (liberated). Although they are unlimited in number, they are all one in *tattva* in regard to their conscious nature. They are all servants of Kṛṣṇa by their essential constitution, although they take birth in various species such as demigods, humans, animals and birds. To establish this *siddhānta*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining that through knowledge in the mode of goodness, one sees that unlimited living entities exist in various bodies, such as demigods, demons, humans, animals and birds, in order to experience the various fruits of their individual *karma*. From the perspective of *cit-tattva*, or conscious reality, the knowledge by which one perceives them as indivisible, immutable and one in nature is known as *sāttvika-jñāna*, knowledge in the mode of goodness.

VERSE 21

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान् पृथग्विधान् ।
वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ २१ ॥

*ṛṥhaktvena tu yaj jñānam nānā-bhāvān ṛṥthag-vidhān
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu taj jñānam viddhi rājasam*

prthaktvena – separately; *tu* – however; *yat* – by which; *jñānam* – knowledge; *nānā-bhāvān* – many natures; *prthag-vidhān* – of different species; *vetti* – considers; *sarveṣu bhūteṣu* – in all living entities; *tat* – that; *jñānam* – knowledge; *viddhi* – you should know; *rājasam* – governed by the quality of passion.

However, that knowledge whereby a person sees different kinds of beings within the different species of life, such as demigods and humans, and thus sees all living entities as belonging to different classifications and existing for different purposes, is known as knowledge governed by the quality of passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: Here Śrī Bhagavān is explaining knowledge in the mode of passion. The demons say that there are characteristic differences between the souls in all beings and that the soul is destroyed when the body is destroyed. In other words, they see that there are separate types of souls in different bodies. By the influence of knowledge in the mode of passion, one may conclude that the soul is influenced by happiness and distress, or that happiness and distress are without any basis. In other words, one sees their occurrence as merely accidental. The knowledge by which one sees the inert, the conscious, the all-pervading, or the atomic particles, as somewhat similar, is known as knowledge governed by the quality of passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Knowledge in the mode of passion, or *rājasika-jñāna*, gives rise to dissimilar understandings. This means that those who do not believe in the existence of a transcendental world say that the body itself is the soul. The Jains say that although the soul is different from the body, it is limited by the body. In other words, they say the soul has no existence separate from the body. The Buddhists say that the soul is conscious for a limited period of time. The logicians say that the soul is the basis of nine types of special qualities, that is, it is different from the body and not inert. The knowledge by which these various understandings arise in relation to the soul is governed by the quality of ignorance.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Those who have *rājasika-jñāna* say that the living entities that exist in different species such as

humans, animals and birds belong to different classes and that their constitutional natures are also different.”

VERSE 22

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन् कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

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

yat – by which; *tu* – but; *kṛtsna-vat* – completely; *ekasmin* – to one; *kārye* – activity (bodily maintenance such as bathing and eating, etc.); *saktam* – attached; *ahaitukam* – without any cause (naturally occurring); *atattva-artha-vat* – which is without a factual understanding of the goal of life; *alpam* – meagre (like that of an animal); *ca* – and; *tat* – that knowledge; *tāmasam* – knowledge governed by the quality of darkness; *udāhṛtam* – is said to be.

And knowledge in the mode of darkness is that knowledge by which one becomes absorbed in activities related exclusively to the temporary material body, such as bathing and eating, considering such activities to be the ultimate perfection. That knowledge is irrational, devoid of any understanding of spiritual reality, and meagre like that of the animals.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is explaining knowledge governed by the mode of ignorance, *tāmasika jñāna*. Such knowledge is devoid of any spiritual basis and it only fosters attachment to the natural acts of the body, such as bathing, eating, drinking and enjoying with women, as well as to the various ways of attaining such enjoyment. It does not foster attachment to Vedic activities such as performance of sacrifice and giving in charity. Knowledge in the mode of ignorance also lacks any substantial philosophical understanding, that is, it lacks an understanding in relation to *tattva*, and it is insubstantial and unimportant, like the knowledge or instinct of animals.

In brief, knowledge of the Absolute Reality, which is beyond the body, is in the mode of goodness; knowledge of *nyāya-śāstras*, for example, which are full of various arguments and counter-arguments, is in the mode of passion; and materialistic knowledge, which is simply related to the demands of the body such as bathing and eating is in the mode of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura says, “The knowledge of those who consider bodily activities such as bathing and eating to be most important, and which encourages attachment to such activities, is meagre and is called knowledge in the mode of ignorance. Although this knowledge is improper, it appears to be natural, but in fact, it is meaningless.

“In conclusion, knowledge of the Absolute Reality, which is separate from the body, is called knowledge in the mode of goodness. Knowledge of various scriptures such as *nyāya*, the science of logic, which establish different contentious philosophies, is called knowledge in the mode of passion. And knowledge that deals with bodily activities, such as bathing and eating, is called knowledge in the mode of ignorance.”

VERSE 23

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।
अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत् सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ २३ ॥

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

niyatam – steadily; *saṅga-rahitam* – with detachment; *arāga-dveṣataḥ* – free from attachment and aversion; *kṛtam* – performed; *aphala-prepsunā* – without desire for the result; *karma* – work; *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *sāttvikam* – governed by the quality of goodness; *ucyate* – is said to be.

That obligatory duty (*nitya-karma*) that a person performs without desiring the result and without attachment, and that is free from any personal attraction or aversion, is said to be governed by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Having explained the three types of knowledge, Śrī Bhagavān explains the three types of action, or *karma*. When one performs *nitya-karma* (regular duties as prescribed in scripture), without attachment to it or absorption in it – that is, without attraction or aversion or any desire for its fruits – it is called action in the mode of goodness.

VERSE 24

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहङ्कारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २४ ॥

yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṅkāreṇa vā puṅaḥ
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tad rājasam udāhṛtam

yat – which; *tu* – but; *kāma-ipsunā* – with desire for the result; *karma* – work; *sa-ahaṅkāreṇa* – with the conception that he is the doer of his actions (false-ego); *vā puṅaḥ* – and also; *kriyate* – is performed; *bahulāyāsam* – with great trouble; *tat* – that; *rājasam* – governed by the quality of passion; *udāhṛtam* – is said (to be).

However, that action which is performed with great trouble by a conceited person who seeks to fulfil his desires is known to be governed by the quality of passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Kāmepsunā* means ‘possessing little false ego’, and *sāhaṅkāreṇa* means ‘possessing an immense false ego’.

VERSE 25

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

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

anubandham – (miserable) consequences; *kṣayam* – destruction (of virtue); *hiṁsām* – self-destruction or violence to others; *anapekṣya* – without

considering; *ca* – and; *pauruṣam* – one’s own ability; *mohāt* – out of delusion; *ārabhyate* – is undertaken; *karma* – activity; *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *tāmasam* – governed by the quality of darkness; *ucyate* – is said to be.

Action performed in delusion is known to be governed by the quality of darkness. As a result, a person does not consider the miserable consequences of his action, such as the destruction of knowledge and religiosity and the suffering caused to both oneself and others. He cannot realistically estimate his own ability.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: The prefix *anu* in the word *anubandham* means ‘that which takes place in the future, after the *karma* has been performed’. In other words, it means the consequential results of action. *Bandha* means ‘the bondage enforced by people such as state police or Yamadūtas’. Any materialistic endeavour that commences in delusion, without properly considering resultant future miseries, loss of religiosity and knowledge, or self-destruction, is called action in the mode of ignorance.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the above three verses, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the three types of *karma*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.23), it is also said:

*mad-arpaṇam niṣphalam vā sāttvikam nija-karma tat
rājasam phala-saṅkalpaṁ himsā-prāyādi tāmasam*

Only that *nitya-karma* which is selflessly performed as an offering to Bhagavān is in the mode of goodness. *Karma* performed with the desire to enjoy its fruits is in the mode of passion, and *karma* performed with violence and out of envy is in the mode of ignorance.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Action in the mode of ignorance makes one inclined to cruelty. It is performed in a bewildered state of mind, without properly considering the future misery it may cause or the destruction of knowledge and religiosity that it may incur. Or else it is violent, bringing loss to others as well as to oneself.”

VERSE 26

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६ ॥

*mukta-saṅgo 'naham-vādi dhṛty-utsāha-samanvitaḥ
siddhy-asiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate*

mukta-saṅgaḥ – who is free from attachment; *anaham-vādi* – free from false ego; *dhṛti* – with patient determination; *utsāha* – and enthusiasm; *samanvitaḥ* – endowed; *siddhi-asiddhyoḥ* – by success and failure; *nirvikāraḥ* – who is unaffected; *kartā* – the performer of action; *sāttvikaḥ* – governed by the quality of goodness; *ucyate* – is said to be.

That performer of action who has no desire for the fruit of his actions, who is free from false ego, endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm, and who is unaffected by his actions' success or failure is said to be influenced by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: First, Śrī Bhagavān explained the three types of *karma*, or action. Now He is explaining the three types of *kartā*, or performers of action.

VERSE 27

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

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

rāgī – who is deeply attached; *karma-phala* – for the results of his work; *pṛepsuḥ* – who very much hankers; *lubdhaḥ* – who is greedy; *himsa-ātmaḥ* – violent; *aśuciḥ* – unclean; *harṣa* – jubilation; *śoka* – and tribulation; *anvitaḥ* – absorbed in; *kartā* – a performer of action; *rājasaḥ* – governed by the quality of passion; *parikīrtitaḥ* – is described.

That performer of action who is deeply attached to the fruits of his activities and hankers for them, who is attached to sense objects, fond of violence, unclean and overwhelmed by elation and sorrow, is said to be influenced by the quality of passion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Rāgī* means ‘attached to action’. *Lubdhaḥ* means ‘absorbed in sense objects’.

VERSE 28

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

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

ayuktaḥ – fond of improper actions; *prākṛtaḥ* – whose endeavours are in accordance with his acquired nature; *stabdhaḥ* – obstinate; *śaṭhaḥ* – deceitful; *naiṣkṛtikaḥ* – insulting to others; *alasaḥ* – lazy; *viṣādī* – despondent; *dīrgha-sūtrī* – procrastinating; *ca* – and; *kartā* – the performer of action; *tāmasaḥ* – governed by the quality of darkness; *ucyate* – is said to be.

That performer of action who is fond of improper action, who endeavours according to his own acquired nature, who is obstinate and deceitful, who insults others, and who is lazy, despondent and procrastinating, is said to be governed by the quality of darkness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ayuktaḥ* means ‘one who performs improper acts’. *Prākṛtaḥ* means ‘one who is situated in his own acquired nature’. Such persons act according to the dictates of their minds. They do not even follow the orders of their *guru*. *Naiṣkṛtikaḥ* means ‘one who insults others’.

“*Jñānīs*, therefore, should perform renunciation in the mode of goodness, which possesses the characteristics described earlier. One should only take shelter of knowledge that is fixed in action in the mode of goodness. Indeed, this is obligatory. One should be a *kartā*, or

performer of action, in the mode of goodness. This is the *sannyāsa* of the *jñānīs*, and this is knowledge in relation to Me. It is also related to the self and is the essence of this subject matter. The knowledge of the devotees, however, is beyond the three binding modes of nature. The work performed for Me is beyond the influence of the three modes and is called *bhakti*. The performer of that action is also beyond those modes.” As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.24) states, “*Kaivalya-jñāna*, knowledge of the self, is in the mode of goodness; *jñāna* based on duality, or manifold variety, is in the mode of passion; material knowledge is in the mode of ignorance; and knowledge that is fixed in Me is *nirguṇa*, beyond the three modes of nature.” This is the characteristic of *nirguṇā-bhakti-yoga* as stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.11–12).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.26) states, “That performer of action who is detached from the result of his activity is governed by the quality of goodness; he who is attached to the result is governed by the quality of passion; and he who has lost his sense of discrimination is governed by the quality of ignorance. But that performer of action who is surrendered to Me is transcendental to the three modes of nature.”

Furthermore, it is not only the knowledge, the action and the performer of action that are related to *bhakti* and thus beyond the modes of nature, anything related to *bhakti* is like that. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.27), there is also a statement concerning faith (*śraddhā*): “*Śraddhā* related to knowledge of the self is governed by the quality of goodness, *śraddhā* based on action is in the mode of passion, and *śraddhā* based on irreligion is in the mode of ignorance. But *śraddhā* in service to Me is beyond all material modes.”

In regard to residence, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.25) states: “To live in the forest is in the mode of goodness, to live in the village is in the mode of passion, and to live in the gambling house (or the city, which is the centre of various wicked acts) is in the mode of ignorance. But the place where I or My devotees reside (or are worshipped) is beyond all material modes.”

Concerning happiness, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.29) states: “The happiness arising from the self is governed by the quality of goodness; happiness arising from sense objects is governed by passion; happiness arising from delusion and mean-spiritedness is governed by ignorance;

and happiness that results from surrendering unto Me is beyond these three modes.”

“Therefore, the personal happiness that My transcendently situated devotees derive from the knowledge, action and faith related to *bhakti* is beyond the modes of nature. Everything related to the knowledge of *jñānīs*, who are in the mode of goodness, is *sāttvika* (in goodness). Everything related to *karmīs*, who are in the mode of passion, is *rājasika* (in passion) and everything related to unrestrained people, who are in the mode of ignorance, is *tāmasika* (in ignorance).” This is discerned from the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The Fourteenth Chapter of the *Gītā* also states that the *jñānīs* ultimately attain freedom from the material modes of nature only by performing pure devotion, which manifests only after *jñāna* has been relinquished.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.26) also describes that the performers of action (*kartā*) are of three types:

*sāttvikaḥ kārako ’saṅgī rāgāndho rājasaḥ smṛtaḥ
tāmasaḥ smṛti-vibhraṣṭo nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*

That performer of action who is detached is in the mode of goodness, he who is excessively attached to action and its results is in the mode of passion, he who has no discrimination is in the mode of ignorance, and he who is surrendered unto Me is transcendental to the three binding modes of material nature.

VERSE 29

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥ २९ ॥

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

buddheḥ – of intelligence; *bhedam* – division; *dhṛteḥ* – of determination; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *guṇataḥ* – according to the qualities of material nature; *tri-vidham* – the three; *śṛṇu* – now hear; *procyamānam* – described; *aśeṣeṇa* – and completely; *pṛthaktvena* – distinctly; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth.

O Dhanañjaya, please listen as I describe in full the three divisions of intelligence and determination, in accordance with the binding qualities of material nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Everything related to the *jñānīs* is governed by the quality of goodness and therefore, beneficial. Śrī Bhagavān now describes the three divisions of intelligence and determination, in this verse beginning with *buddheḥ*.

VERSE 30

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३० ॥

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

pravṛttim – when to engage; *ca* – and; *nivṛttim* – when to disengage; *ca* – and; *kārya-akārye* – what is proper and improper action; *bhaya-abhaye* – what is to be feared and what is not to be feared; *bandham* – what is bondage; *mokṣam* – what is liberation; *ca* – and; *yā* – which; *vetti* – understands; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *sā* – that; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *sāttvikī* – governed by the quality of goodness.

O Pārtha, a person's intelligence is considered to be in the mode of goodness when he is able to discriminate between proper and improper engagement, between what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, and between what is binding and what is liberating.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Bhayābhaye* refers to the cause of both entanglement in the material world and liberation from it.

VERSE 31

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।
अयथावत् प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१ ॥

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

yayā – by which; *dharmam* – virtue; *adharmam* – vice; *ca* – and; *kāryam* – that which is to be done, duty; *ca* – and; *akāryam* – that which is not to be done; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *ayathāvat* – incorrectly; *prajānāti* – one discerns; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *sā* – that; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *rājasī* – governed by the quality of passion.

O Pārtha, a person's intelligence is known to be covered by the quality of passion when he distinguishes incorrectly between religion and irreligion and between what is to be done and what is not to be done.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Ayathāvat* means 'incorrectly'.

VERSE 32

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता।
सर्वार्थान् विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३२॥

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

adharmam – irreligion; *dharmam* – religion; *iti* – thus; *yā* – which; *manyate* – considers; *tāmasa-avṛtā* – covered by darkness; *sarvārthān* – all things; *viparītān* – said to be opposite; *ca* – and; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *sā* – that; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *tāmasī* – governed by the quality of darkness.

O Pārtha, a person whose intelligence is covered by the dark quality of ignorance considers irreligion to be the true religion and true religion to be irreligion, and his perception of everything is the opposite of reality. Being covered by the mode of ignorance, that intelligence is *tāmasika*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Yā manyate* refers to an intelligence which sees that an axe cuts independently. [In other words, a person who only perceives the external function (e.g. the axe cutting) cannot enter the internal understanding that the soul, he who is wielding the axe, is

the actual performer of the act of cutting, not the axe, which is just the instrument.]

VERSE 33

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३ ॥

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

dhṛtyā – by determining; *yayā* – which; *dhārayate* – sustains; *manaḥ* – of the mind; *prāṇa* – life energy; *indriya* – and senses; *kriyāḥ* – the activities; *yogena* – through the practice of *yoga*; *avyabhicāriṇyā* – through undeviating; *dhṛtiḥ* – determination; *sā* – that; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *sāttvikī* – governed by the quality of goodness.

O Pārtha, the unswerving determination that is attained by the practice of *yoga*, by which a person controls the functions of his mind, life energy and senses, is governed by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is describing the three types of determination, or fortitude (*dhṛti*).

VERSE 34

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान् धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।
प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३४ ॥

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

yayā – which; *tu* – but; *dharma-kāma-arthān* – the activities of *dharma*, sense gratification and economic development; *dhṛtyā* – by determining; *dhārayate* – one sustains; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *prasaṅgena* – through strong attachment; *phala-ākāṅkṣī* – hankers for the results; *dhṛtiḥ* – determination; *sā* – that; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *rājasī* – governed by the quality of passion.

O Arjuna, son of Pṛthā, the determination whereby a person adheres to religious practices, activities of sense pleasure, and the endeavours to ameliorate his economic condition, being driven by an intense attachment to enjoy the results of his work, is governed by the quality of passion.

VERSE 35

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।
न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा तामसी मता ॥ ३५ ॥

*yayā svapnam bhayaṁ śokam viṣādam madam eva ca
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā tāmasī matā*

yayā – by which; *svapnam* – excessive sleep; *bhayaṁ* – fear; *śokam* – lamentation; *viṣādam* – depression; *madam* – madness; *eva ca* – and certainly; *na* – never; *vimuñcati* – can surpass; *durmedhā* – unintelligent; *dhṛtiḥ* – determination; *sā* – that; *tāmasī* – governed by the quality of darkness; *matā* – considered.

But the determination of an unintelligent person which renders him incapable of rising above excessive sleep, fear, lamentation, depression and madness, is considered influenced by the quality of ignorance.

VERSE 36

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ ३६ ॥

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

sukham – of happiness; *tu* – but; *idānīm* – now; *tri-vidham* – the three kinds; *śṛṇu* – hear; *me* – from Me; *bharata-rṣabha* – O best of Bharata's line; *abhyāsāt* – through (constant) cultivation; *ramate* – relishes; *yatra* – that happiness which; *duḥkha-antam* – to the end of suffering (is happiness in the quality of goodness); *ca* – and; *nigacchati* – brings one.

O best of the Bharata dynasty, now hear from Me of the three kinds of happiness. Through regular cultivation of happiness governed by the quality of goodness and attachment to it, a person brings the misery of the cycle of repeated birth and death to an end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In the next one-and-a-half verses, Śrī Bhagavān is describing happiness in the mode of goodness, its nature and how, by constant cultivation, one becomes attached to it. This differs from the happiness derived from sense objects that appears due to the excitement of sensual stimulation. *Duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati* means 'that attachment by which one can cross over the misery of material existence'.

VERSE 37

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ ३७ ॥

yat tad agre viṣam iva pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam
tat sukham sāttvikam proktam ātma-buddhi-prasāda-jam

yat – which; *tat* – that; *agre* – in the beginning; *viṣam* – poison; *iva* – like; *pariṇāme* – in the end; *amṛta-upamam* – like nectar; *tat* – that; *sukham* – happiness; *sāttvikam* – governed by the quality of goodness; *proktam* – declared; *ātma* – directed to the self; *buddhi* – intelligence; *prasāda* – from pure; *jam* – which is generated.

That happiness which in the beginning is like poison but in the end is like nectar, and which is generated from pure intelligence related to the transcendental self, is declared to be governed by the quality of goodness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Viṣam iva* (like poison) indicates that in the beginning, it is quite troublesome to control the senses and the mind.

VERSE 38

विषयेन्द्रिय-संयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।
परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

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

viṣaya – with the sense objects; *indriya* – of the senses; *saṁyogāt* – from the contact; *yat* – which; *tat* – that; *agre* – in the beginning; *amṛta-upamam* – like nectar; *pariṇāme* – in the end; *viṣam* – poison; *iva* – like; *tat* – that; *sukham* – happiness; *rājasam* – governed by the quality of passion; *smṛtam* – considered.

Happiness in the mode of passion is known to be produced by the senses' contact with their sense objects. It is like nectar in the beginning but like poison in the end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: *Yad amṛta-upamam* refers to the happiness experienced while enjoying with women other than one's wife and so forth.

VERSE 39

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।
निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९ ॥

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

yat – which; *agre* – in the beginning; *ca* – and; *anubandhe* – in the end; *ca* – and; *sukham* – happiness; *mohanam* – delusion; *ātmanaḥ* – of the *ātmā*; *nidrā* – sleep; *ālasya* – laziness; *pramāda* – intoxication; *uttham* – born out of; *tat* – that; *tāmasam* – governed by the quality of darkness; *udāhṛtam* – is said.

That happiness which from beginning to end covers the nature of the spirit soul and which arises from sleep, laziness, useless activity and so forth is said to be governed by the quality of darkness.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Happiness is also of three types. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.29) states:

*sāttvikam sukham ātmottham viṣayottham tu rājasam
tāmasam moha-dainyottham nirguṇam mad-apāśrayam*

Happiness derived from realization of the self is in goodness, happiness derived from sense pleasure is in passion, happiness that arises from a deluded, wretched condition is in ignorance, and the happiness that comes from the performance of glorifying Śrī Bhagavān and remembering Him is beyond all material modes.

VERSE 40

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ ४० ॥

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

na – never; *tat* – there; *asti* – exists; *pṛthivyām* – on the Earth; *vā* – or; *divi* – in the heavenly planets; *deveṣu* – amongst the gods; *vā* – or; *punaḥ* – even; *sattvaṁ* – a being or object; *prakṛti-jaiḥ* – born of material nature; *muktam* – free; *yad* – who; *ebhiḥ* – from these; *syāt* – can be; *tribhiḥ* – three; *guṇaiḥ* – binding qualities.

Throughout this entire material creation, there is no one among mankind and the other species on Earth, or even among the demigods in the heavenly planets, who is free from the influence of the three qualities of nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this subject by explaining something He has not yet described. *Tat sattvaṁ* means that no living being or object in the creation is devoid of the three modes, which are born of material nature. Therefore, everything is composed of the three modes of material nature. Only that which is *sāttvika* is useful; that which is *rājasika* or *tāmasika* is not. This is the purport of this topic.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Bhagavān is concluding this subject by stating that everything that is related to this material world is composed of the three modes of material nature. The superiority of something that is *sāttvika*, or in the mode of goodness,

has been established. One is instructed to ardently take shelter of and accept only that which is *sāttvika*. However, in order to become free from the bondage of this material world, it is necessary to take shelter of that which is *nirguṇa*, transcendental to the modes. Bhagavān, the devotee (*bhakta*) and devotion (*bhakti*), as well as all the emotions and paraphernalia used in service to Śrī Bhagavān, are *nirguṇa*. Without adopting them, it is impossible for a living entity to achieve his ultimate benefit. Therefore, it is the supreme duty of all intelligent individuals to endeavour to rise above the three modes of material nature by the influence of *sādhu-saṅga*. Being thus situated in their transcendental nature, they enter into the transcendental loving service of Bhagavān.

An overview of this subject is now presented so that practitioners of *bhakti* may easily understand it and enter the realm that lies beyond the three binding modes of material nature.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.30–31) describes the above-mentioned subjects that are within the three *guṇas* and beyond them. Therein, Śrī Bhagavān says to Uddhava:

*dravyam deśaḥ phalaṁ kālo jñānam karma ca kārakaḥ
śraddhāvasthākṛtir niṣṭhā trai-guṇyaḥ sarva eva hi
sarve guṇa-mayā bhāvāḥ puruṣavyakta-dhiṣṭhitāḥ
dṛṣṭam śrutam anudhyātam buddhyā vā puruṣarṣabha*

Various objects, places, results of activities, time, knowledge, action, the performers of action, faith, consciousness, and firm resolve, all consist of the three modes of material nature. O best among men, all that is seen, heard or conceived of within the mind is situated within *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, and is therefore composed of the three modes.

How can one conquer the three modes? In this regard, Śrī Bhagavān says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.32):

*etāḥ saṁsṛtayaḥ puṁso guṇa-karma-nibandhanāḥ
yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya guṇā jīvena citta-jāḥ
bhakti-yogena man-niṣṭho mad bhāvāya prapadyate*

O gentle one, because the living entity mistakes the body for the self, he is bound by the modes and by action. Thus he wanders throughout the various species of life. Those influenced by the association

A Table Of Subjects And Their Guṇas

Subject	Mode of Goodness	Mode of Passion	Mode of Ignorance	Beyond the Modes
Foodstuff	Beneficial, pure, easily obtained	Pleasing to the senses	Gives rise to affliction, impure	Offered to the Lord
Place	Forest	Village	Gambling house	The Lord's temple
Result	Knowledge of the self	Sense gratification	Bewilderment	Hearing and chanting
Time	Happiness, religion, knowledge	Misery and wealth	Grief and delusion	Pure loving service to the Lord
Knowledge	Related to the self	Full of doubt	Material enjoyment	Related to the Lord
Action	Niskāma-karma-yoga	Sakāma-karma-yoga	Opposed to Vedic injunctions	Hearing and chanting
Performer	Detached	Absorbed in sense objects	Devoid of discrimination	Devotee
Faith	Related to the self	Related to fruitive action	Related to irreligion	Related to devotional service
State of being	Wakefulness	Dreaming	Deep sleep	Divine
Form attained	Demigod	Human	Trees and stones	Servant of the Lord
Destination	Heavenly planets	Earth	Hell	Loving service to the Lord

of devotees practise *bhakti-yoga*. Consequently, they conquer the material modes, which manifest within the mind as the ego of considering the body to be the self, and they become firmly devoted to Me. Thus they attain service to Me in My supreme abode.

Śrī Bhagavān is that truth which is beyond the modes of material nature. The devotees who take shelter of Him are also beyond the modes. Exclusive *bhakti* and its limbs are also beyond the modes. The various objects and moods that the devotees accept as useful instruments in *bhakti* and that they engage in service to Bhagavān become transcendental to the modes by His inconceivable power. This principle has been established in various places throughout scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

VERSE 41

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविषां शूद्राणां च परन्तप ।
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१ ॥

brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśāṃ śūdrāṇāṃ ca parantapa
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāva-prabhavair guṇaiḥ

brāhmaṇa – of the priests or intellectuals; *kṣatriya* – of the warriors or administrators; *viśāṃ* – of the merchants or cow protectors; *śūdrāṇāṃ* – of the manual labourers; *ca* – and; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the foe; *karmāṇi* – the activities; *pravibhaktāni* – divided; *svabhāva-prabhavaiḥ* – which are born of their respective natures (which are created by impressions made by deeds in past lives); *guṇaiḥ* – according to their qualities.

O conqueror of the foe, the prescribed duties of the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* are divided in accordance with the disposition born of their respective natures.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Furthermore, the living entities who are subject to the influence of the three modes of material nature become successful and perfect by worshipping the Supreme Lord, Parameśvara, performing the acts prescribed in scripture according to their respective

qualification. Śrī Bhagavān now speaks the next six verses beginning with *brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-viśām* in order to explain this principle.

Svabhāva-prabhavair-guṇaiḥ means ‘work born of one’s own nature in accordance with the predominating modes’. The various types of action are appropriately divided according to these modes and prescribed for the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and so forth. This determines the individual obligatory duties of those persons.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In order to elevate human beings beyond the three modes of material nature and gradually raise them to a higher qualification, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has established *varṇa-dharma*, dividing prescribed duties according to man’s respective qualities (*guṇas*) and actions (*karma*). The arrangement of the pure caste system is very scientific, as well as beneficial and auspicious for human beings. With the passing of time, however, the common man has lost faith in this system, having witnessed various defects in its so-called followers. This faith has been lost to such an extent that now even the common people of Indian society blame the *varṇāśrama* system for the divisions and hostility created by its castes. They also assert that *varṇa-dharma* is the main cause of India’s social, political and economic collapse and that Indian people are less advanced than those of other countries because of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The majority of India’s population is becoming determined to completely destroy *varṇa-dharma* and establish an atheistic society without any class, or *varṇa*. As easy as it is to destroy a useful thing, it is that difficult to initiate and propagate an ideal thing. May Śrī Bhagavān bestow good intelligence upon them. Are they taking this stance after careful deliberation? Or are they simply being carried away by their sentiment, thus developing a firm resolve to completely destroy the individual, as well as society as a whole, at the root? In this regard, we will quote some meaningful portions of *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. We humbly request the faithful reader to carefully examine and understand them.

“One’s inclinations, or qualities, depend solely upon one’s nature. A person should work in accordance with that individual nature, otherwise his work will not be fruitful. In the English language, the

word 'genius' is used to refer to a particular part of one's nature. It is not easy for a person to change his matured nature; therefore, by working in accordance with it, he should endeavour for his livelihood and spiritual perfection. In India, people are divided into four castes in accordance with four types of nature and thus become properly situated in society, having followed the injunctions of the caste system. Their social activities naturally become fruitful and humanity attains complete auspiciousness. The basis of the caste system is solid and scientific. A society with such a foundation is worthy of respect by all of humanity.

“Some people may doubt the *varṇāśrama* system, saying, ‘No one in Europe and America follows the injunctions based on caste divisions, yet they are more advanced and respected than the Indian people economically, scientifically and so forth,’ and they conclude that it is useless to accept a system like *varṇāśrama*. Such doubts, however, are baseless, because the European societies are quite new. People of such modern societies are generally stronger and more courageous and so they perform various activities in the world, accepting portions of the knowledge, science and arts that have been preserved by the older societies. But these new societies will gradually become extinct because their social arrangement has no scientific basis. Symptoms of the original caste system, however, which existed in ancient India's Āryan society, can still be observed in current Indian society, even though it is now so old and weak.

“Previously, the Roman and Greek cultures were more powerful and advanced than modern European culture, but what is their present plight? They have lost their own ancient caste system. They have embraced the religions and systems of modern societies to such an extent that the people of those castes do not even boast the glories of their noble ancestors. Although the Āryan society of India is much older than the Roman and Greek societies, the present Āryans feel proud of their great heroic forefathers. Why? Because the foundation of Āryan society was firmly rooted in the *varṇāśrama* system, and so their societal or caste traits still remain. The descendants of Rāma, who were defeated by the *mlecchas* (outcastes, or meat-eaters), still consider themselves to be the heroic descendants of Śrī Rāmacandra. As long as the caste arrangement exists in India, the people there will

certainly remain Āryan. They can never become non-Āryan, no matter how fallen they become, due to the time-worn and antiquated nature of Indian society.

“The European Āryan descendants, such as the Romans, have mingled with the lowest castes such as Hāna and Bhāṇḍāla and have thus become integrated with them. By studying the structure of the present European societies, we find that whatever charm exists in them is due to the fact that they have in some way embraced the principles of the *varṇa* system, which has manifested in accordance with people’s natural propensities. In Europe, those with a *vaiśya* nature consider it beneficial to engage in business, and because of that alone, they are making economic progress. Those with the nature of a *kṣatriya* will voluntarily become soldiers, and those with the nature of a *śūdra* generally prefer to perform menial services. In fact, no society can exist without accepting *varṇa-dharma* in some form or other. Even when a marriage is arranged, the bride’s and the groom’s caste and nature are examined and their higher or lower status in relation with each other is considered.

“Although *varṇa-dharma* is partially accepted in Europe, it has not been established in its full, scientifically-based form. Wherever knowledge and civilization make real progress, *varṇa-dharma* manifests proportionately. Two methods are employed in any activity: the unscientific and the scientific. An activity is performed unscientifically until a scientific process is accepted. For example, before the invention of power driven ships, people used to travel in sailboats, designed to depend on the winds. But when scientifically manufactured steamships were introduced, they replaced sailing vessels as the primary means of water transport. The same principle can also be applied to society. Until the caste system becomes properly established in a country, that country’s society will be run by some unscientific, rudimentary system. A rudimentary and primitive caste system is currently operating in and controlling societies in all countries of the world, save and except for India [where it is more developed]. India has therefore been called *karma-kṣetra*, the land where prescribed duty is properly executed.

“At this point in our discussion, one may ask whether or not the *varṇa*, or caste, system is actually functioning properly in India today. The

answer is that it most definitely is not. Although previously this caste system had been fully implemented, in course of time it became diseased and its degraded condition is now visible in India. We may well ask, ‘What is that disease?’ The following explanation provides the answer.

“At the beginning of Tretā-yuga, the Āryan society had reached the pinnacle of its development, and at that time, the *varṇāśrama* system was established. An arrangement was made to determine the caste of every person according to his nature. Upon ascertaining the requisite qualifications (*adhikāra*), he would perform his duties prescribed for that caste only. In this way, the activities of the world were very comfortably managed through the scientific process of division of labour and ascertainment of nature. A person whose father had no caste was accommodated in the appropriate caste, after examining his nature. Vedic histories of Jābālī, Gautama, Jānaśruti and Citraratha, etc., are examples of this. For a person whose father’s caste was known, his caste was ascertained on the basis of his disposition as well as his family lineage. In the dynasty of Nariṣyanta, Agniveśa himself became the great sage known as Jātukaṛṇa. It is from him that the famous *brāhmaṇa* dynasty known as Agniveśyāyana originated. In the Aila dynasty, Jahnu, the son of Hotra, attained the status of a *brāhmaṇa*. In the dynasty of Bharadvāja, who was born in the dynasty of Bharata and who was known as King Vitatha, two dynasties came. The progeny coming from Nara became *kṣatriyas*, and the progeny of Garga became *brāhmaṇas*. In the dynasty of King Bharyasva, *maudgalya gotra brāhmaṇas*, such as Śātānanda and Kṛpācārya were born. Scripture contains many examples like this; only a few have been cited here.

“When the caste system was functioning in a proper manner, India’s fame spread all over the world like the powerful glow of the midday sun. People from all countries of the world paid homage to India and accepted its rulers, controllers and spiritual masters as their own. Countries such as Egypt and China would hear and receive instructions from Indian people, with great faith and reverence.

“The above-mentioned *varṇāśrama-dharma* continued in its pure form in India for a long time. Later, through the influence of time, the *kṣatriyas* Jamadagni and his son Paraśurāma were unlawfully accepted as *brāhmaṇas*, although they eventually gave up that caste, as

it was opposed to their nature. A dispute then broke out between the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas*, which caused a disturbance to world peace. This quarrel bore an unfavourable result: within the caste system, more emphasis was placed on birth. This perverted caste system was introduced covertly; it even infiltrated scriptures such as the *Manu-smṛti*. The *kṣatriyas* lost all hope of attaining a higher caste and they revolted, supporting the Buddhist religion and focusing all their energy on destroying the *brāhmaṇas*. A new activity or opinion is opposed to the degree that it is propagated. When the Buddhist faith, which is opposed to the Vedas, arose to confront the *brāhmaṇas*, the caste system based upon birth became even more deeply rooted. Dissension ensued between the supporters of this ill-conceived system and those supporting a spirit of nationalism. This gradually led to a virtual disintegration of the Āryan civilization in India.

“Driven by selfish motives, the so-called *brāhmaṇas*, bereft of any real brahminical qualities, composed their own religious scriptures and began to cheat the other castes. The so-called *kṣatriyas*, who had lost their true *kṣatriya* spirit and qualities, became averse to engaging in battle and thus began to lose their kingdoms. Finally, they started to preach the comparatively insignificant and inferior Buddhist doctrine. The *vaiśyas*, who possessed no real business qualities and acumen, began propagating religions such as Jainism. Under these circumstances, the world-wide business ventures of India gradually declined, and the *śūdras* who had no real *śūdra* qualities, became almost like dacoits, being unable to find work befitting their nature. As a result, the discussion of bona fide scriptures such as the Vedas gradually came to a halt. Then, at an opportune time, rulers of the *mleccha* countries attacked India and took control. Due to improper management, India’s shipping industry suffered and finally ceased. In this way, the influence of Kali intensified. Alas! The Āryan race of India, which once was the ruler and *guru* of all other societies on Earth, deteriorated to the pitiable condition we see today. The reason for this unfortunate development is not the aging of Indian civilization but the numerous defects that have permeated the caste system.

“Parameśvara is the original controller of all systems and living entities. He has the ability to remove all inauspicious elements and bestow

all auspiciousness. If He so desires, He may send His empowered representative to re-establish *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The writers of the Purāṇas assert that Śrī Kalkideva will make His advent and reinstate the pristine glory of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The story of King Maru and Devāpi describes a similar expectancy. We will now discuss the rules within *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

“The scriptures delineating moral principles (*dharmāśāstra*) give a detailed explanation about the *karma* (prescribed duties) that a person in each caste has the right to perform. The full details of that subject cannot possibly be presented in the context of this book.

“The prescribed activities for *brāhmaṇas* include serving food to guests, bathing thrice a day for purity, worshipping the demigods and goddesses, studying the Vedas, giving spiritual instruction, performing *pūjā*, and observing vows such as accepting the sacred thread and celibacy (*brahmacarya* and *sannyāsa*). *Kṣatriyas* have the qualification to perform activities like fighting for religious purposes, ruling a kingdom, protecting the subjects and generously distributing charity. *Vaiśyas* are eligible for duties such as protecting animals and executing business endeavours. The right of the *śūdras* is to perform service to the demigods without uttering *mantras* and to render various services to the other three castes.

“Apart from the activities that are exclusive to their respective caste, all men and women have the common right to perform activities such as marriage, *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord, welfare activities, general acts of charity, service to the *guru*, honouring guests, purificatory rites, celebrating festivals, serving the cows, producing progeny and following prescribed codes of conduct. The specific right of a woman is to engage in the service of her husband. The basic principle is that a person has the eligibility to perform duties that are conducive to his own nature. With simple intelligence, everyone can ascertain their particular qualification to perform work. If someone cannot do that, he should approach a bona fide *guru* to ascertain his nature and qualification. Vaiṣṇavas who are situated beyond the modes of nature and who are interested to know more about this subject, should study *Sat-kriyā-sāra-dīpikā*, by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī.”

VERSE 42

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४२॥

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

śamaḥ – control of the mind; *damaḥ* – control over the senses; *tapaḥ* – bodily austerity mentioned in the scriptures; *śaucam* – internal and external cleanliness; *kṣāntiḥ* – tolerance; *ārjavam* – simplicity; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *jñānam* – transcendental knowledge; *vijñānam* – realized knowledge; *āstikyam* – firm faith in the philosophical conclusions of scriptures concerning the existence of God; *brahma* – of the *brāhmaṇas*; *karma* – the proper duties; *svabhāva-jam* – born out of their own nature.

Control of the mind and senses, austerity, cleanliness, tolerance, simplicity, transcendental knowledge, realization of that knowledge and firm faith in the existence of God are the characteristic duties of the *brāhmaṇas* and born of their nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now the *karma* (duty) of *brāhmaṇas*, who are influenced predominantly by the mode of goodness, is being described. *Śamaḥ* refers to control of the internal sense, the mind. *Damaḥ* means ‘control of the external physical senses’. *Tapaḥ* refers to the prescribed work performed by the body. *Jñāna-vijñāne* means ‘knowledge and realization of the scripture’. *Āstikatā* means ‘firm faith in the meaning and purport of scripture’. All these are the natural activities of the *brāhmaṇas*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.21), the qualities of the *brāhmaṇas* are described: control of the mind and senses, penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, tolerance, simplicity, knowledge, mercy, truthfulness and devotion to the Supreme Lord.

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucam santoṣaḥ kṣāntir ārjavam
jñānam dayācyutātmatvaṁ satyaṁ ca brahma-lakṣaṇam*

Also in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.17.16), Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava that control of the mind and senses, performance of penance, cleanliness, satisfaction, tolerance, simplicity, devotion to Bhagavān, mercy and truthfulness are the qualities of the *brāhmaṇas*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.5.24), Rṣabhadeva says:

*dhṛtā tanūr uśatī me purāṇī
yeneha sattvaṁ paramaṁ pavitram
śamo damaḥ satyam anugrahaś ca
tapas titikṣānubhavaś ca yatra*

Who can be superior to the *brāhmaṇas*? By their study they are sustaining the Vedas, which are My very beautiful and primeval form incarnated as transcendental sound. They are endowed with the eight supremely pure qualities of the mode goodness: control of the mind, control of the senses, truthfulness, mercy, penance, tolerance, knowledge and realization (*bhakti*).

Here, it should be understood that a real *brāhmaṇa*, who is endowed with such qualities, cannot harm or be violent to any person, society, community or nation. Undoubtedly, such individuals are the well-wishing friends of every living being. This statement is most definitely true. But those who parade as *brāhmaṇas* while being bereft of brahminical qualities will only cause great harm to society. Of this there is no doubt.

Still, it is not correct to despise the whole caste system because of this defect and consequently strive to completely destroy it. The proper course of action is to correct the visible defects that have crept into this system in due course of time and to honour those who truly possess good qualities.

According to the *Gītā*, a person should be appropriately honoured upon ascertaining his caste, which is determined by his qualities, actions, nature and his impressions from previous lives. This will make it possible for *brāhmaṇas* like Vasiṣṭha, Nārada and Vyāsa to make their appearance in our society. Peace and happiness will be established throughout the world if such elevated *brāhmaṇas* and heroic *kṣatriyas* like Śrī Rāma, Arjuna, Bhīma and Mahārāja Bharata take birth here.

Today, the atheistic society that is taking shape has no concern for caste or family divisions. Murder, theft, armed-robbery, cheating and other sinful activities are prominent. Agitation and fear are all-pervading. The world has never before seen such a miserable condition. It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35):

*yasya yal-lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdīśet*

A person's caste can be ascertained by noting particular symptoms in him, and accordingly, his proper social position should be assigned. Caste cannot be decided merely by birth.

In the present age, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda*, the founder of the worldwide Gauḍīya Mission, re-established *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma* in this modern age, based on various evidences from Śruti and Smṛti as well as on time-honoured customs.

VERSE 43

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४३ ॥

*śauryaṁ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṁ yuddhe cāpy apalāyanam
dānam īśvara-bhāvaś ca kṣātraṁ karma svabhāva-jam*

śauryam – heroism; *tejah* – splendour; *dhṛtiḥ* – resolve; *dākṣyaḥ* – dexterity; *yuddhe* – in battle; *ca* – and; *api* – also; *apalāyanam* – not fleeing; *dānam* – generosity; *īśvara-bhāvaḥ* – leadership; *ca* – and; *kṣātram* – of the administrative, or warrior class; *karma* – the prescribed work; *svabhāva* – of their own nature; *jam* – born.

Heroism, splendour, resolve, dexterity, being steadfast in battle, generosity and leadership are the prescribed works of the *kṣatriyas* that are born of their own nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: This verse describes the activities of *kṣatriyas*, in whom the quality of passion dominates the quality of goodness.

Śaurya means 'valour', or 'heroism', *tejah* means 'courage', *dhṛtiḥ* means 'determination', and *īśvara-bhāvaḥ* means 'the ability and tendency to control people'. These are the innate duties of a *kṣatriya*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: It is also stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.22):

*śauryaṁ vīryaṁ dhṛtis tejas tyāgaś cātma-jayaḥ kṣamā
brahmaṇyatā prasādaś ca rakṣā ca kṣatra-lakṣaṇam*

Enthusiasm in battle, heroism, firmness, boldness, sacrifice, control of the mind, forgiveness, devotion to the *brāhmaṇas*, mercy and protecting subjects are the characteristics of the *kṣatriyas*.

VERSE 44

कृशिशोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ ४४ ॥

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

kṛṣi – cultivating the produce of the land; *go-rakṣya* – cow protection; *vāṇijyam* – trade; *vaiśya* – of the *vaiśyas*; *karma* – work; *sva-bhāva-jam* – which is born of their own nature; *paricarya* – of rendering service; *ātmakam* – of the nature; *karma* – the work; *śūdrasya* – of the *śūdras*; *api* – and; *svabhāva-jam* – born of their own nature.

The prescribed duty of the *vaiśyas*, which is born of their nature, consists of agriculture, protecting cows, commerce and trade. The prescribed duty of the *śūdras*, also born of their very nature, consists of rendering service to the other classes.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: The mode of passion is predominant in *vaiśyas*; the mode of ignorance is less prominent. By nature, it is the tendency of the *vaiśya* to perform agriculture, cow protection, trade, etc. In fact, because they rear and protect the cows, they are called *go-rakṣaka*. The mode of ignorance is prominent in *śūdras*, not the mode of passion. Their natural *karma* is to render service to *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*.

VERSE 45

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥४५॥

sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ

sva-karma nirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tac chṛṇu

sve sve – to the respective; *karmaṇi* – work; *abhirataḥ* – being attached; *saṁsiddhiṁ* – complete perfection (eligibility to acquire transcendental knowledge); *labhate* – attains; *naraḥ* – a man; *sva-karma* – to his own prescribed work; *nirataḥ* – a man attached; *siddhiṁ* – perfection; *yathā* – how; *vindati* – he attains; *tac* – from that; *śṛṇu* – now hear.

When men remain attached to their respective work, they can attain complete perfection in the form of qualification for transcendental knowledge. Now hear how a person who is engaged in his prescribed duty attains perfection.

VERSE 46

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥४६॥

yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvam idaṁ tatam

sva-karmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ

yataḥ – from which; *pravṛtṭiḥ* – have arisen; *bhūtānām* – of all beings; *yena* – by whom; *sarvam* – entire (world); *idaṁ* – this; *tatam* – pervaded; *sva-karmaṇā* – through performance of his prescribed work; *tam* – Him, the Supreme Lord; *abhyarcya* – by worshipping; *siddhiṁ* – perfection; *vindati* – attains; *mānavaḥ* – a human being.

All living entities have arisen from the Supreme Lord, who pervades the entire universe, and a human being attains perfection by worshipping Him through the performance of his prescribed work.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: One should attain Parameśvara, from whom all living entities are born, by performing *pūjā* and *arcana* to Him with

the prayerful entreaty, “May Parameśvara be pleased by my rendering this work (*karma*).” To worship the Supreme Lord (Parameśvara) with such feeling is actual worship.

VERSE 47

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात्।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४७॥

*śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt
svabhāva-niyataṁ karma kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam*

śreyān – better; *svadharmāḥ* – one’s own occupational duty; *viguṇaḥ* – imperfectly performed; *para-dharmāt* – than another’s duty; *svanuṣṭhitāt* – very nicely performed; *svabhāva-niyatam* – regulated by one’s own nature; *karma* – work; *kurvan* – by performing; *na āpnoti* – does not incur; *kilbiṣam* – sin.

It is more beneficial to perform one’s own occupational duty (*sva-dharma*), even though imperfectly, than to perfectly execute the duty of another (*para-dharma*). By performing work according to his nature, a man incurs no sin.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “It is not proper to engage in acts in the mode of goodness just because one has lost interest in one’s own duty (*sva-dharma*), considering that duty to be merely in the mode of passion.” For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *śreyān*. One may be unable to perform one’s inferior *sva-dharma* properly, but it is better than properly performing *para-dharma*, the prescribed duty of another, which may appear to be superior. “Therefore, O Arjuna, it is improper to renounce your *sva-dharma* of fighting, just because you see the killing of relatives as faulty, and instead adopt the occupation of a wandering mendicant.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, in the context of the present verse, it should be understood that when the word *sva-dharma* implies *varṇāśrama-dharma*, then one should perform one’s own

prescribed duty, not the duty of another. But when *sva-dharma* is used to imply *ātma-dharma*, the soul's nature to be devoted to Śrī Hari, then one must perform that duty and no other, in accordance with the conclusion of verses such as *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. Where *sva-dharma* (one's duty) means *ātma-dharma* (the inherent duty of the soul), the word *para-dharma* (another's duty) means 'activities related to the body and mind'. Until a person develops faith in the duty of the soul, it is beneficial to perform prescribed duties according to his innate material nature. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.9):

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for *bhajana* by hearing, chanting, etc., one has to follow the principles of scripture.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "It is better to improperly perform duties in accordance with one's own nature than to expertly engage in the duties of another. *Sva-dharma* means the duties prescribed according to one's natural aptitude and innate qualities. Therefore, engaging in *sva-dharma*, duty according to one's nature, is always beneficial, even if not executed expertly. In fact, there is no possibility of incurring sin by performing *sva-dharma*."

VERSE 48

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥
*saha-jam karma kaunteya sa-doṣam api na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ*

saha-jam – born of one's nature; *karma* – the prescribed work; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *sa-doṣam* – covered by fault; *api* – even though; *na tyajet* – one should not give up; *sarva-ārambhāḥ* – all endeavours; *hi* – because; *doṣeṇa* – by fault; *dhūmena* – by smoke; *agniḥ* – fire; *iva* – like; *avṛtāḥ* – covered.

O son of Kuntī, one should not abandon the work that scripture prescribes according to one's nature, even if that work has some defect. All undertakings are covered by some fault, just as fire is covered by smoke.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: It is not proper to think that it is only one's own duty that contains defect, as there is certainly some defect in the duty of another, also. To clarify this point, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *saha-jam*. One should work in accordance with one's nature, because all work (*karma*), be it manifest or unmanifest, is tinged with some defect, just as fire is covered by smoke. A person overlooks the defect of a fire's smoke while utilizing its light and heat to dispel darkness and cold. In the same way, one must accept the positive aspect of one's prescribed duty for the purification of one's existence, and neglect the defective aspect.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Generally, duties that are prescribed according to one's nature are called *sva-dharma*. By performing such duties a person can maintain his life very easily, and furthermore, he may gradually enter spiritual life. If a person accepts the prescribed duties of others, having observed some fault in his own, he may incur even more sin. If one gives up one's *kṣatriya-dharma*, considering it to be violent, and accepts the duty of a *brāhmaṇa*, thinking it to be free from such faults, then there is the possibility of impropriety, for even the duties prescribed for a brahmanical nature are subject to the three modes. Since the instruments for performing brahmanical acts are material, there always remains some fault in acts performed with them. For example, while performing a fire *yajña*, there is always the possibility of killing living entities. For this reason, the example of fire is given here. Fire remains covered by smoke. This is a defect of fire. Still, fire is used to dispel cold, to cook and to serve other purposes. According to this same reasoning, it is beneficial to engage in one's prescribed activities only. A person utilizes the fire he lights after removing a portion of the smoke. In the same way, one should overcome the defects of one's prescribed duty by offering it to Bhagavān, and then, for the purpose of self-realization, one should accept that aspect of one's prescribed duty that gives rise to *jñāna*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying, “O son of Kuntī, even if the duties prescribed according to one’s nature are defective, they should by no means be relinquished. Every endeavour is covered by some defect. Just as fire is always covered by smoke, some defect covers and contaminates every action. A man should accept what is positive about his prescribed duty, which is decided according to his nature for the purpose of purifying his existence, and he should disregard the defective aspect.”

VERSE 49

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥४९॥

asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigata-spr̥haḥ
naiṣkarmya-siddhiṁ paramāṁ sannyāsenādhigacchati

asakta-buddhiḥ – one who is detached due to intelligent understanding (of the science of the soul); *sarvatra* – towards all material objects; *jita-ātmā* – whose mind is controlled; *vigata-spr̥haḥ* – free from hankering; *naiṣkarmya* – by action which does not generate reaction; *siddhiṁ* – perfection; *paramāṁ* – supreme; *sannyāsenā* – through renouncing (the results of one’s prescribed duties); *adhigacchati* – attains.

One whose intelligence is not attached to anything material, whose mind is controlled, and who is free from all desires, even the desire to achieve the happiness of Brahma-loka, completely renounces prescribed duties. He attains supreme perfection in the form of reaction-free action.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Action (*karma*) becomes defective when, due to false ego, a person considers himself to be the doer and desires the fruit of that activity. The first stage of *sannyāsa* is to give up this defective mentality and remain engaged in prescribed action. Gradually, however, when the *sannyāsi*’s practice matures and he becomes adept in *yoga (yogārūḍha)*, he may renounce his prescribed duties completely. This is the second stage of *sannyāsa* and this is

what is being referred to here. *Asakta-buddhiḥ* refers to one whose intelligence is free from attachment to all material objects. *Jitātmā* means ‘one whose mind is under control’ and *vigata-spr̥haḥ* means ‘one who does not even desire the happiness of Brahma-loka’. Such persons attain supreme perfection in the form of *naiṣkarmya* (freedom from prescribed duty and its reaction) by giving up all *karma*, prescribed duty, completely. When they become adept in *yoga*, their *naiṣkarmya* attains perfection in the highest sense.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here Śrī Bhagavān is explaining how one can accept the positive aspect of one’s prescribed duty by giving up a defective mentality. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “Those whose intelligence is completely free from attachment to anything material, whose minds are under control and who do not even desire the happiness of Brahma-loka, achieve supreme perfection in the form of freedom from prescribed duty and its reaction by completely renouncing their resolve to perform prescribed duties.”

VERSE 50

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।
 समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥५०॥
siddhim prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnōti nibodha me
samāsenaiṣa kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā

siddhim – perfection; *prāptaḥ* – one who has attained; *yathā* – how; *brahma* – spiritual realization; *tathā* – also; *āpnōti* – attains; *nibodha* – hear; *me* – from Me; *samāsenā* – in brief; *eva* – indeed; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *niṣṭhā* – stage of steadiness; *jñānasya* – of transcendental knowledge; *yā* – which; *parā* – the highest.

Hear from Me in brief, O son of Kuntī, the means whereby a person who has achieved perfection [in the form of *naiṣkarmya*, or freedom from the reactions to fruitive work] attains realization of spiritual reality, which is the highest culmination of transcendental knowledge.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “And now, hear from Me how he then attains and realizes *brahma*, the Supreme.” *Niṣṭhā parā* refers to complete cessation of ignorance through the practice of various types of *yoga*. According to the *Amara-koṣa*, *niṣṭhā* means ‘completion’, ‘destruction’ or ‘end’. “Try to understand that when ignorance is almost destroyed, then knowledge, also, begins to be destroyed. And finally, when one entirely relinquishes *jñāna*, one realizes *brahma*.”

VERSES 51-53

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।
 शब्दादीन् विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥५१॥
 विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।
 ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥५२॥
 अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
 विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥५३॥

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhr̥tyātmānam niyamya ca śabdādīn viṣayāṁs tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca vivikta-sevī laghv-āśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ dhyāna-yoga-paraḥ nityam vairāgyam samupāśritaḥ ahaṅkāram balam darpaṁ kāmam krodham parigraham vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

buddhyā – intelligence; *viśuddhayā* – fully purified; *yuktaḥ* – endowed with; *dhr̥tyā* – with determination; *ātmānam* – the mind; *niyamya* – controlling; *ca* – and; *śabda-ādīn* – such as sound; *viṣayān* – sense objects; *tyaktvā* – giving up; *rāga-dveṣau* – attachment and aversion; *vyudasya* – putting aside; *ca* – and; *vivikta-sevī* – resorting to solitary places; *laghv-āśī* – eating lightly; *yata* – controlling; *vāk* – and speech; *kāya* – body; *mānasaḥ* – mind; *dhyāna-yoga* – connected in contemplative meditation (upon Bhagavān); *paraḥ* – being absorbed; *nityam* – always; *vairāgyam* – of renunciation; *samupāśritaḥ* – taking full shelter; *ahaṅkāram* – false ego; *balam* – strength; *darpaṁ* – arrogance; *kāmam* – desire; *krodham* – anger; *parigraham* – unnecessary accumulation of possessions; *vimucya* – being

freed from; *nirmamaḥ* – free from possessiveness; *sāntaḥ* – peaceful; *brahma-bhūyāya* – for *brahma* realization; *kalpate* – is qualified.

A person endowed with pure intelligence controls the mind with determination. He renounces the objects of sense enjoyment such as sound and form. Freed from attachment and aversion, he lives in a sanctified solitary place, eating little, controlling his body, mind and speech, and constantly taking shelter of *yoga* by meditating on Bhagavān. He takes shelter of detachment, being completely free from false ego, false attachment, arrogance, desire, anger, unnecessary accumulation of possessions and feelings of possessiveness, and he is situated in peace. Such a person is qualified to realize *brahma*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Those who are able to control their mind with intelligence and forbearance in the mode of goodness, and who take shelter of the supreme *yoga* of being situated in meditation upon Śrī Bhagavān, become qualified to realize *brahma* (the Supreme). Here, the word *bala* does not mean ‘strength’ or ‘ability,’ but ‘attachment to material desires.’ After relinquishing false ego and so forth, such persons become qualified to realize *brahma*. This is called cessation of ignorance. In such a state, even the quality of goodness becomes subdued. This alone is called renunciation of knowledge. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Eleven states, “Renounce even knowledge for Me.” One cannot realize *brahma* without renouncing both ignorance and knowledge. *Brahma-bhūyāya kalpate* means ‘to become capable of realizing *brahma*’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: A *sādhaka*’s heart becomes purified by offering Bhagavān the results of his actions in the mode of goodness that are born of his nature. By subduing his senses, which are satisfied because of his detachment from sense objects, the practitioner’s mind becomes pure and he remains fixed in a state of trance. In this way, all mundane attachments and aversions are dispelled. In such a state, he becomes free from false ego, by which he considers the body to be the self. He does not seek material happiness, nor is he ever overpowered by lamentation. Constantly equipoised in this state, which is called

brahma-bhūta, he even gives up the subtle body and becomes situated in his true self.

VERSE 54

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥५४॥

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

brahma-bhūtaḥ – one who is situated in spiritual realization; *prasanna-ātmā* – a fully joyful soul; *na śocati* – he does not lament; *na* – nor; *kāṅkṣati* – hanker; *samaḥ* – equal; *sarveṣu* – to all; *bhūteṣu* – beings; *mad-bhaktim* – My pure *bhakti*; *labhate* – he attains; *parām* – which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

A person thus situated in realization of *brahma* becomes fully joyful. He neither laments nor hankers for anything. Being equally disposed to all beings, he attains My pure *bhakti*, which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “A *sādhaka-jīva* attains the nature of *brahma* (*brahma-bhūta*) when the contaminating coverings – the impure designations of goodness, passion and ignorance – are removed. In other words he attains a state of pure consciousness that is free from any covering, and thus he becomes fully joyful (*prasannātmā*). Having achieved this higher consciousness, he neither laments for what he has lost nor hankers for what he does not have, and he is free from the false ego of considering the body to be the self. *Sarveṣu bhūteṣu* means ‘in all beings, good or bad’. *Samaḥ* means that, like a child, he sees everything equally, and by this he becomes free from external considerations. His desire for *jñāna* becomes satiated, just as a fire dies down when fuel runs out. He then attains My imperishable *bhakti* in the form of *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam*, which is inherently full of knowledge.

“*Bhakti* is a function of My internal potency, the *svarūpa-śakti*. Because it is separate from My illusory potency, it continues to exist

when ignorance and knowledge cease. The word *parām* therefore means ‘separate from or superior to *jñāna*’. In other words, it means pure devotion, which is devoid of *niškāma-karma*, *jñāna*, etc. The word *labhate* means that the *bhakti* which was partially situated in knowledge and renunciation and aimed at liberation, is not intelligibly realized, just as the indwelling Supersoul, situated in all beings, cannot easily be perceived. For this reason, the word *labhate* (obtain) has been used instead of the word *kurute* (does). The *bhakti* that was previously mixed with knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*), can be recovered intact when *jñāna* and *vairāgya* are dispelled, just as a golden gem that has been mixed into some *mūṅg* or *urad dāl* can be retrieved when the pulses are burned, because the gem is comparatively imperishable.”

This is the most opportune time to attain *prema-bhakti*. The result of such *bhakti* is never the liberation of becoming one with the Lord’s effulgence, so here, *parām* means *bhakti* endowed with the symptoms of *prema* (*prema-lakṣaṇā-bhakti*).

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Having attained *brahma-bhūta*, the state of transcendence, it is still necessary that one have transcendental devotion (*parā-bhakti*) in order to understand Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is explained in the present verse. The explanations of various commentators of the word *brahma-bhūta* convey almost the same meaning. Only a living entity who is free from all the material modes and situated on the spiritual platform of *brahma* is called *brahma-bhūta*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that *brahma-bhūta* is the pure state of transcendence a *jīva* attains when he is free from all gross and subtle designations. This completely refutes the understanding that *brahma-bhūta* means to totally lose one’s individual existence by merging into and becoming one with *brahma*, the Lord’s effulgence. This idea opposes scriptural conclusions and has therefore been unanimously refuted by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śrī Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Madhvācārya, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and others.

The *kevala-advaitavādīs*, or absolute monists, declare the following four statements to be the Vedas’ supreme axioms: *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* (I am *brahma*); *tat tvam asi* (You are that); *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*

(indeed everything is *brahma*); and *prajñānam brahma* (real knowledge is *brahma* realization). They attempt to establish *māyāvāda* philosophy with an erroneous interpretation of these statements, but their deceptive propaganda simply cheats the common people.

These four statements of the Vedas are actually peripheral statements only. *Om* alone is the supreme statement and the intrinsic nature, or *svarūpa*, of *brahma*. *Tat tvam asi* actually means ‘You belong to Him’, or ‘you are His servant’. This was also clarified earlier. The *māyāvādīs*, however, interpret it as ‘You are also that (Him)’, which is completely distorted and misleading. Furthermore, it is simply because the *jīva* is qualitatively similar to *brahma* that he is referred to as *brahma* in the statement “*aham brahmāsmi* – I am *brahma*”. The *jīva* is a separated part of *brahma*, and therefore, he is a conscious entity and spiritual by nature. But because he is only a separated part, he can be controlled by the deluding potency. Parabrahma, however, is the controller of that potency. The *jīva* is an atomic entity and Parabrahma is an infinite entity. Therefore, these two can never become one.

The entire creation, which contains both conscious energy and inert energy, has manifested from Parabrahma. Consciousness and inert matter are transformations of *brahma*’s potency. Although partially one with Him, they are not completely one.

Only when someone has considered the precise meaning of each and every Upaniṣad *mantra* can he understand the true import of the Vedas. He first contemplates each *mantra* in isolation, and later he deliberates upon the *mantras* collectively, to comprehend their meaning as a whole. The conclusion of one who unnecessarily speculates to interpret the peripheral statements of the Vedas is bound to be erroneous. It is for this reason that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu scrutinized the Vedas from every angle before He imparted instruction on *acintya-bheda-abheda-tattva*, which declares that matter and the living entity are simultaneously one with and different from the Supreme Lord.

The Vedas abound with various *mantras* that establish the difference between the *jīva* and *brahma*:

- (1) “*pradhāna-kṣetra-jña-patir guṇeśaḥ* – He is the controller of the modes of material nature and the master of the living entities, who

are *kṣetra-jña*, or knowers of the field of their respective bodies” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.16).

- (2) “*tam āhur agryam puruṣam mahāntam* – sages declare Him to be the foremost and greatest of persons” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.19).
- (3) “*yāthātathyato ’rthān vyadadhāt* – it is He who fulfils the living entities’ many requirements” (*Īśopaniṣad* 8).
- (4) “*tenedaṃ pūrṇaṃ puruṣeṇa sarvaṃ* – by the arrangement of the Supreme Person, this universe is complete in every respect” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.9).
- (5) “*nityo nityānām* – He is supreme among all eternal beings” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.13).

These statements clearly reveal that the living entity can never merge, or become one with, *brahma*. Therefore, *brahma-bhūta* actually refers to the living entity in his eternal constitutional position. *Jīvas* who have achieved the *brahma-bhūta* stage manifest the following symptoms:

- (1) *prasannātmā* – they remain ever joyful, being free from the effects of the subtle body, which is composed of the three material modes.
- (2) *na śocati* – they never lament for what they have lost.
- (3) *na kāṅkṣati* – they do not hanker for any material object. They do not identify with the body and as a result, they do not desire material enjoyment. They only desire devotion to Bhagavān.
- (4) *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu* – like a child, they look upon all living beings equally, be they good or bad
- (5) *mad bhaktiṃ parām* – they have a burning desire to attain supreme, transcendental *bhakti* to Me.

In the association of exalted, saintly persons possessed of these symptoms, the practitioner achieves *parā-bhakti*, supremely pure loving devotion to Śrī Bhagavān. At this point, it is necessary to understand the true meaning of the word *parā-bhakti*.

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Uttamā-bhakti means the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, it means the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed with

all endeavours of the body, mind and speech and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*). It is not covered by knowledge of oneness with *brahma*, or by *nitya-karma*, *naimittika-karma*, *yoga*, *tapasyā* and so forth. And it is devoid of every other type of desire other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Uttamā-bhakti is certainly the quintessence of all scriptures. Famous proponents of pure monism (*kevala-advaitavādīs*), such as Ācārya Śaṅkara, Ānandagiri and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, have stated in their commentaries on the present *Gītā* verse that *parā-bhakti* refers to that *bhakti* which is characterized by *jñāna*. In this verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, however, it is worth noting that *parā-bhakti* is attained after the *brahma-bhūta* stage. In other words, it is achieved by one who has become situated on the *brahma-bhūta* platform and is therefore superior to that platform. It is quite apparent that it does not refer to *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna* and aimed at achieving *brahma-jñāna*, realization of the Lord's effulgence. Upon attaining this stage, one needs to acquire full knowledge of Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A *brahma-jñānī* can achieve that knowledge if by good fortune, he takes shelter of transcendental devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the association of devotees.

At this point, it is necessary to clearly understand the difference between *parā-bhakti*, which gives knowledge of the truth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-tattva*), and the *bhakti* employed to achieve knowledge of the impersonal aspect of the Absolute (*brahma-jñāna*). The word *parā* (supremely transcendental) has been used to clarify this point. Furthermore, there is a confidential reason why *labhate* (obtains) was used instead of *kurute* (does). It is only possible to attain *parā-bhakti* when one has realized the insignificance and inferiority of *brahma-jñāna*, as attained by a *brahma-jñānī*. Since *parā-bhakti* can only be obtained by the causeless mercy of Bhagavān or His devotees, the word *labhate* has been used. The word *kurute* (does, or makes) would have been applicable if *parā-bhakti* were achievable by one's own endeavour, but Śrī Bhagavān has not used this word. This observation serves to clarify the meaning of *parā-bhakti*: Its only aim is pure devotion (also known as *śuddhā-bhakti*, *kevalā-bhakti* and *ananyā-bhakti*); it does not aim at *bhakti* mixed with *jñāna*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu proclaimed that even this *brahma-bhūta* stage is external, because one thus situated, although free from the modes, cannot realize or attain Goloka or Vaikuṅṭha. These realms can only be realized by *parā-bhakti*. The *brahma-bhūta* platform is therefore not topmost; it is merely the initial stage of supreme spiritual attainment.

Here it should be understood that two types of persons attain the *brahma-bhūta* stage. The first type endeavours to merge with the *brahma* effulgence (*sāyujya-mukti*), and they continue to do so, even after attaining the *brahma-bhūta* platform. They disregard Bhagavān's devotees, as well as His name, form, qualities and pastimes, and they do not listen to *hari-kathā*, transcendental narrations about the Supreme Lord. Thus they are offenders. They never achieve *mukti* but continue to wander in bodies in the demoniac species of life within this material world. The second type respects the devotees, as well as Bhagavān's name, form, qualities and pastimes. Taking shelter of the devotees, they easily achieve *parā-bhakti* due to their inoffensive attitude.

VERSE 55

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥५५॥

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

bhaktyā – through pure devotional service; *mām* – Me; *abhijānāti* – one can fully comprehend; *yāvān* – how great (My opulence); *yaḥ ca asmi* – what My *svarūpa* is; *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *tataḥ* – then; *mām* – Me (My eternal pastimes); *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *jñātvā* – having understood; *viśate* – one can enter; *tad-anantaram* – after leaving that *jñāna*.

It is only through pure devotional service that one can actually comprehend the truth concerning My glories and the nature of My original transcendental form. One who thus understands Me as I am enters My eternal pastimes on the strength of *prema-bhakti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What is the result of attaining *bhakti* to You?” Śrī Bhagavān answers this question in the verse beginning with *bhaktyā*.

“It is only by *bhakti* that *jñānīs* and various types of devotees can understand the *tattva* of My opulences, My being all-pervading and My *svarūpa* (*tat-padārtha*). I have also said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21), ‘I can be attained only by pure devotion.’ When the *jñānīs* cease their cultivation of knowledge, they will come to know Me on the strength of *bhakti*, and then they will enter into Me. In other words they realize the bliss of *sāyujya*. Because I am beyond *māyā* and since ignorance (*avidyā*) is *māyā*, I am known only by true knowledge (*vidyā*).”

The five divisions of true knowledge are stated in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*: knowledge (*jñāna*), mystic *yoga*, renunciation (*vairāgya*), austerity (*tapa*) and devotion to Keśava (*bhakti*). *Bhakti* is a special function of *vidyā*. Furthermore, a mere portion of *bhakti*, which is a function of Śrī Bhagavān’s internal pleasure-giving potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), enters *vidyā* to enable its success. And sometimes, a portion of *bhakti* enters *karma* to facilitate the success of *karma-yoga*. Without *bhakti*, the practice of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna*, etc., is simply useless labour that bears no fruit. *Vidyā* is in the mode of goodness, but *bhakti* is beyond all modes of nature, so it cannot manifest from *vidyā*. *Vidyā* removes ignorance, whereas *bhakti* enables one to know Śrī Bhagavān. Furthermore, it is said in the *Gītā* (14.17), “*Jñāna* arises from the mode of goodness, or *sattva-guṇa*.” Therefore, that *jñāna* which comes from the mode of goodness is also in that mode. *Vidyā* refers to knowledge in the mode of goodness, but the knowledge arising from *bhakti* is *bhakti* herself. In some places, that *bhakti* is indicated by the word *bhakti* and elsewhere by the word *jñāna*. It is thus necessary to understand that *jñāna* is also of two types.

One only achieves *brahma-sāyujya*, the liberation of merging into the Lord’s effulgence, after relinquishing the first type of *jñāna*, which manifests from the mode of goodness, and adopting the second type of *jñāna* arising from *bhakti*. This can be clearly seen in the Fifteenth Chapter of the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Those who are bereft of *bhakti* try to attain *sāyujya* through *jñāna* alone, but unfortunately, such persons, who are proud of their knowledge, only achieve distress and are thus condemned.

Then there are those who understand that liberation cannot be achieved solely through *jñāna* and so engage in *bhakti* mixed with

jñāna (*jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*). They think that Bhagavān's existence is material and temporary and that His body consists of the modes of material nature. Even after becoming adept in *yoga* (*yogārūḍha*), such persons, who falsely think that they are liberated, are condemned. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.2–3) states: “The respective qualities of the four stages of life (*āśramas*) and the four types of occupational duty (*varṇas*) originated separately from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Supreme Person, Śrī Bhagavān. Those who disrespect that self-born Bhagavān and do not render service to Him fall from their position.” This means that those who do not worship Him and those who do not properly respect Him even while worshipping Him lose their knowledge and fall down, even though they are *sannyāsīs*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also states (10.2.32):

*ye 'nye aravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

O lotus-eyed Lord, one who is falsely proud of being liberated and who does not perform *bhakti* to You due to his polluted intelligence, falls down because he disrespects Your lotus feet, even after he has taken great trouble to attain the highest position of renunciation.

The word *anye* in the above *Bhāgavatam* verse refers to a person other than a devotee of Śrī Mādhava, and the word *aṅghri* refers to *bhakti*. To disrespect Śrī Bhagavān's lotus feet, therefore, means to disrespect *bhakti*.

Anāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ means that it is disrespectful to consider Śrī Bhagavān's body to be composed of the three modes of material nature. This was also stated earlier in the *Gītā* (9.11): “Foolish people deride Me when I appear in My human form.” In reality, that human form is composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). Only by the influence of Śrī Bhagavān's inconceivable mercy potency (*kṛpā-śakti*) does that form become visible. It is said in *Nārāyaṇa-ādhyātma-vacana*, “Although the *svarūpa* of Śrī Bhagavān is ever unmanifest, He becomes visible only by the influence of His own

potency, or *śakti*. Who can see His supremely blissful *svarūpa* without the help of that potency?” In this way, the eternal, all-cognizant and fully blissful nature of Bhagavān’s body is established.

Hundreds of Śruti and Smṛti statements further establish the *sac-cid-ānanda* nature of Bhagavān’s form: “*kliptam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham śrī vṛndāvana sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam* – the Lord is described as He whose transcendental form of eternality, cognizance and bliss is seated at the base of a desire-tree” (*Gopāla-tāpini Upaniṣad*) and “*śābdam brahma dadhad vapuḥ* – His transcendental form can only be understood through the Vedas” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.21.8).

Despite this, some still conclude on the basis of one solitary statement in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.10) that His name, form, qualities and so forth are material: “*māyām tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān māyinaṁ tu maheśvaram* – the phenomenon of material nature is *māyā*, a temporary illusion, and Parameśvara is *mayī*, composed of *māyā*.”

There is, however, another statement from *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* quoted in *Śrī Madhva-bhāṣya*: “*ato māyāmayam viṣṇuṁ pravādanti sanātanam* – therefore, they declare Śrī Viṣṇu, the eternal Supreme Lord, to be composed of *māyā*.” According to this statement, Bhagavān is eternally endowed with an internal potency called *svarūpa-bhūta-māyā*, which is intrinsic to His own transcendental form. On the basis of this, the word *māyā* in *māyām tu* from the previously quoted verse (4.10) refers to His spiritual potency, the *cit-śakti*, which is *svarūpa-bhūta*. This means that it emanates from His own transcendental form, or *svarūpa*, and is therefore non-different from the Lord Himself. It does not refer to the material energy consisting of the modes of nature, which is not part of His transcendental form.

Such *jñānīs*, however, do not accept this meaning. They do not even accept the interpretation that *māyā* is the material nature, or *prakṛti*, and that Maheśvara, or Śambhu Śiva, is the master of that *māyā*. Due to this offensive attitude to Bhagavān, they fall down, even after they have attained the state of *jīvan-mukta*, or liberation while still within this material body. It is also said in the supplementary statement of *Vāsana-bhāṣya*, that even if one who is *jīvan-mukta* somehow offends Śrī Bhagavān, who is inconceivably powerful, he becomes entrenched in material lusty desires and has to again enter the cycle of material life.

He falls down because he abandons his practice upon attaining its fruit, thinking it is of no further use.

This means that upon attaining the stage of *jñāna-sannyāsa*, he abandons not only *jñāna* but *bhakti* also, which is present in *jñāna* to some degree (*guṇī-bhūtā-bhakti*), and he maintains the false conception that he is directly perceiving *brahma*. Because of his offences to the form of Bhagavān, *bhakti* also disappears along with *jñāna* and is not to be regained. Without *bhakti*, however, the Supreme Absolute Truth cannot be realized. The meditation such a person performs at that time is to be understood as useless, as is his pride in being *jīvan-mukta*, a liberated soul even within this body.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32) supports this view, stating, *ye 'nye aravindākṣa vimukta-māninaḥ*. Liberated persons who properly engage in the practice of *bhakti-miśra-jñāna* (knowledge mixed with devotion) are of two types. Both recognize Śrī Bhagavān's form to be composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, and such persons achieve *parā-bhakti* after gradually giving up *vidyā* (knowledge) and *avidyā* (ignorance).

The first type performs *bhakti* with the aim of becoming one with Him (*sāyujya-mukti*). Aided by *bhakti*, they achieve direct realization of the impersonal *brahma* and thus attain oneness with Him. Those individuals are worthy of honour.

The second type consist of highly fortunate persons who, by the influence of the association of tranquil *mahā-bhāgavatas*, renounce the desire for liberation. Like Śukadeva Gosvāmī and others, they remain absorbed in tasting the sweetness of *bhakti-rasa*. Such personalities merit the highest veneration. As it is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10), "The qualities of Śrī Hari are so wonderful that even great sages who are *ātmārāma*, or fully self-satisfied, and who have completely cut the knot of ignorance are attracted by His attracting potency. Hence, they perform selfless *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who performs wonderful feats."

Therefore, out of these four types of *jñānīs*, the first two are worthy of reproach and remain bound, while the other two are respectable and transcend the material world.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the result of transcendental pure devotion,

parā-bhakti, or *kevalā-bhakti*, which is symptomized by *prema*. By some good fortune attained by the mercy of a great personality, one who has achieved the *brahma-bhūta* stage then attains *parā-bhakti*. Losing his desire for liberation, he relinquishes *jñāna* and achieves that *bhakti* which is free from the modes of nature, thus realizing the fundamental Truth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well as his own eternal form as Kṛṣṇa's servant. This is *svārūpa-siddhi*. His later entrance into the pastimes of Bhagavān is known as *vastu-siddhi*. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10):

*ātmarāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanti ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

Those who are satisfied within and who are most fortunate can become attracted by the qualities of Śrī Bhagavān if they receive the causeless mercy of Śrī Bhagavān and His devotees. They can then become absorbed in relishing the sweetness of *bhakti-rasa* by engaging in causeless devotion (*ahaitukī bhakti*) to Him.

Examples of this are the four Kumāras, who received the mercy of Bhagavān, and Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who received the mercy of Śrī Vyāsadeva.

Gītā verses such as 11.54, 8.14 and 9.22 state that Śrī Bhagavān can only be attained by *bhakti*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21) states, “*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am attained only by pure devotional service.” While answering the questions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Rāya Rāmānanda said that *bhakti* that is free from *jñāna* is the essence of all perfection. But Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not accept this as the highest goal of life and requested him to explain further. At this point, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda presented a *Bhāgavatam* verse as evidence – *jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā*. This verse states that not all perfected and liberated persons can realize *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, the reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This has been discussed in various verses such as *Gītā* 7.3, “*manuṣyaṅāṁ sahasreṣu...* – only an extremely rare person comes to know Me in truth”; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5), “*muktānām api siddhānām...* – among millions of liberated souls, only one knows Me in truth”; and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.148), “*koṭi-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta* – among millions of souls who are actually liberated, it is very difficult to find one who is My pure devotee”.

The Śrūtis, Smṛtis, *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures give numerous proofs to show that even after a *jīva* has achieved *mukti*, he can become situated in his eternal *svarūpa* and taste the bliss of service to Śrī Bhagavān. In Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary called *Dhṛta-sarvajña-bhāṣyākāra*, he states (regarding 10.87.21): "*muktā api līlayā vīghrahaṁ kṛtvā bhagavantaṁ bhajante* – even the liberated beings constantly render service to Bhagavān with their transcendental bodies." In the Śrūtis, also, we find statements such as "*āprāyaṇāt tatrāpi hi dṛṣṭam* – what one does throughout one's life is evident at the time of death" (*Brahma-sūtra* 4.1.12), and *mokṣe ca bhaktir anuvarttate*, which describes that *bhakti* is present even in the liberated state.

Here, *viśate tad anantaram* (*Gītā* 18.55) has a deeper, more confidential meaning. One who has known and realized Bhagavān does not enter into Him and become one with Him; rather one enters into His pastimes. For example, when a person enters a city or a bird enters its nest, it does not mean that the person becomes the city or that the bird becomes the nest. It actually means that they enjoy great happiness in meeting with their family members.

The impersonalists (*nirviśeṣavādīs*) generally use the example of rivers flowing into the ocean to express the oneness of the *jīva* with *brahma*. They say that just as the rivers lose their name and form when they merge into the ocean (having given up their separate identity), in the same way, the *jīva* merges with *brahma* and becomes one with Him. However, the devotees, who adhere to the doctrine of personalism (*saviśeṣavādī-bhaktas*) say that, even after liberation, a pure *jīva* maintains his individual existence, just as the aquatics living in the ocean have their separate existence from the ocean and live there with their family members. To know the ocean, mere knowledge of the ocean's surface is not sufficient. It is necessary also to know the various aquatics that live deep within the ocean, as well as the ocean's pearls, gemstones and various other resources. Similarly, to know Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as He who is replete with six opulences and full of *rasa* is to know Him in *tattva* and in full. Only when a *sādhaka*, or *bhāva-bhakta*, has attained this knowledge can he then enter into the pastimes of Bhagavān. This takes place upon attaining

the state of full perfection known as *vastu-siddhi* in which he tastes the bliss of rendering service to Him.

One who deeply deliberates on the statements of scripture clearly understands that *jñāna* alone will not award liberation unless aided by *bhakti*. “*Sreyaḥ sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya...* – O Lord, devotional service to You is the main source of all kinds of auspiciousness. Those who give up this path to cultivate *jñāna* will simply undergo hard work, suffer pain and achieve difficulty, just as the only gain of a person who beats empty husks is hard work, not rice. I can be attained by *bhakti* alone, not by speculative knowledge” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.4). The *jñānīs* are of two types: those who exclusively cultivate knowledge (*kevala-jñānīs*) and those who mix devotion with their cultivation of *jñāna* (*bhakti-miśra-jñānīs*).

Bhakti-miśra-jñānīs are also of two types: those who consider the form of Bhagavān to be illusory and those who accept the form of Bhagavān to be composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss. Those who consider Bhagavān’s form to be illusory do not achieve liberation due to their offence at His lotus feet. Still, they erroneously consider themselves liberated. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32) makes the following statement about such proud *jñānīs*:

*ye ’nye aravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy astabhāvād aviśuddha buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho anāḍṛta yuṣmad-anḡhrayaḥ*

O lotus-eyed Bhagavān, He who has cultivated *jñāna* and who is falsely proud claims to be liberated. It should be understood that his intelligence is polluted because he has no conception that *bhakti* is an eternal activity. Although, in his cultivation of *jñāna*, through the process of negation, he has renounced material objects (*atat*), he only comes close to Absolute Reality (*tat*), and does not progress. Because he has failed to attain the shelter of Your lotus feet, he eventually falls down.

Gītā (9.12) also states:

*moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo mogha-jñānā vicetasah
rākṣasīm āsurīm caiva prakṛtiṁ mohinīm śritāḥ*

The hopes of such bewildered persons for liberation, material gain and the culture of knowledge all go in vain. Thus, with their minds distracted, they adopt the nature of the deluded, ignorant and passionate.

The second type of *jñānī* follows the path of *bhakti-miśra-jñāna*, accepting Bhagavān's form to be composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss. Such a *jñānī*, after renouncing knowledge (*vidyā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*), attains the liberation of merging with the Lord's effulgence, but he does not attain transcendental *bhakti*. Some of these *jñānīs*, however, are fortunate enough to receive the mercy of a perfected saint. This allows them to relinquish the desire for liberation and thus attain transcendental *bhakti*. The following *Bhāgavatam* verse (1.7.10) is spoken in reference to such self-satisfied *jñānīs* (*ātmārāmas*).

*ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim itthambhūta guṇo hariḥ*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has such an attractive potency that even the *ātmārāma-munis*, who have completely cut the knot of ignorance, become attracted to Him and start performing pure, causeless devotional service to Urukrama, the performer of wonderful activities. What, then, can be said of one who is absorbed in attraction to mundane matter?

All of the verses cited above clarify this point.

VERSE 56

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ ५६ ॥

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

sarva-karmāṅi – all sorts of activities; *api* – even though; *sadā* – always; *kurvāṇaḥ* – performing; *mat-vyapāśrayaḥ* – My exclusive devotee; *mat-prasādāt* – by My grace; *avāpnoti* – attains; *śāśvatam* – the eternal; *padam* – abode of Vaikuntha; *avyayam* – imperishable.

By My grace, My exclusive devotee attains the eternal and imperishable realm of Vaikuṅṭha, even though he always engages in various types of duties.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “It was explained earlier that a *jñānī* ultimately achieves the result of *sāyujya-mukti*, merging with My effulgence, by gradually giving up the results of his prescribed duties, or *karma*. He then gives up the *karma* itself and finally, he abandons *jñāna*. But how do My devotees attain Me?” To explain this, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *sarva*. “If even those who are inferior, that is, those who are *sakāma* (possessing material desires) attain the supreme destination by taking shelter of Me, what can be said of the destination of devotees who are *niṣkāma* (without such desires)?”

Even those who engage in all types of prescribed duties, such as regular (*nitya*), occasional (*naimittika*), fruitive (*kāmya*) and social activities, and who maintain their sons, daughters and others, achieve the indestructible destination, what to speak of those who give up prescribed duties, mystic perfection, knowledge, devotion to various demigods and all other material desires.

“Here, the statement *āśrayate* (he takes shelter) means that he wholeheartedly serves Me.” The prefix *ān* on the word *śraya* implies that service is certainly predominant. The word *api* (also) in the phrase *karmaṇy api* indicates the inferiority of prescribed duty and implies that it is secondary for such people. In other words, such people perform *bhakti* that is mixed with *karma*, prescribed action, not prescribed action that is mixed with *bhakti*. This means that they are not excessively engrossed in the *karma* that was described in the first six chapters. The words *śāśvataṁ padam* mean ‘they attain My eternal abodes such as Vaikuṅṭha, Mathurā, Dvārakā and Ayodhyā.’

But how will these abodes survive the total annihilation (*mahā-pralaya*)? In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān says *avyayam*. “My abodes are not destroyed at that time; they remain unaffected. This is possible only by My inconceivable potency.”

One may raise the following doubt: “On the one hand, a *jñānī* attains *sāyujya*, the liberation of merging with the Supreme Spirit, only after achieving *naiṣkarmya*, action without reaction. This occurs

as a result of his giving up all sense enjoyment, performing painful austerities and so forth for many lifetimes. Your devotees, however, attain Your eternal abode, even though they may perform their duty with material desires. Is this solely because they have taken shelter of You?” In response to this Śrī Bhagavān says, “This takes place by My mercy. Know that My sweet will is beyond all reason.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: This verse illustrates the speciality of *bhakti* and the *bhakta*. As one selflessly performs his prescribed duty as an offering to Bhagavān, one’s heart becomes increasingly purified and gradually one attains knowledge, or *jñāna*. “Such *jñānīs* then become qualified to attain *bhakti* to Me. By My causeless mercy, however, My *aikāntika-bhaktas*, who are exclusively dedicated to Me, can attain My supreme abode in any condition, simply by taking shelter of pure devotion. They are not bound by the results of any duty, even while performing obligatory (*nitya*), causal (*naimittika*) and fruitive (*kāmya*) activities. By My mercy, they quickly attain Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka, My eternal abodes.” This indicates the supremely merciful nature of Bhagavān in relation to His *aikāntika-bhaktas*. Bhagavān Himself says in the *Gītā* (9.30), “*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk* – even if a man’s conduct is most abominable, if he engages in exclusive devotion to Me, he is to be accepted as a devotee.”

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I have explained that the Vedic process is the confidential path to attaining Me. First one worships Bhagavān by selflessly offering Him the fruit of one’s prescribed duty (*niṣkāma-karma-yoga*). In this way, one attains knowledge (*jñāna*). Through that knowledge, one attains devotion (*bhakti*). I am lucidly describing the first of these three processes. Now, please listen as I explain how I am achieved by the second process, namely, worship of Me.

“Being especially attracted to Me, the devotee takes exclusive shelter of Me, even though he has material desires. Considering Me to be the Supreme Lord, He offers all of his activities to Me. By My mercy he finally attains that *bhakti* which is beyond the modes of nature. This is our imperishable and eternal position.”

VERSE 57

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥५७॥

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

cetasā – by such consciousness (free from the ego of being the doer); *sarva-karmāṇi* – all activities; *mayi* – unto Me; *sannyasya* – having surrendered or offered; *mat-paraḥ* – being dedicated to Me; *buddhi-yogam* – of the yoga of (resolute) intelligence; *upāśritya* – taking shelter; *mat-cittaḥ* – conscious absorbed in Me; *satatam* – always; *bhava* – be.

With your mind free from the false ego of being the doer, wholeheartedly offering all of your activities to Me, being fully devoted to Me and taking shelter of the *yoga* of unwavering intelligence, remain always absorbed in full consciousness of Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Very well, so what are You finally ordering me to do? Do You want me to become an exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhakta*) or a materialistic devotee (*sakāma-bhakta*), who possesses the symptoms You have already described?” Śrī Bhagavān responds to Arjuna’s question as follows: “You will not be able to become the topmost *bhakta*, nor should you become the inferior, *sakāma-bhakta*. Rather, you should become situated as a *madhyama-bhakta*, one in the intermediate stage of *bhakti*.” Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with the word *cetasā* to give this instruction.

Sarva-karmāṇi indicates, “You should become a *niṣkāma-bhakta* by offering your everyday activities to Me. This includes offering those activities related to *varṇāśrama-dharma*. I am the only goal of such *niṣkāma* devotees. I have already explained this in the *Gītā* (9.27), *yat karoṣi*.” The word *buddhi-yogam* means, “You should become constantly absorbed in Me with resolute intelligence. In other words, you should always remember Me while performing your prescribed duty or in any other situation.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Arjuna wants to clearly understand the obligations of a devotee whose qualification is to practise *bhakti* on the intermediate level, between that of the pure *aikāntika-bhakta*, who has attained transcendental *bhakti*, and the inferior *sakāma-bhakta*, who is still materialistically inclined. Understanding Arjuna's inner feeling, Śrī Kṛṣṇa now gives instruction for whose qualification is similar to that of Arjuna. "Such a person should give up the false ego of being the doer and the enjoyer of all action and offer all of their action to Me, remembering Me always." This was also stated earlier: *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi*. It is worthy to note, however, that the activity itself should be performed as an offering, not just the results of the activity. By doing this and by the influence of *sādhu-saṅga*, the *sādhaka* finally attains transcendental *bhakti*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "I have already explained that *brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān* are My three manifestations. Through *buddhi-yoga* (intelligence fixed on Me), fix your thoughts on My manifestation of *Paramātmā*, and with your mind, offer all your work to Me. In this way, become devoted to Me."

VERSE 58

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्कारान्न श्रोश्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥५८॥

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

mat-cittaḥ – by fixing your mind on Me; *sarva-durgāṇi* – from all obstacles; *mat-prasādāt* – by My grace; *tariṣyasi* – you will cross over; *atha cet* – if however; *tvam* – you; *ahaṅkārāt* – out of egoism; *na śroṣyasi* – do not listen; *vinaṅkṣyasi* – you will be ruined.

By constantly remembering Me with wholehearted devotion, you will, by My grace, cross over all obstacles. But if, out of false ego, you neglect My instructions, you will attain ruination in the form of continued material existence.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What would occur as a consequence of that?” In response, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse beginning with *mac-cittaḥ*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “By fixing your mind upon Me in this way, you will be able to transcend any obstacle that may arise in your lifetime. If, however, you do not act in this way and, out of false ego and subsequent identification with the body, you consider yourself the doer, then you will fall from your immortal *svarūpa* and incur destruction by remaining in this material world.”

VERSE 59

यदहङ्कारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे।
मिथ्यैव व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥५९॥

yad ahaṅkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaiva vyavasāyas te prakṛtiḥ tvāṁ niyoṣyati

yat – which; *ahaṅkāram* – of false ego; *āśritya* – having taken shelter; *na yotsya* – I shall not fight; *iti* – thus; *manyase* – you are thinking; *mithyā* – vain; *eva* – certainly; *vyavasāyaḥ* – resolution; *te* – your; *prakṛtiḥ* – My illusory energy (as the quality of passion); *tvām* – you; *niyoṣyati* – will engage (in fighting).

Your resolution to not fight is solely due to this false ego, but it will only go in vain, for My material energy, in her form as the mode of passion, will compel you to fight anyway.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “I am a *kṣatriya* and to fight in battle is my highest duty, but I do not wish to fight because I fear the great sin I will incur by killing so many people.” Śrī Bhagavān responds to this argument by reprimanding Arjuna, speaking this verse beginning with *yad ahaṅkāram*. The word *prakṛtiḥ* means *sva-bhāva*, or nature. “O great hero, you are not accepting My instructions now, but when your formidable, natural enthusiasm to fight manifests, you will make Me laugh by entering this battle and killing such worshipable personalities as Bhīṣma.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Sādhakas* should never misuse their independence and engage in frivolous acts. According to the instructions of Śrī Bhagavān, they should give up the false ego of being the doer and the enjoyer and act as His servants. One should receive this instruction of Bhagavān either from Bhagavān Himself as *caitya-guru* within, or from the scripture spoken by Him. Or, considering the instructions of the devotees to be non-different from His, one should work only for the purpose of serving Him. If, however, one performs work with the conception of being the doer and the enjoyer, which is opposed to the instruction of Bhagavān, one becomes bound to undergo the good and bad results of those actions, life after life.

VERSE 60

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात् करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥६०॥

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

svabhāva-jena – born of the nature; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *nibaddhaḥ* – bound; *svena* – your own; *karmaṇā* – by your work; *kartum* – to do; *na icchasi* – you do not wish; *yat* – which; *mohāt* – out of delusion; *kariṣyasi* – you will do; *avaśaḥ* – helplessly; *api* – still; *tat* – that.

O son of Kuntī, you will be helplessly compelled to perform that action which in your deluded state you now wish to avoid, because you are bound to act in accordance with your inborn nature.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: This verse elaborates on the previous one. “Due to *saṁskāras*, or impressions from past lives, you possess the nature of a *kṣatriya*. You will certainly engage in battle, being compelled by your natural inborn qualities, such as chivalry.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The import of Śrī Bhagavān’s statement in this verse is as follows: “Now you are not following My instructions because you are bewildered; that is why you are not engaging in battle. But when your enthusiasm to fight gains strength,

then, in accordance with your own nature, you will not be able to suppress it. You will be bound to undergo the results of those actions and will see yourself as an agent of battle, a warrior. It is therefore beneficial for you to fight in pursuance of My instruction.”

According to this injunction, the *sādhakas* who have a similar level of qualification (as discussed in the previous verses) should become free from both their gross and subtle egos in order to perform action in service to Bhagavān, which is favourable to *bhakti*.

VERSE 61

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ ६१ ॥

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

īśvaraḥ – the indwelling Paramātmā; *sarva-bhūtānām* – of all beings; *hṛt-deśe* – in the area of the heart; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *tiṣṭhati* – is situated; *bhrāmayan* – He is motivated to wander; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all living beings; *yantra-ārūḍhāni* – (as if) mounted upon machines [the 8,400,000 species]; *māyayā* – by His illusory energy.

O Arjuna, the indwelling Supersoul is situated in the heart of all living beings. By His illusory potency, He is causing them to wander in the cycle of birth and death, as if they are mounted on a machine.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is now giving His own conclusion, having explained, in the previous two verses, the opinion of the *svabhāvavādīs*, those who believe that everyone acts according to the tendencies born of their natures. Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the indwelling witness of all, resides within the living entities. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.6.3) states that He resides within the earth, but the earth does not know Him. The earth is His body and by residing within the earth, He controls and moves it. The Śrutis also state: “Śrī Nārāyaṇa pervades everything that is seen or heard in this universe and anything that is within it or beyond it.”

From these Vedic statements, it is established that Īśvara is situated within the heart as the indwelling, all-seeing Supersoul. What does

He do there? In response to this, Śrī Bhagavān says, “By His *māyā-śakti*, He engages all living entities in various activities, making them wander within this material world.” Just as a puppeteer pulls strings to manoeuvre puppets, *māyā* similarly controls the living entities. *Yantrārūḍhāni* also means ‘jīvas who are situated in various bodies’.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Parameśvara is the indwelling Supersoul of the entire moving and non-moving world. This was stated previously in the *Gītā* (15.15): “*sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo* – I am seated within everyone’s heart; all remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness come from Me alone.”

The Śrutis also say:

*eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ
sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā
karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ
sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca*

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.11)

He is omnipresent and omnipotent. Under His control, the living entity is wandering throughout this material world, riding the machine of the subtle and gross body made by the illusory potency.

Some think that Īśvara, the Supreme Lord, controls all beings and prompts their actions. They conclude, ‘Therefore, all of our good and bad actions are inspired by Him.’ They think that the living entity is just like a puppet, so instead of him receiving the results of all his good and bad works, Īśvara alone should, and in fact does, receive the results. This understanding is completely wrong. The word *yantrārūḍhāni* should be properly understood. *Māyā* gives the living entities who are averse to Bhagavān a subtle and a gross body, according to the impressions created by their previous actions, which have accumulated since time immemorial. The living entity wanders throughout the cycle of *karma*, in bodies he receives in accordance with his previous actions. This takes place by the inspiration of Īśvara and under the control of *māyā*. Īśvara does not directly engage the conditioned souls in action. Because the conditioned soul does not want to give up his independence completely and be controlled by Bhagavān, he does not receive this good fortune.

Thus, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu clearly states in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.117):

*kṛṣṇa bhūli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha*

The living entity has forgotten Kṛṣṇa since time immemorial; thus *māyā* gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.

Parameśvara merely acts as a witness to such rebellious living entities, and through *māyā* He makes them undergo the results of all their good and bad activities. But He does not remain indifferent like a witness toward His devotees. Rather, He engages them in serving Him. This is His great mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I alone am situated in the heart of all living beings as Paramātmā, and Paramātmā is indeed the controller and master of all. Īśvara gives the *jīvas* the fruit of whatever action they perform. Just as an object rotates on a machine, similarly, the living entities continue to wander in the material world, as arranged by the all-controlling quality of Īśvara. According to your previous action, you will continue to function according to your nature by the inspiration of Īśvara.”

VERSE 62

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥६२॥

*tam eva śaraṇam gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat prasādāt parāṁ śāntim sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam*

tam – of Him (the Supreme Controller); *eva* – indeed; *śaraṇam gaccha* – take shelter; *sarva-bhāvena* – in every way; *bhārata* – O descendant of Bharata; *tat-prasādāt* – by His mercy; *parāṁ śāntim* – transcendental peace; *sthānam* – the abode; *prāpsyasi* – you will attain; *śāśvatam* – eternal.

O descendant of Bharata, surrender completely to Him, that Supreme Controller. By His grace, you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme eternal abode.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: For the purpose of explaining the significance of surrendering to Him, Śrī Bhagavān is now speaking this verse beginning with *tam eva*. *Parām* means ‘when both *avidyā* and *vidyā* cease, you will attain Vaikuṅṭha, the eternal abode’. Some people think that those who worship Paramātmā attain the shelter of Paramātmā, but later, it will be described how the worshippers of Bhagavān attain His shelter. Others constantly think, “My worshipful deity (*iṣṭa-deva*) is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and He is my only *guru*. He alone will bestow *bhakti-yoga* and beneficial instructions upon me. I surrender to Him only. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is my Antaryāmī, my indwelling witness. May He alone engage me in His service. I take exclusive shelter of Him.” As Uddhava also says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.6), “O Lord, those who are greatly learned, who have acquired a duration of life equivalent to that of Brahmā, and who blissfully remember You, always feel indebted to You. This is because You illuminate the embodied entities with the method to attain You. You accomplish this externally as the spiritual master (*ācārya-guru*) and internally as the Supersoul (*caitya-guru*).”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Here, Śrī Bhagavān instructs Arjuna to fully surrender to Antaryāmī, the indwelling witness in all. He is Parameśvara, who is causelessly merciful and who was described in the previous verse. Parameśvara is influenced by one-pointed surrender, which pleases Him. By His mercy, one can easily attain supreme transcendental peace and go to His imperishable abodes, such as Vaikuṅṭha or Goloka. In this world, Bhagavān manifests Himself in five forms for the welfare of the *jīvas*, according to their service attitude. These five forms are (1) *arcā-vigraha* – the deity, (2) Antaryāmī – the Supersoul, (3) *vaibhava* – incarnations of the Lord, (4) *vyūha* – expansions and (5) *parā* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

*kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kono bhāgyavāne
guru-antaryāmī-rūpe sikhāye āpane*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.47)

To bestow His mercy upon those living entities who possess sufficient accumulated spiritual merit, Bhagavān gives instructions – externally as the spiritual master and internally as *guru* within the heart (the *caitya-guru*) – about surrendering to Him.

VERSE 63

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥६३॥

*iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataraṁ mayā
vimṛśyaitad aśeṣeṇa yathecchasi tathā kuru*

iti – thus; *te* – to you; *jñānam* – transcendental knowledge; *ākhyātam* – has been described; *guhyāt* – than the confidential knowledge; *guhyataram* – more confidential; *mayā* – by Me; *vimṛśya* – after reflecting; *etat* – on this; *aśeṣeṇa* – completely; *yathā* – as; *icchasi* – you wish; *tathā* – so; *kuru* – do.

Thus I have instructed you in this knowledge, which is more confidential than the secret knowledge of *brahma*. Reflect fully on this confidential knowledge, and then act as you wish.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse beginning with *iti* to conclude the entire *Gītā*. “One can know *karma-yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* by this knowledge. This means that it is even more confidential than the knowledge imparted in scriptures delineating *jñāna*. Even sages such as Vasiṣṭha, Vedavyāsa and Nārada could not reveal it in the scriptures they composed, for their omniscience is relative, but Mine is complete. Due to the highly confidential nature of this *tattva*, even these exalted sages are not fully acquainted with it; I do not instruct it even to them. Reflect deeply upon My instructions and then act as you desire, in accordance with your discretion.”

In this way, the last set of six chapters has been completed. This *Bhagavad-gītā*, consisting of eighteen chapters, is the crest jewel of all types of knowledge. It is comprised of three sets of six chapters and is like a treasure chest that contains the most precious and unrivalled gem, namely, highly confidential *bhakti*. The first set of six chapters, called *karma-śaṭka*, is the gold-covered base of this chest, and the last set of six chapters, *jñāna-śaṭka*, is the gem-studded lid. *Bhakti*, the set of six chapters situated in between these two *śaṭkas*, is the most precious wealth within the three worlds. Containing the power to control and overpower Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *bhakti* is situated within this chest like an excellent and beautiful gem. The forthcoming two verses (18.65–66),

the first beginning with *man-manā bhava*, consist of sixty-four syllables. They should be regarded as the pure maidservant of this *bhakti*, being situated as the upper covering of the entire chest.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this present verse, Śrī Bhagavān is presenting His conclusion to *Bhagavad-gītā*. He says that knowledge of His impersonal aspect, *brahma-jñāna*, as previously described, is confidential; knowledge of His aspect as the Supersoul, *paramātma-jñāna*, is more confidential; and knowledge of Him, the Supreme Person, *bhagavat-jñāna*, is most confidential. He will clearly explain this in the following verse. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the non-dual Absolute Truth (*advaya-jñāna-svarūpa*) and the ultimate limit of *parā-tattva*. He has three manifestations: *brahma* (His bodily effulgence), *Paramātmā* (His localized aspect) and *Bhagavān* (His personal aspect, the Supreme Lord Himself). As *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) states:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

Those who are knowers of the Truth (*tattva-vit*) realize that non-dual Absolute Truth in three aspects. *Brahma* only has the characteristic of *cit*, or consciousness, and is the first manifestation of that *tattva*. *Paramātmā*, the extension of that *cit*, is the second manifestation. And *Bhagavān*, who manifests as *cid-vilāsa-rūpa* (He who performs transcendental, amorous pastimes) is the third manifestation. That *tattva* is known by three names in these three states.

The three manifestations of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa are *brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*. Realization of *brahma* (the effulgence emanating from His body) is the perverted reflection of *cid-amśa*, the conscious aspect of the Absolute Truth. It does not yield full understanding of the Truth. Realization of *Paramātmā* comprises partial realization of *sat* (eternality) and *cit* (cognizance). And realization of *Bhagavān* is the complete realization of the Absolute in the form of *sat* (eternality), *cit* (cognizance) and *ānanda* (complete bliss).

Here, *brahma-jñāna* is called confidential (*guhya*), *paramātma-jñāna* more confidential (*guhyatara*) and *bhagavat-jñāna* the most confidential (*guhyatama*).

This most confidential *bhagavat-jñāna* also has three divisions: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete in Dvārakā, more complete in Mathurā and most complete in Vṛndāvana, or Gokula. Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa's friend in His Dvārakā pastimes, is only familiar with His complete feature.

The eighteen chapters of the *Gītā* are divided into three divisions of six. The first six chapters describe *niṣkāma-karma-yoga*, the *yoga* of offering the result of one's selflessly performed prescribed duty to Bhagavān. The second six chapters describe *bhakti-yoga*, the *yoga* of pure devotion, and the third six chapters describe *jñāna-yoga*, the *yoga* of transcendental knowledge. One should not think that *jñāna-yoga* is the highest and final conclusion just because it comes at the end of this scripture. Rather, the meaning is hidden: *bhakti-yoga*, which is situated in between *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, gives strength to both, enabling *karma* and *jñāna* to give their results. *Karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* are useless without the shelter of *bhakti*. Therefore, the *Gītā* is like a treasure chest, its base being *karma-yoga*, its upper lid being *jñāna-yoga*, and the great wealth of Bhakti-devī being situated like a precious gem in between. In this way, people in general can understand that the first six chapters are confidential, the last six chapters are more confidential, and the middle six chapters are the most confidential.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "Knowledge of the impersonal aspect of Bhagavān (*brahma-jñāna*), which I explained to you earlier, is secret. Knowledge of the localized aspect of Bhagavān (*paramātma-jñāna*), which is now being explained, is more secret. Reflect on this thoroughly and do as you wish.

"If you want to achieve *brahma* by taking shelter of *jñāna* through the *yoga* of selfless action and in this way gradually achieve devotion to Me that is beyond the modes of nature, then perform your actions in this battle as *niṣkāma-karma*. And if you want to surrender to Paramātmā, then engage in battle while offering your actions to Īśvara, performing the duty born of your *kṣatriya* nature, as prompted by Him. Then Īśvara, who is My *avatāra* (incarnation), will gradually bestow upon you that *bhakti* which is transcendental to the modes. Whatever your conclusion, understand that to fight is certainly beneficial for you."

VERSE 64

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
 इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥६४॥

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

sarva-guhyatamam – the most confidential of all instructions; *bhūyaḥ* – again; *śṛṇu* – hear; *me* – My; *paramam* – supreme; *vacaḥ* – instruction; *iṣṭaḥ* – very dear; *asi* – you are; *me* – to Me; *dṛḍham* – extremely; *iti* – knowing; *tataḥ* – therefore; *vakṣyāmi* – I shall speak; *te* – for your; *hitam* – welfare.

Again hear My supreme instruction, the most confidential of all knowledge. You are extremely dear to Me, and therefore, I am speaking this for your benefit.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: When Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw that His dear friend Arjuna had fallen silent while deliberating on the deep and grave meanings of this *Gītā*, His heart, which is as soft as butter, melted and He said, “O Arjuna, My dear friend, now, in these concluding eight verses, I will speak the very essence of all scriptures to you.” Arjuna may ask, “Why will You take further trouble to explain this?” Śrī Bhagavān thus responded with this verse beginning with *sarva-guhyatamam*. “In the verse beginning with *man-manā bhava mad-bhakto*, I will again impart to you the king of all knowledge (*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam*), the essence of the Ninth Chapter. This is indeed the supreme statement, for it is the essence of the *Gītā*, which is itself the essence of all scriptures. The word *guhyatamam* means that nothing more confidential than this can be found anywhere. It is absolute. I am reiterating this for your ultimate benefit, because you are My very dear friend (*iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti*). And why would I not? After all, a person will reveal his most confidential secrets only to his dear-most friend.”

Some versions of the *Gītā* use the phrase *iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍha-matiḥ* instead of *dṛḍham iti*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī *Gītā* is called an Upaniṣad. It is the essence of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. One can

only understand its innermost intention by the mercy of Bhagavān or His devotees. These confidential instructions cannot possibly be understood merely on the strength of one's intelligence or through the medium of *karmīs*, *jñānīs* or non-devotees who consider the form of Bhagavān to be illusory and devoid of potency. Only the exclusive, fully surrendered devotees of Kṛṣṇa can, by His grace, become aware of these most confidential instructions. This verse is spoken by Śrī Bhagavān for the explicit purpose of explaining this secret.

Arjuna is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's fully surrendered devotee and is very dear to Him. He is therefore qualified to hear this most confidential instruction. In the same way, only such pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa are capable of comprehending this most secret instruction of the *Gītā*, not others.

The *aikāntika-bhaktas* are exclusively surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, knowing Him to be the Absolute Truth, composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss, and therefore, they actively engage in following His instructions and directions, being freed from any doubt or controversy.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, "I spoke *brahma-jñāna*, knowledge of My featureless aspect, to you. This knowledge is confidential (*guhya*). And I told you of *īśvara-jñāna*, knowledge of My localized aspect, which is more confidential (*guhyatara*). Now, I am instructing you on *bhagavat-jñāna*, knowledge of My personal aspect, which is most confidential (*guhyatama*). Please listen. This *bhagavat-jñāna* is superior to all the other teachings I have given in *Bhagavad-gītā*. I am imparting it to you for your welfare, because you are very dear to Me."

VERSE 65

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६५ ॥

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

mat-manāḥ – offer your mind to Me; *bhava* – become; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – My devotee (engage in hearing and chanting about My name, form, etc.); *mat-yājī* – My worshipper; *mām* – to Me; *namaskuru* – offer your obeisances;

mām – Me; *evaiśyasi* – you shall attain; *satyam* – truthfully; *te* – to you; *pratijāne* – I promise; *priyaḥ* – dear; *asi* – are; *me* – to Me.

Absorb your consciousness in Me; become My devotee by dedicating yourself to such practices as hearing about and glorifying My names, forms, qualities and pastimes; worship Me; and offer obeisances to Me. Thus, you will certainly attain Me. This truth I swear to you because you are most dear to Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: “*Man-manā bhava* means that, becoming My exclusive devotee, you should meditate on Me. Do not become a *jñānī* or *yogī* and contemplate Me as they do.” Alternatively, *man-manā bhava* means, “You should become like that person who has offered his mind to Me, Śyāmasundara, who am showering upon you a sweet, merciful glance from My most beautiful moon-like face, which is adorned with exquisite arched eyebrows and soft curly hair. *Mad-bhaktah* means to offer your senses to Me. In other words, worship Me by engaging all your senses in service to Me; hear and chant My glories, see My deity form, cleanse and decorate My temple, collect flowers and make garlands, decorate Me with ornaments, offer Me an umbrella, fan Me with a yak-tail whisk and perform other services. *Mad-yājī* means to worship Me, offering Me articles such as fragrances, flowers, incense, a ghee lamp and foodstuffs. *Mām namaskuru* means to fall to the ground and offer obeisance with either eight or five limbs of your body. *Mām evaiśyasi* means you will surely achieve Me by performing the four activities of thinking, serving, worshipping and offering obeisances, or even by performing just one of them. Offer Me your mind and all your senses, such as your ear and tongue, and in return I will give Myself to you. This is the truth; do not doubt it.”

According to the *Amara-koṣa*, the words *satya* (truth), *śapatha* (vow) and *tathya* (fact) are synonymous. Arjuna may say, “The people of Mathurā take vows at every step, but in fact they are unable to maintain them, so how can I have faith in the vow of You, who are the Lord of Mathurā?” Śrī Bhagavān responds, “Although what you say is true, I am making this promise because you are very dear to Me. A person does not deceive those who are dear to him.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: *Man-manā bhava* means ‘to absorb one’s mind exclusively in Kṛṣṇa’. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has accepted the *gopīs* as the epitome of *man-manā bhava*, and He expresses this to Uddhava (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.46.4–6):

*tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā mad-arthe tyakta-daiḥikāḥ
mām eva dayitaṁ preṣṭham ātmānaṁ manasā gatāḥ
ye tyakta-loka-dharmās ca mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham
mayi tāḥ preyasām preṣṭhe dūra-sthe gokula-striyaḥ
smarantyo ’nga vimuhyanti virahautkaṅṭhya-vihvalāḥ
dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana
pratyāgamana-sandēsair ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ*

Dear Uddhava, the minds of the *gopīs* are always absorbed in Me. I am their very life and their all-in-all. It is for My sake alone that they have relinquished everything, including their homes, husbands, sons, relatives, shyness and religious principles. They constantly remain absorbed in thoughts of Me alone. Because they have faith in My statement, ‘I will come,’ they are maintaining their lives somehow or other with great difficulty and are waiting for Me.

This description of the *gopīs* anxiety in their separation from Kṛṣṇa is the highest example of *man-manā bhava*. Now hear about the *gopīs*’ absorption in Kṛṣṇa while they are in *pūrva-rāga*, that state prior to meeting with Him.

Once, a newly married *gopī* came to live in Nandagāon. This *gopī* had heard of Kṛṣṇa’s name and His supremely attractive and wonderful activities, yet she had never had the good fortune to see Him directly. Every day, Kṛṣṇa sounded His flute as He entered the forest to tend the cows with His friends. Upon hearing that sound, all the residents of Vraja would gather on the royal path, eager to see the unparalleled sweetness of His beauty. Some stood on the balconies and some climbed trees. Some stood near the path and some peeped through windows. That newly-married *gopī* also longed to go there and see Kṛṣṇa, but her mother-in-law forbade her, saying, “A black snake out there will bite you; you should not go.”

The newly-wedded bride contended this. “Your daughter has gone out, so why do you forbid me?” But her mother-in-law would not relent.

The young *gopī* neglected this instruction and sneaked to behind a grove beside the royal path, which allowed her to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Understanding her mind, Kṛṣṇa slightly twisted the tail of a calf, who took off, running and jumping over to that new *gopī*, coming to a stop just near her. Kṛṣṇa chased after the calf and finally arrived at that very spot. For a mere moment He stood there in His beautiful threefold-bending form, touched the chin of that *gopī* with His flute and then ran off to rejoin His friends. The new *gopī*, now totally absorbed in the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form, lost her external consciousness and stood motionless as Kṛṣṇa entered the forest.

A considerable amount of time passed. When she did not return home, her mother-in-law came searching for her. Upon finding her in that condition, she shook that *gopī* and cried, "What I feared has happened! You have been bitten by that black snake."

She brought the *gopī* back to the house and ordered her to extract butter from yogurt kept in a clay pot. The bride still had not regained her external consciousness. Mistaking a pot full of mustard seeds for yogurt, she began to churn. Sometimes she would churn the mustard seeds and sometimes not, so sometimes a harsh sound came from her churning and sometimes no sound. Noticing this, her mother-in-law ordered her to bring water from the well instead. She placed three pots on the *gopī*'s head, one on top of the other. She then placed a rope in one hand and a little baby to carry on her hip in the other arm. She then sent her to fetch water from the well.

The bride went to the well and prepared the rope to haul water, but she was not in her natural state of mind and proceeded to tie the rope around the baby's neck. The other *gopīs* at the well stopped her, crying, "Alas, alas! What has happened to her? It seems that she is possessed by a ghost!" But some *gopīs* knew the reality of the situation. "No, no," they said, "it is not a ghost that has possessed her but the son of Nanda Mahārāja."

This is an example of *man-manā bhava*.

The instruction *mad-bhaktō bhava* (become My devotee) is for those who cannot become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa as the *gopīs* are. *Mad-bhaktō bhava* means to offer oneself fully unto the lotus feet of Bhagavān. How can a *bhaktā* render service continuously? In this regard, the story of Prahāda has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23–24):

śrī-prahlāda uvāca
śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavatya addhā tan manye 'dhītam uttama

Prahlāda Mahārāja said, “O my dear father, *bhakti* to Śrī Viṣṇu is performed in nine ways: hearing and chanting about Him, remembering His name, form, qualities, pastimes, etc., rendering service to His lotus feet, worshipping Him, praying to Him, serving Him, making friendship with Him and surrendering one’s self to Him. If these nine types of *bhakti* are performed to Bhagavān in a mood of surrender, then I consider that to be the best of all education.”

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa is a shining example of complete surrender. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.18–20) describes how he performed *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa.

sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
vacāmsi vaikunṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
śrutim cakārcyuta-sat-kathodaye
mukunda-liṅgālaya-darśane dṛṣau
tad-bhṛtya-gātra-sparṣe 'ṅga-saṅgamam
ghrāṇam ca tat-pāda-saroja-saurabhe
śrīmat-tulasyā rasanām tad-arpite
pādau hareḥ kṣetra-padānusarpaṇe
śiro hṛṣikeśa-padābhivandane
kāmaṁ ca dāsye na tu kāma-kāmyayā
yathottama-śloka-janāśrayā ratih

He fixed his mind on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, his speech in glorifying the qualities of Bhagavān, his hands in cleansing the temple of Śrī Hari and his ears in hearing the auspicious pastimes of Bhagavān Acyuta. He engaged his eyes in seeing the deity and temples of Mukunda, his body and limbs in touching the bodies of His devotees, his nose in smelling the transcendental fragrance of Tulasī offered at His feet, and his tongue in honouring the *prasāda* that had been offered to Bhagavān. He utilized his feet for walking

to the holy abodes of Bhagavān, and his head in offering obeisances at His lotus feet. He offered all paraphernalia such as garlands and sandalwood in the service of Bhagavān. He did all this, not to acquire material enjoyment, but to attain pure love for Bhagavān, which resides in His devotees only. Glorification of them serves to purify everyone.

Bilvamaṅgala is an example of such a devotee. He was born in a village on the bank of the Kṛṣṇā-veṅṇā River in South India. He was a great scholar of the Vedas and Vedānta, but he was overly attached to a prostitute named Cintāmaṇi. One evening it was raining heavily, but still, he was so obsessed with desire to meet Cintāmaṇi that he set out for her residence, not caring for the bad weather. On the way, he had to cross a river, which on that terrifying night was flooded. In fact, it looked like the very form of death. There were no means to cross that river, so in desperation Bilvamaṅgala took the aid of a floating corpse. Upon reaching Cintāmaṇi's house, he saw that her gate was closed. Bilvamaṅgala saw something hanging from her boundary wall and used it to scale the wall, thinking it was a rope, but in fact it was a snake. While climbing down the other side of the wall, however, he slipped and fell to the ground, making a loud crash and losing consciousness. Cintāmaṇi and her friends ran out to see what had happened. Flashes of lightning illuminated the scene and enabled her to recognize Bilvamaṅgala. At that point she understood everything. Reproaching herself, Cintāmaṇi chastized Bilvamaṅgala severely. "If only you were as attached to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as you are to me, you would certainly become a supremely blessed man."

As Bilvamaṅgala regained consciousness, he heard Cintāmaṇi's words, which pierced his heart. He immediately saw the folly of his activities and decided to end his sinful ways immediately and journey on foot to Vṛndāvana. On the way, he became thirsty, and when he saw a young woman hauling water from a well, he went over to her. That woman's beauty was so exquisite that he became attracted and even followed her to her home.

The woman's husband noted Bilvamaṅgala's dress and demeanor and took him to be a saint. He showed him due respect, inviting him

into his home and offering him a seat. Bilvamaṅgala then requested the man to call his wife. When she entered the room, Bilvamaṅgala asked her for her two hairpins. He took them and immediately pierced both his eyes. “These eyes have become the cause of my degraded, wretched condition!” he lamented grievously. “By them, I become attracted by their sense objects – beautiful women. Where there is no cause there can be no effect!” Now blind, he again started for Vṛndāvana, blood flowing profusely from his eyes. But his heart had become purified. After only walking a short distance, a boy came to him, and in a very sweet voice asked, “O Bābā, where are you going?”

“I am going to Vṛndāvana,” Bilvamaṅgala replied.

The boy said, “I am also going to Vṛndāvana. Please grasp hold of My walking stick.” That boy was none other than Muralī-manohara Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, He who captivates the mind by playing His *muralī* flute.

Mad-yājī means ‘to perform worship of Me’ (*arcana*). The steady practice of *arcana* is on a slightly lower level than that of *mad-bhaktō*. Śrī Bhagavān therefore says, “If you cannot be a devotee (*mad-bhaktō*) like Bilvamaṅgala, then perform worship of Me.” What should the determination of one who performs *arcana* to Śrī Bhagavān be like? To illustrate this, I will relate a story from our own experience that took place here in Mathurā, India.

There used to be a *bābā* (saintly person) in Mathurā who worshipped his *śālagrāma-silā* with steadfast faith. He did not have complete knowledge of the various limbs of *arcana* (worship), but whatever worship he performed, he did with great faith and devotion. He had taken a vow to bathe in Yamunā every day during the early morning period of *brahma-muhūrta*, and to worship his *śālagrāma* with Yamunā water only. Once, on the Amāvasyā (dark-moon day) in the month of Māgha, the cold winter month from mid-January to mid-February, it rained the entire night and a strong chilly wind blew. It was pitch-dark and he had no idea of the time because no stars were visible in the sky. He had woken long before the *brahma-muhūrta* hour and set out to take his bath. Yamunā’s waters were as cold as ice and he was shivering due to the extreme chilliness, but he still took bath just to maintain his vow. He then started back for his home, carrying the Yamunā water for his worship. His return home was arduous,

with the dense darkness, heavy rain and the weak condition of his shivering body, but he was anxious to worship his deity. Suddenly, he saw somebody coming toward him carrying a lantern. It was a young boy holding a blanket over His head to shield Himself from the rain. He came up to the *bābā* and asked, “Bābā, where are you going?” The man told Him where he lived and the boy said, “I am also going that way. Come with Me and I will take you to your house.”

He proceeded to walk with that boy and reached his house very quickly. Just as he was about to enter, he thought, “Let me ask this boy His name.” But what a wonder! Although the *bābā* looked everywhere he was unable to see that boy, not even a trace of Him. Standing there like a stone, he lamented, “Alas! That *chaliyā* (transcendental cheater) Himself came to protect my vow, and upon cheating me, He has gone away.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.3.29) illustrates the meaning of *mām namaskuru* with Yamarāja’s instructions to the Yamadūtas:

*jihvā na vakti bhagavad-guṇa-nāmadheyam
cetaś ca na smarati tac-caraṇāravindam
kṛṣṇāya no namati yac-chira ekadāpi
tān ānayadhvam asato ’kṛta-viṣṇu-kṛtyān*

O Yamadūtas, bring me only those sinful people whose tongues do not chant the name of Kṛṣṇa, whose minds do not remember the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and whose heads have not bowed even once before Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because they have never performed a single act of *bhakti*.

“*Daśāśvamedhi punar eti janma kṛṣṇa-praṇāmī na punar bhavāya* – a person who performs ten *aśvamedha-yajñas* has to take birth again, but those who offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa even once never take birth again.”

“*Sakṛt praṇāmī kṛṣṇasya mātuh stanyam piben nahi* – one who bows down to Kṛṣṇa does not have to drink a mother’s breast-milk again.”

While explaining the word *namaḥ* in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (169), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes *vandanam namaskāram*. “Akrūra attained *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa by paying obeisances.” The *Skanda Purāṇa* describes the glory of paying obeisances in the following way:

*sāthyepi namaskāram kurvataḥ śārṅga-dhanvine
sata janmārjitaṁ pāpaṁ tat-kṣaṇād eva naśyati*

Even if a person deceitfully bows down to Śrī Viṣṇu, who carries the bow called *śārṅga* in His hand, his sins accumulated from one hundred lives are immediately destroyed.

VERSE 66

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६ ॥

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

sarva-dharmān – all other prescribed duties such as *varṇāśrama*, the four social orders and four spiritual orders; *parityajya* – abandoning; *mām* – of Me; *ekam* – exclusive; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *vraja* – take; *aham* – I; *tvām* – you; *sarva-pāpebhyaḥ* – from all sinful reactions; *mokṣayiṣyāmi* – shall deliver; *mā śucaḥ* – do not grieve.

Completely abandoning all bodily and mental *dharma*, such as *varṇa* and *āśrama*, fully surrender to Me alone. I shall liberate you from all reactions to your sins. Do not grieve.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “Should I perform *dhyāna*, meditation on You, and also fulfil my *āśrama-dharma* (religious duties in accordance with a particular stage of life, or *āśrama*)? Or should I exclusively perform meditation and so forth, and not depend on any other *dharma*?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān speaks this verse beginning with *sarva-dharmān*. “Renouncing all types of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, take exclusive shelter of Me.”

It is incorrect to translate the word *parityajya* as *sannyāsa* (complete renunciation of *karma*) because as a *kṣatriya*, Arjuna did not have the qualification to take *sannyāsa*. Someone may say, “Kṛṣṇa is making Arjuna an instrument to show that he does not have the qualification for *sannyāsa*. But is He, in fact, indicating that this instruction is for common people who may consider that they have that qualification, and not for Arjuna, who was a *kṣatriya*?” In answer to this, it is said that if this instruction regarding *sannyāsa* had been applicable to

Arjuna, who is the prime object of Kṛṣṇa's instructions, it would be applicable to all others, and not otherwise. Furthermore, it is also not appropriate to translate the word *parityajya* as 'renouncing the fruits of one's activities'. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.41) states:

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām piṭṛṇām
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaranyam
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

One who gives up the false ego of being the doer and accepts, with his whole being (*ātmā*), the shelter of He who is the supreme shelter Śrī Mukunda, becomes free from any obligations to the demigods, sages, living entities, family members and forefathers.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.29.34) also states:

*martyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā
niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me
tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno
mayātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai*

When a person renounces all types of *karma* and completely surrenders himself to Me, by My will he becomes more opulent than a *yogī* or a *jñānī*. Within no time, he attains liberation (*mukti*) and becomes qualified to receive opulences like My own.

Another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.9) states:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

Until a person develops detachment from sense objects and attains faith in hearing narrations about Me, he should continue to perform his *nitya* (obligatory) and *naimittika* (incidental) duties.

Also, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.32) it says:

*ājñāyaivaṁ guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ*

Those who render service to Me, having abandoned all types of religious duties, and having understood the inherent positive and

negative aspects of the prescribed duties instructed by Me in the Vedas, are counted among the best of *sādhus*.

It is necessary to explain the meaning of this *Gītā* verse in accordance with the above profound statements of Śrī Bhagavān, and to reconcile their meanings. The word *pari* (*parityaja*) indicates that the highest objective of these instructions is not to renounce the fruits of one's duties. "Rather, you should take absolute shelter of Me and not surrender to *dharma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* or any of the demigods. Previously, it was stated that you do not have the qualification to perform exclusive devotion (*ananya-bhakti*) to Me. Therefore, in statements such as *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi* (*Gītā* 9.27), I have explained that your qualification is to perform *bhakti* along with your prescribed duty (*karma-miśrā-bhakti*). Now, however, I am mercifully bestowing upon you the qualification to execute *aikāntika-bhakti*, exclusive devotion. I have solemnly declared that this exclusive devotion is attained only by the great fortune of receiving the mercy of My *aikāntika-bhaktas*. But just as I will break My vow for Grandsire Bhīṣma, I am breaking this vow so as to personally bestow upon you the qualification to perform exclusive devotion. If you give up your regular and occasional duties (*nitya-naimittika karma*) just to pursue My order, you will not have to face any reaction. I alone, in the form of the Vedas, have given the instruction to perform *nitya-karma*, and now I am personally ordering you to give it up. If you accept My order, where is the possibility of your incurring sin by abandoning your regular prescribed duty (*nitya-karma*)? On the contrary, if you choose to ignore My direct order and instead continue to perform *nitya-karma*, then certainly you will incur sin. Know this for certain."

If a person surrenders to someone, he remains under that person's ownership and control, just like a purchased animal. Whatever the master commands him to do, he does that only; wherever he keeps him, he stays there only; whatever food he gives him, he eats that only. This is the fundamental principle of *dharma*, the symptom of which is full surrender, or *śaraṇāgati*. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* lists the six aspects of *śaraṇāgati*:

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopṭṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇ ye śaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ*

The six types of surrender: (1) to accept that which is favourable to *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, (2) to reject that which is unfavourable, (3) to have the strong faith ‘Bhagavān will protect me’, (4) to feel dependent, thinking ‘Bhagavān will take care of me’, (5) to be fully self-surrendered, and (6) to be humble.

To remain devotedly engaged for the pleasure of one’s worshipable deity, as established in the *bhakti-śāstras*, is favourable (*ānukūlya*), and any acts contrary to this are unfavourable (*prātikūlya*). *Varaṇa*, choosing Him as one’s maintainer, means to feel, ‘He alone is my protector; I have no one other than Him’. *Rakṣiṣyati* refers to the faith seen in those such as Gajendra and Draupadī: “Whenever I am threatened by some unfavourable situation, He will surely protect me.” *Nikṣepaṇa* means to devote one’s gross and subtle body, as well as one’s own self, for the sole purpose of serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Akārpaṇya* means to not express one’s humility anywhere else [but to Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone]. When these six activities are performed to attain Bhagavān, it is called *śaraṇāgati*.

Arjuna may doubt, “If beginning from today, I surrender to You and You alone, then my sole duty is to remain surrendered, whether I attain auspiciousness or inauspiciousness, as You have described. In this way, Your engaging me in religious activity only is no cause for anxiety. But what will my destination be if You, the supremely independent Lord, engage me in sinful acts?” In response, Śrī Bhagavān says, “I will liberate you from all your accumulated sins, past and present, as well as from any sins I may cause you to perform. I am capable of liberating you from sin, unlike any other master. Having made you My instrument, I am giving you this instruction from scripture for the benefit of every human being.”

The meaning of *mā śucaḥ* is as follows:

“Do not worry for yourself or for others. I am bound by My vow to carry the burden of freeing any person like you, who is dedicated to remembering Me, from all his sins and deliver him from the cycle of birth and death. If such a person fixes his mind upon Me, completely giving up his *sva-dharma* or *para-dharma* and if he remains happily situated, having surrendered to Me, I am also bound to carry the burden of providing him with the means to achieve Me. What more can I say? I

am even ready to accept the burden of maintaining his material life, as I stated when I spoke *ananyāś cintayanto mām* (Gītā 9.22).

“Do not grieve by thinking, ‘Alas! I have placed such a heavy load on my Lord and master!’ For Me, there is absolutely no labour involved in accepting this burden, for I am always kindly disposed towards My devotee (*bhakta-vatsala*) and am *satya-saṅkalpa*, one whose vows always hold true. This instruction eliminates the need for any other. I therefore conclude this scripture here.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the previous verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave the most confidential instruction of *Bhagavad-gītā* concerning pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*). Now, in this present verse, He states that to become qualified to receive this *śuddha-bhakti*, it is first necessary to surrender exclusively to Him. Here, the word *sarva-dharmān* means that the practice of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, prescribed action (*karma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), mystic perfection (*yoga*), demigod worship and any bodily or mental action apart from the path of *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are all based on the bodily or mental platform and should be abandoned. It is not correct to think that the sole meaning of *parityajya* is to renounce attachment to prescribed duty and its results. The innermost intention of Bhagavān’s statement is to completely give up prescribed duty altogether. This is the deeper meaning of the prefix *pari*.

Someone may think that sinful reaction may be incurred by one who gives up all other *dharma* as described above, to exclusively surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This doubt may exist in the minds of common, faithful persons, so to remove it, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has made this declaration, thus bestowing fearlessness upon them: “*sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ* – do not grieve; I will certainly free you from all types of sins.”

eta saba chāḍi āra varṇāśrama-dharma

akiñcana hāya laya kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.93)

One should give up the bad association of *māyāvādīs*, who are bereft of *bhakti*, as well as *karmīs*, *yogīs*, materialists, womanisers and those who associate with such womanisers. One should even give up *varṇāśrama-dharma* and take full shelter of Kṛṣṇa, and become humble, meek and devoid of attachment to material possessions.

One who does not follow this instruction cannot embrace the moods described in the previous verse. As long as one falsely identifies the body as his true self, he will fear that by abandoning *dharma* he will incur sin. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān has to take a vow that He will free one from any sin incurred by giving up all *dharma*. Even after making this promise, He again raises His hand to reassure Arjuna and make him fearless. And he tells him, “Do not grieve.”

In the conversation between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya (*Rāya Rāmānanda Saṁvāda*), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that even this stage of devotion (*sarva-dharmān parityajya* – abandon all other *dharma*) is external, since a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa is absent. It merely gives one the qualification required to understand the mood of the previous verse (18.65). One who does not become firmly fixed in the spirit of this verse will not be able to understand the purport of the previous one. It will be impossible, like trying to catch an imaginary flower in the sky. Pure devotees naturally possess a pure ego – ‘I am a servant of Kṛṣṇa’ – and therefore, they naturally renounce *varṇāśrama-dharma* of their own accord. No sin or irregularity affects them because they are completely renounced. Such devotees are *uttama-adhikārīs*, the topmost class of Vaiṣṇava.

*ājñāyaivaṁ guṇān doṣān mayā diṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa ca sattamaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.32)*

Those who render service to Me, having abandoned all types of *dharma* and having understood the inherent positive and negative aspects of prescribed duties as instructed by Me in the Vedas, are counted among the best of saintly persons.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura quotes Kṛṣṇa as saying, “I have instructed you in the various types of *dharmas*, or religious duties, such as *varṇāśrama-dharma*, *yati-dharma* (the renounced order), *vairāgya* (detachment), control of the mind and senses, meditation, and the acceptance of the domination of Īśvara, the Supersoul. I gave these instructions so that you can attain *brahma-jñāna* and *īśvara-jñāna*. Now, completely give up all these religious processes and exclusively surrender to Me, the Supreme Lord. Only if you surrender

in this way will I deliver you from all types of sins, whether those sins are caused by material existence or by renouncing these other *dharmas*. You should not lament that you are not performing these activities. The true constitutional nature of the living entity is easily awakened by the performance of that *bhakti* which is transcendental to the modes of nature. One is not required to perform religious duties, prescribed duties, atonements and so forth, or *jñāna*, mysticism, meditation or any other process. In the conditioned state, one should perform bodily, mental and spiritual activities, but he should abandon any adherence to the impersonal feature of Bhagavān and surrender to Him, being attracted by His beauty and sweetness. This means that whatever *karma* an embodied living entity performs to maintain his life should be executed with these higher types of resolve (*niṣṭhā*). Those whose *niṣṭhā* is on a low level perform *akarma* – avoidance of one’s duty; *vikarma* – sinful activities; and so forth, which create unwanted obstacles and desires.

“The higher *niṣṭhā* is of three types: *brahma-niṣṭhā* (devotion to the Lord’s featureless aspect), *īśvara-niṣṭhā* (devotion to the Supersoul) and *bhagavad-niṣṭhā* (devotion to the Supreme Person). All processes such as *varṇāśrama* and renunciation assume their respective natures by adopting one of these types of *niṣṭhā*.

“Action that is performed with *brahma-niṣṭhā* manifests *karma* and *jñāna*. Action that is performed with *īśvara-niṣṭhā* manifests as offering one’s prescribed action to Īśvara and meditating upon Him. And action that is performed with *bhagavad-niṣṭhā* transforms into exclusive, pure devotion. Therefore, *bhakti* alone is the most confidential truth, and *prema* is the supreme goal of life. This, only, is the principal teaching of *Bhagavad-gītā*. It may seem from external observation that the lifestyle of the *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs* is just like that of the *bhaktas*, but their method of worship, their *sādhana* and their ultimate goal are vastly different.”

VERSE 67

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥६७॥

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

idam – this *Bhagavad-gītā*; *te* – by you; *na* – nor; *atapaskāya* – with uncontrolled senses; *na* – not; *abhaktāya* – to a non-devotee; *kadācana* – at any time; *ca* – also; *aśuśrūṣave* – to one who is devoid of a service mentality; *vācyam* – be spoken; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *mām* – of Me; *yaḥ abhyasūyati* – one who is envious.

You should never explain this scripture of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* to one whose senses are uncontrolled, to a non-devotee, to one devoid of a serving mood, or to one who is envious of Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Thus, having completed His instructions on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Bhagavān elaborates on the rules by which a *sampradāya* is to continue. In other words, He delineates the criteria by which one can ascertain who is qualified to receive these instructions. One whose senses are not under control is called *atapaska*. Smṛti states, “Control of the mind and the senses is the highest penance.”

The instructions of the *Gītā* should not be imparted to a non-devotee, even if his senses are controlled. Nor should they be given to a devotee who may be self-controlled but not interested in submissively hearing (*aśuśrūṣu*). “A person may be self-controlled, he may be a devotee, and he may hear submissively, but if he is envious of Me, he is not qualified for the *Gītā*’s message. ‘*Mām yo’ bhyasūyati* – I am the Supreme Absolute Truth and transcendental to all material designations.’ If he considers Me to be one with *māyā* and My existence to be illusory and temporary, then this message of the *Gītā* must never be given to him in any way.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In the present verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is establishing the necessary qualification to hear the instructions of the *Gītā*. The *tattva* of the *Gītā* should never be instructed to those who are envious of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who consider His transcendental form to be illusory, who are devoid of *bhakti to guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas, who do not render any service to them, and who have no control over their senses. None of these people are qualified to receive the *Gītā*’s instructions.

Although unable to fully realize the essence of Kṛṣṇa's instruction, they still narrate the *Gītā* in an unauthorized manner to unqualified persons, thinking that this is a symptom of their magnanimous and compassionate nature, but this is in direct disobedience to Kṛṣṇa's order. As a result, such persons become offenders.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself very clearly understands how harmful it is to give this knowledge to an unqualified person, for such an ignorant person cannot grasp this knowledge or retain it. Some people may challenge this, saying that in regard to imparting religious instruction, it lacks compassion to consider another's qualification or disqualification. But it is seen that good results only manifest in a qualified recipient, thus invalidating the above argument. An unqualified person may receive these instructions but disobey them. Thus he becomes an offender and even more fallen.

Once, the king of the demigods, Indra, and the chief of the demons, Virocana, went to Lord Brahmā to receive instruction on the truth of the soul, *ātma-tattva*. Brahmā instructed Indra, who was a qualified recipient of absolute knowledge and able to comprehend it. Virocana, however, was unqualified and therefore not able to understand Brahmā's instructions. He concluded that his self was his gross body only and to maintain it is the goal of life. In this way, Virocana remained bereft of true knowledge of the Truth (*tattva-jñāna*).

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23) also states:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmānaḥ*

The conclusive essence of the Śrutis is only revealed to those great souls who have supreme, transcendental devotion to Śrī Bhagavān and equal devotion to *śrī gurudeva*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs Uddhava in a similar way:

*naitat tvayā dāmbhikāya nāstikāya śaṭhāya ca
aśuśrūṣor abhaktāya durvinītāya dīyatām*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.29.30)

You must never give this knowledge to persons who are proud, atheistic, wicked, faithless, devoid of *bhakti* or unsubmitive.

The *Padma Purāṇa* also says, “*aśraddhadhāne vimukhe py aśṛṇvati yaś copadeśaḥ śiva-nāmāpārādhaḥ* – one who gives this instruction to a person who is faithless and averse to Bhagavān causes him to become an offender; it does not benefit him.”

VERSE 68

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥६८॥

*ya imam paramam guhyam mad-bhakteṣu abhidhāsyati
bhaktim mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ*

yaḥ – who; *imam* – this (*Bhagavad-gītā*); *paramam* – supremely; *guhyam* – confidential knowledge; *mat-bhakteṣu* – to My devotees; *abhidhāsyati* – will teach; *bhaktim* – devotional service; *mayi* – to Me; *parām* – the highest; *kṛtvā* – attaining; *mām* – to Me; *eva eṣyati* – will certainly attain; *asaṁśayaḥ* – becoming free from all doubts.

He who instructs this most confidential knowledge of the *Bhagavad-gītā* to My devotees will attain the topmost transcendental devotion to Me. Thus becoming free from all doubts, he will finally attain Me.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: In two verses, the first starting with *yaḥ*, Śrī Bhagavān is describing the result attained by those who give instruction on this *Bhagavad-gītā*. “First, they attain transcendental devotion to Me, and later, they attain Me.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān is describing the symptoms and dedication of the genuine preachers and hearers of the *Gītā*. While giving Arjuna the *Gītā*’s most confidential instruction (18.65), Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “You are very dear to Me and that is why I am explaining this highly intimate truth to you.” In the previous verse, Kṛṣṇa also instructed Arjuna, “Give this knowledge of the *Gītā* only to one who is self-controlled, faithful, endowed with a service attitude and who possesses love for Me.”

It is therefore essential for anyone who preaches *Bhagavad-gītā* to have strong faith in Kṛṣṇa and be exclusively devoted to Him, to be

fully conversant with *tattva-jñāna* and free from any doubts. If one who preaches the message of the *Gītā* knows it in theory but does not practise it, or if he is bereft of the above-mentioned qualities, then he is not bona fide. One must never hear the *Gītā*'s instructions from such a person, for by doing so, both the listener and the speaker will remain deprived of the *Gītā*'s actual knowledge.

Scripture describes the qualifications and the characteristics of a sincere listener. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

*etair doṣair vihināya brahmanyāya priyāya ca
sādhave śucaye brūyād bhaktiḥ syāc chūdra-yoṣitām
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.29.31)*

One should give these teachings to those who are free from the defects of false pride, atheism, wickedness, faithlessness and arrogance and who have *bhakti*. They should be dedicated to the welfare of the *brāhmaṇas*, strive for *bhagavat-prema*, possess a saintly nature and above all, they should be devotees. These instructions can also be given to a simple worker or to a woman who has faith in Me and *bhakti* to Me.

From this it is clear that one's caste, creed, age, activities, etc., are not considerations in deciding who is fit to receive the knowledge of the *Gītā*. Anyone with the above-mentioned qualities is qualified to hear this *Gītā*. This principle is substantiated in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.64): “*śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti adhikārī* – a faithful person is a truly eligible candidate for *bhakti*.” Śrī Kapiladeva has also said:

*śraddadhānāya bhaktāya vinītāyānasūyave
bhūteṣu kṛta-maitrāya śuśrūṣābhiratāya ca
bahirjāta-virāgāya śānta-cittāya dīyate
nirmatsarāya śucaye yasyāham preyasām priyaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.41-42)*

Only narrate this to faithful, devout persons who are submissive, free from malice, well-wishing to all living entities, engaged in service, detached from external sense pleasures, peaceful, free from envy and whose only beloved is Me.

In essence, any person who has faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Him is qualified to hear the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who impart the instructions of the *Gītā* to such qualified persons attain the topmost *bhakti*, and finally, without a doubt, they attain Kṛṣṇa. The qualified listeners also attain that supreme destination.

VERSE 69

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥६९॥

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

na – not; *ca* – also; *tasmāt* – compared to him (he who explains this *Gītā*); *manuṣyeṣu* – in human society; *kaścīn* – anyone; *me* – to Me; *priya-kṛttamaḥ* – who performs a more pleasing service; *bhavitā na* – there will never be; *ca* – and; *me* – to Me; *tasmāt* – than him; *anyaḥ* – another; *priyataro* – more dear; *bhuvī* – on the Earth.

No one in human society is more dear to Me than one who explains this message of the *Gītā* to others, nor will there ever be anyone more dear to Me than him.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “There is no one in this world who performs a more pleasing service to Me, nor will there ever be anyone more dear to Me than one who preaches this *Bhagavad-gītā*.”

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The bona fide instructors, or preachers, of this *Gītā* are very dear to Bhagavān. It is therefore incumbent on pure devotees to preach its message, but those who simply entertain people on the pretext of preaching the *Gītā* do not deliver the confidential, more confidential, even more confidential and the most confidential truths of the *Gītā*. Instead, they teach *māyāvādā*, *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*. Such persons become offenders at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. One does not benefit by hearing the *Gītā* from them.

VERSE 70

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥७०॥

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

adhyeṣyate – studies; *ca* – and; *yaḥ* – who; *imam* – this; *dharmyam* – sacred; *saṁvādam* – conversation; *āvayoḥ* – between both of us; *jñāna-yajñena* – through the sacrifice of transcendental knowledge; *tena* – by he; *aham* – I; *iṣṭaḥ* – worshipped; *syām* – will be; *iti* – such; *me* – My; *matiḥ* – opinion.

One who studies our sacred dialogue will thereby worship Me through the sacrifice of transcendental knowledge. This is My opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now, in the verse beginning with the word *adhyeṣyate*, Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the results of studying this *Gītā*.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Simply by faithfully studying this dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, one performs *jñāna-yoga*. Kṛṣṇa is pleased by this effort. In this context, *jñāna* means to practise the essence of the *Gītā* after understanding it. The essence of the *Gītā* is *ananya-bhakti*, exclusive devotion to Śrī Bhagavān, so one who practises such *bhakti* is very dear to Him. Others, such as the *karmī*, *jñānī* and *yogī*, are not.

VERSE 71

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभौल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

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

śraddhāvān – faithful; *anasūyaḥ* – non-envious; *ca* – and; *śṛṇuyāt* – hears; *api* – even; *yaḥ* – who; *naraḥ* – man; *saḥ* – that; *api* – also; *muktaḥ* –

liberated; *śubhān* – the auspicious; *lokān* – planets; *prāpnuyāt* – attains; *puṇya-karmaṇām* – of those who have performed pious deeds.

And a faithful and non-jealous person who merely hears this *Bhagavad-gītā* will also become liberated from sinful reaction and go to the auspicious planets that are attained by the pious.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: Now Śrī Bhagavān is explaining the results of hearing the *Gītā*, in this verse beginning with the word *śraddhāvān*.

VERSE 72

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥७२॥

kaccid etac chrutaṁ pārtha tvayaikāgreṇa cetasā
kaccid ajñāna-sammohaḥ pranaṣṭas te dhanañjaya

kaccit – whether?; *etat* – this (teaching of the *Gītā*); *śrutam* – been heard; *pārtha* – O son of Prthā; *tvayā* – by you; *eka-agreṇa* – with one-pointed; *cetasā* – attention; *kaccit* – whether?; *ajñāna-sammohaḥ* – delusion born of ignorance; *pranaṣṭaḥ* – been destroyed; *te* – your; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth.

O Pārtha, O winner of wealth, Dhanañjaya, have you heard this *Gītā* with undivided attention? And, having heard it, has your delusion born of ignorance been dispelled?

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “If you have not understood the superlative essence of this teaching, then I will instruct it to you again.” Śrī Bhagavān is speaking this verse solely with this intention.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: After concluding the instructions on the *Gītā* and describing the results of hearing it and preaching its purport, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is asking Arjuna, “Do you have any further questions? If you do, I will solve them also.” From this it is indicated that one should hear the instructions of the *Gītā* with fixed attention. Furthermore, even after hearing the confidential *tattva* of the *Gītā*

from śrī gurudeva or from devotees who have fully realized the Truth (*tattva-darśī*), the student should continue to serve them until and after he has realization of this *tattva*. He should affectionately inquire about these *tattvas* and hear them repeatedly, otherwise, he will not be able to understand these teachings.

VERSE 73

अर्जुन उवाच—

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥७३॥

arjuna uvāca –

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

arjunaḥ uvāca – Arjuna said; *naṣṭaḥ* – destroyed; *mohaḥ* – illusion; *smṛtiḥ* – my spiritual remembrance (of myself as spirit soul); *labdhā* – regained; *tvat-prasādāt* – through Your mercy; *mayā* – by me; *acyuta* – O infallible Lord; *sthitaḥ* – situated (in true transcendental knowledge); *asmi* – I am; *gata-sandehaḥ* – free from doubt; *kariṣye* – I shall follow; *vacanam* – order; *tava* – Your.

Arjuna said: O Acyuta, my delusion has been dispelled by Your grace and remembrance of my true self has been regained. My doubts have been dispelled and I am situated firmly in true knowledge. I will now carry out Your order.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ: “What further questions could I ask? I have become free from all anxiety because I have given up all types of *dharma* (prescribed duties) and surrendered to You.”

Arjuna is speaking this verse beginning with *naṣṭaḥ*, to show Kṛṣṇa the actual condition of his heart. “From this point on, You are my sole refuge. The only *dharma* of this surrendered soul is to be fixed in following Your order, not in following *varṇāśrama-dharma*, *jñāna-yoga* or any other process. From today, I have abandoned them all.” When Arjuna, who carries the Gāṇḍīva bow, heard Śrī Bhagavān say, “My dear

friend Arjuna, I have yet to act to remove the burden of the Earth. I will accomplish this through you,” he readied himself to fight.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VRṬTI: Arjuna became very pleased to understand the intention of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He folded his hands and said, “O Acyuta, Your instructions and mercy have dispelled all my ignorance and delusion. I understand perfectly that You are the *guru* and Lord of all moving and non-moving beings within the entire universe. I am Your servant, fully surrendered at Your lotus feet, and I will execute Your every order.” Arjuna then prepared for battle, having understood Kṛṣṇa’s intention.

We learn from Arjuna’s example that this human form of life will yield perfection if we become free from all doubts by studying this *Bhagavad-gītā*, engaging in Kṛṣṇa’s service, surrendering exclusively to Him and giving up adherence to all other philosophies.

VERSE 74

सञ्जय उवाच—

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।

संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥७४॥

sañjaya uvāca –

ity ahaṁ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanah

saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam adbhutam roma-harṣaṇam

sañjaya uvāca – Sañjaya said (to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra); *iti* – thus; *ahaṁ* – I; *vāsudevasya* – of Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva; *pārthasya* – Arjuna, son of Pṛthā; *ca* – and; *mahā-ātmanah* – of the great soul; *saṁvādam* – conversation; *imam* – this; *aśrauṣam* – I have heard; *adbhutam* – wonderful; *roma-harṣaṇam* – which causes my hair to stand on end.

Sañjaya said: O King, I have thus heard this most wonderful dialogue between that great soul – the son of Vasudeva – and the son of Pṛthā. Indeed, the hairs on my body are standing on end.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ: It so happens that the two papers on which I had written the explanation of the five final verses summarizing the

essence of the complete *Gītā* have disappeared. I take it that Gaṇeśajī had those papers stolen by his mouse carrier. After that, I did not again write those purports. May Gaṇeśajī be pleased with me. I offer my obeisances unto him.

Thus ends the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭīkā* (the commentary which gives pleasure to the devotees and is accepted by all saintly persons) on the Eighteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

VERSE 75

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानिमं गुह्यमहं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥७५॥

*vyāsa-prasādāc chrutavān imam guhyam aham param
yogam yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sākṣāt kathayataḥ svayam*

vyāsa-prasādāt – by the mercy of Śrī Vyāsa; *śrutavān* – I have heard; *imam* – this; *guhyam* – confidential; *aham* – I; *param* – supreme; *yogam* – science of union with the Supreme Lord; *yoga-īśvarāt* – from the Master of *yoga*; *kṛṣṇāt* – from the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *sākṣāt* – directly; *kathayataḥ* – as He was speaking; *svayam* – Himself.

By the grace of Śrī Vyāsa, I have heard this supremely confidential science of *yoga* explained personally by the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Lord of the *yoga* process.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢIṆĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva was the *guru* of Saṅjaya. Saṅjaya acknowledges that he heard and understood the divine knowledge of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, which manifested from the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, only by the grace of his *guru*. Without the grace of *guru*, the truth (*tattva*) of the *Bhagavad-gītā* or of Bhagavān cannot be understood. The *guru* must be as well-versed in *tattva* and as endowed with realization of Bhagavān as Śrīla Vyāsadeva himself. And the disciple should be like Saṅjaya, capable of rendering attentive service to the *guru*, desiring to hear from him and

to follow his teachings and instructions without argument. Only such a faithful disciple can understand *bhagavat-tattva* and achieve complete perfection. It should also be understood that, just as Arjuna became supremely blessed after hearing the deep secret of the *Bhagavad-gītā* directly from the lotus mouth of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Sañjaya also, by the grace of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, became supremely blessed upon hearing and understanding it, although he was sitting far away from Kurukṣetra. And just as Arjuna and Sañjaya were blessed and became perfect, any person, even now, who wants to make his life blessed can do so by taking bath in the philosophical current descending through the bona fide disciplic succession (*guru-paramparā*) and surrendering to a self-realized *guru* or Vaiṣṇava. It is very difficult to attain *bhagavat-tattva* unless one accepts a disciplic succession of those who establish pure devotion in this world.

VERSE 76

राजन् संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥७६॥

rājan saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya saṁvādam imam adbhutam
keśavarjunayoḥ puṇyam hṛṣyāmi ca muhur muhuḥ

rājan – O King; *saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya* – remembering again and again; *saṁvādam* – dialogue; *imam* – this; *adbhutam* – astonishing; *keśavarjunayoḥ* – between Keśava and Arjuna; *puṇyam* – pious and sacred; *hṛṣyāmi* – I rejoice; *ca* – and; *muhur muhuḥ* – at every moment.

O King, as I repeatedly recall this astonishing and sacred dialogue between Śrī Keśava and Arjuna, I rejoice at every moment.

VERSE 77

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान् राजन् हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥७७॥

tac ca saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya rūpam atyadbhutam hareḥ
vismayo me mahān rājan hṛṣyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ

tat – that; *ca* – and; *saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya* – remembering repeatedly; *rūpam* – form; *ati adbhutam* – most wonderful; *hareḥ* – of Śrī Hari; *vismayah* – amazement; *me* – my; *mahān* – great; *rājan* – O King; *hṛṣyāmi* – I rejoice and become thrilled; *ca* – and; *punaḥ punaḥ* – again and again.

O King, as I remember again and again that marvellous form of Śrī Hari, I become struck with great amazement, and at every moment I rejoice and thrill with rapture.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: From this verse, it appears that the universal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which Arjuna saw at Kurukṣetra, was also seen by Sañjaya by the grace of Śrīla Vyāsadeva as he sat in the royal palace in Hastināpura. Śrī Kṛṣṇa had explained to Arjuna that He had not shown that form to anyone before and that He was showing it to Arjuna for the first time. However, by thoroughly deliberating upon this point, it can be understood that both Sañjaya and Vyāsa most definitely saw the universal form when Arjuna did. And from Arjuna's statement, it can be understood that even ṛṣis, maharṣis and demigods saw it. Śrī Vedavyāsa is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's topmost devotee. Not only that, he is also a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* (a *jīva* especially empowered with a potency of the Lord) of Bhagavān Himself. It follows, therefore, that only those who are in the *paramparā* of Śrīla Vyāsa are capable of realizing the essence of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

VERSE 78

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥७८॥

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama

yatra – wherever; *yoga-īśvaraḥ* – the master of all yoga; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *yatra* – wherever; *pārthaḥ* – Pārtha (Arjuna); *dhanur-dharaḥ* – the bow-wielder; *tatra* – there; *śrīḥ* – wealth; *vijayaḥ* – victory; *bhūtiḥ* – expanding prosperity; *dhruvā* – constant; *nītiḥ* – dedication to morality; *matiḥ* – opinion; *mama* – my.

Wherever there is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all *yoga*, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme wielder of the bow, there will surely be majestic opulence, victory, prosperity and adherence to righteousness. This is my conclusive opinion.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI: The Eighteenth Chapter briefly describes the essence of the entire *Gītā*. One division describes *karma-yoga* predominated by meditation (*dhyāna-yoga*), which results in knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñāna*). The other division describes the *yoga* of pure devotion that originates from faith in Bhagavān. This is indeed the essence of the *Gītā*. Of all these paths, the confidential instruction is to gradually achieve the path of *jñāna*. One can do this by the selfless performance of one's prescribed duty, which is based on one's own nature, while adopting *varṇāśrama-dharma*. More confidential than this is the instruction to cultivate, within this life, *ātma-jñāna*, knowledge of the self, through meditation (*dhyāna-yoga*). And the most confidential instruction to engage in *bhakti-yoga* by exclusively surrendering to Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of the Eighteenth Chapter.

The purport of the entire *Bhagavad-gītā* is that the non-dual Absolute Entity (*advaya-vastu*) is the only Reality (*tattva*). He is the complete manifestation of Godhead. All other *tattvas* have emanated from Him. From His internal, spiritual potency (*cit-śakti*), His transcendental form, His various incarnations and other spiritual opulences emanate. Innumerable living entities manifest from his *jīva-śakti*. They are of two types: liberated (*mukta*) and bound (*baddha*). And the twenty-four elements, from *pradhāna*, the unmanifest state of material nature, to the blade of grass, manifest from His external, material energy, the *māyā-śakti*. The creation, maintenance and annihilation are performed by His time potency, *kāla-śakti*. All types of manifestations emanate from the *kriyā-śakti*.

The five elements: Īśvara (the Supersoul), *prakṛti* (material nature), *jīva* (the individual soul), *kāla* (time) and *karma* (activities) have all manifested from Bhagavān only. *Brahma*, *Paramātmā*, etc., are all within Bhagavān, as are all other conceptions of the Absolute

Truth. Although these five are separate, they are simultaneously one constituent, under the complete control of *bhagavat-tattva*, and although they are one, they are eternally different because they have different characteristics. This explanation of *bhedābheda-tattva*, or simultaneous oneness and difference, as given in the *Gītā* is beyond human logic. Therefore, the previous spiritual authorities (*mahājanas*) have called this inconceivable relationship between Bhagavān and His potencies *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, and they have called the knowledge related to it, *tattva-jñāna*.

By constitutional nature, the *jīvas* are pure conscious entities. They are a special *tattva* that exist as atomic particles in the rays emanating from *cit-sūrya*, the transcendental conscious sun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By nature, they are qualified to exist in the spiritual (*cit*) and material (*acit*) worlds, being situated on the border between the two. Because they are conscious, they are independent by nature. If they are favourably inclined to Kṛṣṇa and attracted to the spiritual realm, then they can relish pure bliss (*ānanda*) with the help of the *hlādinī-śakti*, Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency. On the other hand, if, due to the influence of the *māyā-śakti*, they turn away from Kṛṣṇa, being attracted to the illusory world, then they have to undergo material happiness and distress. The living entities who have affinity for and attraction to the spiritual world are *nitya-mukta*, eternally liberated, and those who have affinity for the world of unconscious matter are eternally conditioned, *nitya-baddha*. Both types of living entities are unlimited in number.

Forgetting his pure constitutional nature, the living entity suffers various types of miseries in the ocean of material existence in higher and lower forms of life, such as demigods, humans, worms, insects, trees and creepers. At some time they may become disinterested in material life. By taking shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master, a person meditates on the Lord under his guidance. This is included within the jurisdiction of *karma-yoga*. Gradually, when he perfects his meditation and realizes his pure *svarūpa*, he attains *prema* for the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. Or, if he develops faith in topics of Bhagavān, he takes shelter of a proper *guru* and performs *sādhana-bhakti*. He then attains *bhāva-bhakti* and finally *prema-bhakti*.

There is no path other than these two to realize the pure *svarūpa* of the soul.

Of these two paths, the path of *karma-yoga* predominated by meditation upon the Lord (*dhyāna-yoga*) is suitable for the common man, because its performance is controlled by one's own effort. *Bhakti-yoga*, which arises from *śraddhā*, is superior to *karma-yoga* and also easier to perform, but it cannot be attained without the good fortune of receiving the grace of Bhagavān or His devotees.

Most people in the world are inclined to *karma-yoga*. Among them, those in whom the good fortune awakens of developing faith in *bhakti-yoga* eventually attain the stage of exclusive surrender to Bhagavān, as described in the concluding verse of the *Gītā*. This is the process (*abhidheya*) described in all Vedic literature.

The path of *karma* is based on material desires. Its goals, attainment of material happiness, enjoyment in the fourteen planetary systems and liberation have no significant worth for the conscious *jīva*. From the outset, the *Gītā* describes as worthless both fruitive action and its result, sense enjoyment. Even the attainment of *sāyujya-nirvāṇa*, which is the perfection of monism and which is attained when one has become liberated from birth and death, is not the ultimate goal of the *jīva*. This has also been stated in various places. The supreme goal of the living entity is to rise above impersonal realization and the four types of *mukti*, such as *sālokya*, and achieve spotlessly pure *prema* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa by entering into the topmost spiritual realm where His pastimes are performed.

The conclusion of all Veda and Vedānta is compiled in the *Gītā*, which establishes the supreme goal: to attain *prema* for Bhagavān by performing *bhakti-yoga* in knowledge of one's relationship with Him. A person should always practise *bhakti-yoga* by hearing and chanting according to his qualification, as well as by adhering to a religious life. He should maintain his life by performing his occupation while remaining favourable to the cultivation of devotion. With great faith in the higher process, he should gradually give up any faith in a lower process. He must then become firmly fixed in *bhakti-yoga*, through *śaraṇāgati*, full surrender. In this way, he ought to live his life. Bhagavān will quickly award him *śuddha-prema*, pure love of God. Merely by starting to purify

his existence, a person achieves the mercy of Bhagavān, which bestows upon him fearlessness, immortality and freedom from lamentation, and he becomes eternally absorbed in *prema*.

Thus ends the *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī Prakāśikā-vṛtti*,
by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja,
on the Eighteenth Chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

Glossary

ĀCĀRYA – Spiritual preceptor, one who teaches by example.

ACINTYA – Inconceivable.

ACINTYA-BHEDA-ABHEDA-TATTVA – Fundamental truth of the Supreme Person, who is inconceivably non-different from (*abheda*) and different from (*bheda*) His potencies.

ACINTYA-ŚAKTI – Śrī Bhagavān's inconceivable potency.

ACYUTA – Infallible.

ADHARMA – Irreligion.

ADHIBHAUTIKA – Suffering caused by other living beings.

ADHIBHŪTA – All gross phenomena.

ADHIYAJÑĀ – In-dwelling Supersoul, who inspires the living entities to perform sacrifice and awards the results of their prescribed duty.

ADHOKṢAJA – The Lord who is beyond the cognition and perception of the material senses.

ĀDI – Beginning, first.

ADITI – Wife of Prajāpati Kaśyapa; mother of the twelve Ādityas. Her eldest son was Indra and her youngest was Upendra, or Vāmanadeva, the dwarf incarnation of the Lord.

ĀDITYAS – The twelve sons of Aditi and Kaśyapa.

ADVAITAVĀDĪ – Follower of non-dualism, or monism (*advaitavāda*), as propounded by Śrī Saṅkara Ācārya.

AGNI – Presiding deity of fire and son of Brahmā.

AHAṄGRAHA-UPĀSAKA – One who takes himself as the object of worship, believing that the *jīva* and Bhagavān are ultimately the same. Literally, *aham* – 'myself', *graha* – 'accepting', *upāsana* – 'worship'.

AIKĀNTIKA – One-pointed, unflinching.

AIKĀNTIKĀ-NIṢṬHĀ – One-pointed faith.

AIRĀVATA – Lord Indra's elephant carrier.

AIŚVARYA – (1) Majestic opulence (2) Derived from the word *īśvara*. In regard to *bhakti*, this refers to devotion that is inspired by the majesty of Bhagavān, rather than by His *mādhurya* (sweetness). It especially applies to His feature as Nārāyaṇa. *Aiśvarya* restricts the intimacy between Bhagavān and His devotees.

AKIṆCANA – (1) Without material possessions (2) One whose sole possession is service to Kṛṣṇa.

AMARA-KOṢA – An ancient authoritative Sanskrit thesaurus.

AMṢA – Portion, or expansion, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

ĀNANDA – Transcendental bliss (See *hlādinī-śakti*).

ĀNANDAMAYA – The fifth stage of consciousness, awareness of service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa (13.5).

ANANTA-RŪPA – Unlimited forms.

ANANYA – Literally, 'without another'; exclusive, one-pointed.

ANANYĀ-BHAKTI – Exclusive devotion, unmixed with any other desire, in which one's sole motivation is to please Bhagavān.

ANANYA-YOGA – *Bhakti* unmixed with dependence on speculative knowledge, fruitive work or austerities.

ANARTHA – Unwanted desires, activities or habits that are likened to weeds hindering one's advancement in *bhakti*.

ANARTHA-NIVṚTTI – Clearance of *anarthas*, the fourth stage in the development of the creeper of *bhakti*.

ANĀTMĀ – Not soul; inert matter.

AṄGA – (1) Limb, division, part (2) The various practices of devotion such as hearing and chanting.

AṆIMĀ – Small like an atomic particle.

ANĪSVARAM – Concept that the cosmic manifestation has no Īsvara (controller) but has come about by accident (16.8).

ANNAMAYA – First of the five stages of consciousness in which everything is seen in terms of *anna* (food-grains) (13.5).

ANTARYĀMĪ – In-dwelling witness, the Supersoul, who guides the activities of all living entities.

ANTYA – Last.

ANTYAJA – (1) Of lower birth (2) Outcaste.

APĀNA – Out-going breath.

APARĀ – Not transcendental, inert matter, material nature.

APARĀDHA – (1) That which undermines *arādhana*, or devotion (2) An offence, or an impediment to *bhakti*. *Arcana-dīpikā* lists 64 *sevā-aparādhas*, 10 *nāmā-aparādhas* and 10 *dhāmā-aparādhas* to avoid.

APRĀKRṬA – Non-material, transcendental.

ĀPTAKĀMA – One whose desires have been fulfilled; a self-satisfied soul.

ARCANA – Worship.

ARJUNA – (1) Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intimate friend and devotee to whom He spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2) The Nara portion of the Nara-Nārāyaṇa sages, Śrī Kṛṣṇa being the Nārāyaṇa portion (3) An eternal liberated soul who always serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa out of love.

ĀRTA – One who approaches Bhagavān in a mood of distress (7.16).

ARTHA – Wealth, the second material goal of human life (See *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*)

ARTHA-ŚĀSTRA – Scriptures on economic development.

ĀRYA-RṢIS – Ancient, most noble sages who have seen the Truth.

ĀSAKTI – Deep attachment, especially to Bhagavān and His associates; the sixth stage in the development of the *bhakti* creeper awakened after *ruci* (taste for *bhajana*) matures.

ĀSANA – (1) Seat (2) Sitting posture for meditation.

ASITA – The name of an ancient sage who was an authority on the Vedas.

ĀŚRAMA – (1) Stage of life, either student (*brahmacārī*), householder (*gṛhastha*), retired (*vānaprastha*) or renounced (*sannyāsa*) (2) Hermitage.

ĀŚRAYA – Repository of love for Kṛṣṇa, i.e., His devotee.

AṢṬĀṄGA-YOGA – Eightfold *yoga* process, consisting of *yama* (control of the mind and senses), *niyama* (following rules and regulations of *yoga* practice), *āsana* (bodily postures), *prānāyama* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the mind from sensory perception), *dhāraṇā* (steading the mind), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (trance).

AŚVAMEDHA-YAJÑA – Elaborate sacrifice performed by *brāhmaṇas* on behalf of powerful kings, wherein a horse is sacrificed into the sacred fire and then brought back to life.

AŚVATṬHA – Type of *pīpala* tree (10.26).

AŚVINĪ-KUMĀRAS – Physicians of the demigods.

ATIRATHĪ – Warrior who can face unlimited opponents.

ĀTMĀ – (1) Soul (2) Supersoul (3) Intelligence (4) Mind (5) Body (6) Senses.

ĀTMA-TATTVA – Categorical knowledge of the nature of the soul.

AVATĀRA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself or His plenary portion who descends from the transcendental realm into this

material creation for the deliverance of conditioned souls.

AVIDYĀ – Nescience, or culture of material knowledge, considering such knowledge to be the all-in-all.

AVYABHICĀRA – Unfailing; refers to pure devotion.

AVYAKTA – (1) Unmanifest (2) Beyond the perception of the senses.

AVYAYA – Imperishable.

BAHIRANGĀ-ŚAKTI – The Lord's external, or material, potency, also known as *māyā*. It is the medium by which the material world is created, as well as all affairs pertaining to it.

BALADEVA VIDYĀBHŪSAṆA – Chief disciple of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura and author of *Govinda-bhāṣya*, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. He is thus aptly named Gauḍīya-vedāntācārya.

BHAGAVĀN – The Supreme Lord, complete in six opulences: beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge and renunciation. Literally, *vān* – 'possessor, *bhaga* – 'opulence'.

BHĀGAVATAM – See *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

BHĀGAVATĀMṚTAM – A book by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. Literally, 'the nectarean essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'.

BHAGAVAT-KATHĀ – Narrations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or the instructions of Śrī Bhagavān, as in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

BHAGAVAT-PREMA – Love for the all-opulent Personality of Godhead.

BHAGAVAT-TATTVA – Categorical knowledge of Bhagavān; the principles taught by Śrī Bhagavān.

BHAJANA – (1) Service (2) Spiritual practice, especially hearing, chanting, remembering and meditating on the holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

BHAKTA – Devotee; one devoted to *bhakti-yoga* and one's worshipable deity.

BHAKTI – Derived from the root *bhaj* (to serve). It is the performance of activities meant exclusively for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that are done in a favourable spirit, saturated with love, devoid of other desires, and not covered by *karma* and *jñāna* is called *bhakti* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12).

BHAKTI-DEVĪ – Presiding deity of *bhakti-yoga*, devotion.

BHAKTI-MIŚRA-JÑĀNA – Knowledge mixed with devotion, with knowledge predominating.

BHAKTI-RASĀMṚTA-SINDHU – A book by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī meaning 'the nectarean ocean of the mellows of devotion', which explains the science of *bhakti-yoga*.

BHAKTI-YOGA – Path of spiritual realization through devotional service to Bhagavān.

BHĀVA – (1) Special manifestation of *suddha-sattva* (2) The essence of the cognizance potency and the pleasure-giving potency (3) Eighth stage in the development of the creeper of *bhakti*; likened to the first rays of the sun of *prema*, the highest stage of love for Kṛṣṇa.

BHĀVĀNUVĀDA – Translation that takes into account specific subtleties.

BHĪŚMA-PARVA – The eighteen chapters of the *Mahābhārata* that comprise *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

BHṚGU – One of the seven sages, born from the mind of Lord Brahmā.

BHŪTA-BHĀVANA – Maintainer of all manifestations.

BRAHMA – (1) Derived from *brh* meaning 'expanded', or 'great'; the general meaning is spirit (2) The lying entity (3) The mind (4) The Supersoul (5) The impersonal aspect of the Supreme Lord (6) Bhagavān Himself.

BRAHMĀ – Creator of the material universe who is presiding deity of the quality of passion. He is the original spiritual master of the Brahma-Mādhva *sampradāya*.

BRAHMA-BHŪTA – *Brahma* realized; the state wherein one experiences bliss, free from hankering and lamentation (18.54).

BRAHMACARYA – Literally, ‘spiritual cultivation’; the first *āśrama*, or stage of life, in the *varṇāśrama* system; celibate student life.

BRAHMA-JÑĀNA – Knowledge of *brahma*.

BRAHMA-LOKA – Abode of Lord Brahmā, which is within this material universe.

BRĀHMAṆA – One who realizes *brahma*; one of the four *varṇas*, or social divisions, in the *varṇāśrama* system; priest or teacher.

BRAHMĀNANDA – Bliss experienced by one situated in *brahma*.

BRAHMARṢI – Sages situated in *brahma* realization.

BRAHMĀSTRA – The most powerful weapon in Vedic military science (superior to nuclear weapons). It is released by *mantra* and kills only the person whose name is uttered in conjunction with the *mantra*.

BRAHMA-SŪTRA – (Also known as *Vedānta-sūtra*) The aphorisms of Vedānta offer a complete systematic exposition of Vedic revelation in the form of terse aphorisms (*sūtras*). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, composed by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

BRAHMA-SVARŪPA – The form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose bodily effulgence is the *brahma-jyoti*.

BRAHMA-TATTVA – Categorical knowledge of *brahma*.

BRAHMAVĀDA – Doctrine of impersonalism, the goal which is

to merge into the Supreme Lord’s effulgence.

BRAHMA-VETTĀ – One who has realized *brahma*.

BRHAD-ĀRANYAKA ŚRUTI – Upaniṣad containing important verses relevant to Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

BUDDHI – (1) Intelligence (2) Ability to discern subtle meanings.

BUDDHISM – Philosophy introduced by Śakyasiṃha Buddha that expounds voidist concepts of the Absolute Truth known as *śūnyatā* or *śūnyavāda*.

CAITANYA-ŚIKṢĀMṚTA – A book by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, meaning ‘nectarean instructions of Śrī Caitanya’. It presents an elaborate description of the progression of *bhakti*.

CANDRA – Moon-god.

CATUḤ-ŚLOKĪ GĪTĀ – Essence of *Bhāgavad-gītā* (10.8–11). The four verses that summarize the three Vedic divisions of *sambandha* (relationship), *abhidheya* (means) and *prayojana* (the ultimate goal).

CĀTURMĀSYA – The four months during the rainy season (August to November) in which the practice of certain prescribed austerities is very potent for spiritual development.

CIT – (1) Spirit (2) Consciousness (3) Pure thought.

CIT-JAGAT – All-conscious spiritual world.

CITRARATHA – Chief among the Gandharvas and a representation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s opulence.

CIT-ŚAKTI – Potency that relates to the cognizant aspect of the Supreme Lord. By this *śakti*, He knows Himself and causes others to know Him. Knowledge of the Absolute Reality is only possible with the help of this potency.

CITTA – Heart, thoughts, mind and consciousness.

DĀNAVAS – Demons.

DARŚANA – (1) Behold, or meet. It is used in reference to beholding either the deity or advanced devotees. (2) Doctrine, or philosophical system, as in *Vedānta-darśana*.

DEMIGODS – (1) Celestial deities (2) Godly beings situated in the higher planets who are endowed with great piety and who have tremendous life spans and whose mental and physical prowess is superior to humans. They are entrusted with specific powers for the purpose of universal administration.

DEVA – Demigods.

DEVA-DEVA – God of gods.

DEVAKĪ-NANDANA – Son of Devakī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

DEVALA – A sage, who was an authority on the Vedas. He was the elder brother of Dhaumya (the priest of the Pāṇḍavas).

DEVARŚI NĀRADA – Sage (*ṛṣi*) amongst the demigods (*devas*). Literally, *nāra* – ‘God’, *dā* – ‘giver’; a great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who spreads His glories throughout the universe.

DEVEŚA – Lord of the demigods, a name for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

DEVĪ – Demigoddess.

DHĀMA – Abode of Śrī Bhagavān in which He appears and enacts His divine pastimes.

DHANAŅJAYA – A name awarded to Arjuna who accumulated great wealth while conquering the many kings of northern Bhārata (India) in preparation for the *rājasūya-yajña* of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira. Literally, ‘winner of wealth’.

DHĀRANĀ – Concentration of the mind, the sixth step in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

DHARMA – From the verbal root *dhṛ*, to sustain. Literally, ‘that which sustains’; (1) The natural, characteristic function of a thing; that which cannot be

separated from its nature (2) Religion in general (3) The socio-religious duties prescribed in the scriptures for different classes of persons in the *varṇāśrama* system (4) One’s fixed occupation in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

DHRTARĀṢṬRA – Literally, *dhṛta* – ‘holds on to’, *rāṣṭra* – ‘the kingdom’. He was the son of Ambikā and Vyāsadeva; brother of Pāṇḍu and Vidura. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, was born blind. His one hundred sons, headed by Duryodhana, led the armies that opposed the Pāṇḍavas.

DHYĀNA – Meditation, the seventh stage of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

DĪKṢĀ – Initiation from a spiritual master. In *Bhakti-sandharbha* (*Anucceda* 283) Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī defines *dīkṣā*: learned exponents of the Absolute Truth declare that the process by which the *guru* imparts *divya-jñāna* to the disciple and eradicates all sins is known as *dīkṣā*.

DRAVYA-YAJŅA – The sacrifice of giving material possessions in charity.

DRONA, DRONĀCĀRYA – Commander of the Kaurava army.

DRUPADA – In the Mahābhārata War, Drupada was one of the commanders of the Pāṇḍava army and was killed by Droṇa. Drṣṭadyumna, Drupada’s son avenged his death.

DURGĀ – Literally, *dur* – ‘difficult’, *gā* – ‘to get out’, i.e. a prison. The material world is like a prison for the rebellious conditioned souls. Durgā is mother nature, the goddess of material nature and consort of Mahādeva Śiva.

DURYODHANA – Literally, *dur* – ‘bad’, *yodhana* – ‘fighter’. In the Mahābhārata War, Duryodhana was the leader of the Kauravas. He is a partial incarnation of Kali.

DVĀPARA-YUGA – One of the four ages, Satya, Treta, Dvāpara and Kali. In Dvāpara-yuga people attained perfection by performing excellent worship of the deity incarnation of the Lord.

EKĀDĀŚĪ – Eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. On that day, scripture prescribes fasting from grains, beans and other foodstuffs so that the *sādhaka* can totally immerse himself in activities of pure *bhakti*. Ekādaśī is referred to as the mother of devotion.

GANDHARVAS – Singers and musicians from the higher planets.

GAṆEŚĀ – Elephant scribe of Vyāsadeva.

GAṄGĀ – The Ganges, the river of divine water that falls from the spiritual sky to this universe.

GARGĀCĀRYA – *Guru* of Kṛṣṇa's father, Vasudeva. He performed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name-giving ceremony in Gokula and wrote *Garga-saṁhitā*, a famous literature describing the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

GAUTAMA – A sage, author of *nyāya-darśana* (the philosophy of logic), which is one of the six systems of philosophy.

GĀYATRĪ – Literally, *trī* – 'that which gives deliverance', *gāya* – 'through singing'. Gāyatrī is the mother of the Vedas. *Brahma-saṁhitā* states that Lord Brahmā first heard the flute-song of Kṛṣṇa through his eight ears as the syllable *om*, then, when he chanted it himself, it became *gāyatrī*, by which he became enlightened. Thus he became initiated as a *brāhmaṇa*.

GĪTĀ – Literally, 'song'. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

GĪTĀ-BHŪŚANA – Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana's Sanskrit commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Literally, 'a decoration of the *Gītā*'.

GOPĀLA-TĀPANĪ ŚRUTI – An Upaniṣad that sweetly delineates the truths of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

GOPI – A transcendental cowherd maiden of Vraja.

GOSVĀMĪ – (1) One who is the master of one's senses, detached from material elements (2) One in the renounced order of life.

GOTRA – Seminal line from the *prajāpatīs* and forefathers.

GRHASTHA – Householder.

GUḌĀKEŚĀ – A name for Arjuna meaning 'conqueror of ignorance'.

GUṆA – Binding force. The three qualities of material nature bind the living entity. There are three *guṇas*: goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*) and darkness, or ignorance (*tamas*). Literally, 'rope' (See Chapter 14).

GUṆA-AVATĀRAS – The three primary presiding deities of the three binding forces. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are together known as *tri-mūrti*.

GUṆĪ-BHŪTĀ-BHAKTI – Devotion that is predominated by the modes of nature.

GURU – (1) Spiritual master (2) *Guru* means 'heavy with realization of divine knowledge'. By steadiness, the *guru* anchors the disciple's restless mind from the turbulent waters of the material energy. Literally, *gu* – 'ignorance', *ru* – 'he who dispels'. One who is *guru* will dispel all ignorance.

GURU-DAKṢIṆĀ – Wealth or gifts offered to the *guru* by the disciple.

GURU-PARAMPARĀ – System of disciplic succession in which divine knowledge is transmitted from *śrī guru* to a fully surrendered disciple.

HARI-BHAKTI-VILĀSA – A book that describes many aspects of Vaiṣṇava life. It was written by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī under the direct instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and is divided into twenty sections, or *vilāsas*.

HARI-NĀMA – The names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. These sixteen names destroy all the bad qualities of the age of Kali (*Kali-santarāna Upaniṣad*).

HATHA-YOGA – The *yoga* process of practising different bodily postures in order to render the body supple. It is the third portion of the process of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

HLĀDINĪ-ŚAKTI – Bliss potency or the internal, spiritual potency, which is dominated by bliss, personified as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. *Hlādinī* is the *śakti* that arouses *ānanda* (bliss) in the heart of Śrī Śyāma. Although Kṛṣṇa Himself is the reservoir of all pleasure, through His *hlādinī* potency, He relishes transcendental bliss.

HRṢĪKEŚA – Literally, *iśa* – ‘lord’; *hrṣīka* – ‘of the senses’; a name for Kṛṣṇa meaning ‘one who turns the senses of His devotees towards Himself and those of the non-devotees away’.

IKṢVĀKU – The son of Vivasvān the sun-god; Earth’s first king.

INDRA – King of heaven.

ĪŚA – Controller. Sometimes refers to Viṣṇu and other times to Rudra.

ĪŚVARA – Supreme Controller, Bhagavān. Also a name for the Supersoul (15.15).

JADA – Inert, dull.

JADA-VĀDĪ – One who adheres to the view (*vāda*) that there is nothing but matter (*jada*); an atheistic scientist.

JAGAD-GURU – Universal *guru*.

JAGAT-PATĪ – Master of the universe.

JAINISM – A religious movement begun many hundreds of years ago by King Arhat. The strict followers of Jainism idealistically try to emulate Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva by practising non-violence and by not using vehicles. Rṣabha was an *avatāra* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose history is described in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

JĀLPA – Logical argument that utilizes continuous fault-finding of the opponent’s statements to establish one’s own opinion.

JAMADAGNI – A *brāhmaṇa* who possessed a wish-fulfilling cow. He was slain by a group of *kṣatriyas* for the sake of the cow, and his son, Paraśurāma, an incarnation of the Lord, took revenge by slaying the *kṣatriya* population of the world.

JANAMEJAYA – The son of King Parīkṣit.

JANĀRDANA – Name of Bhagavān meaning ‘one who thrills the hearts of mankind’.

JAPA – The chanting of the holy name on a garland of 108 prayer beads.

JĪVA – Living entity; soul.

JĪVA-ŚAKTI – (See *taṭasthā-śakti*).

JĪVA-TATTVA – Categorical knowledge of the living entity, his nature and his position.

JĪVĀTMĀ – The spirit soul; (See *jīva*).

JÑĀNA – (1) Knowledge; that which helps one know something (18.18) (2) Knowledge that leads to impersonal liberation, which is based on the soul’s distinction from matter and its identity with *brahma* (3) Transcendental knowledge of one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

JÑĀNA-MĪSRĀ-BHAKTI – Devotion mixed with knowledge, devotion predominating.

JÑĀNA-SANNYĀSA – Renunciation of knowledge.

JÑĀNA-YAJÑĀ – Sacrifice in the form of deliberation on spiritual nature.

JÑĀNA-YOGA – Path of spiritual realization through a philosophical search for truth.

JÑĀNĪ – One in search of knowledge, either impersonal or personal.

JÑEYA – Object of knowledge.

KAIVALYA – Oneness, or *mukti*.

KALI-YUGA – Present age of quarrel and hypocrisy. It lasts for 432,000 years, of which approximately five thousand have now passed (refer to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 12 Chapter 2).

KALPA – One day in the life of Lord Brahmā. It is equivalent to one thousand *catur-yugas*. Each *catur-yuga* is one cycle of the four *yugas*: Satya, Dvāpara, Tretā and Kali, totalling 4,320,000,000 years (8.17).

KĀMA – (1) Desire (2) Sense enjoyment (3) The third of the four goals of human society. Those who have no desire other than for the satisfaction of the gross senses aspire for such pleasure. Their *puruṣārtha* is known as *kāma* (See *dharma, ārta* and *mokṣa*).

KĀMADHENU – A cow who can fulfil all desires.

KĀMYA-KARMA – Fruitive activities.

KANDARPA – Cupid, the indirect cause of the birth of living beings. Kandarpa is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's representative as a progenitor (10.28).

KARMA – (1) Work prescribed in the Vedas (2) Activity in general (3) Pious activity performed with Vedic guidance leading to material gain in this world or to the higher planets after death. (See prescribed duty).

KARMA-CODANĀ – Impetus to perform action (18.18).

KARMA-KĀNḌA – Division of the Vedas that involves the performance of ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites directed towards material benefits or liberation.

KARMA-MIŚRĀ-BHAKTI – Devotion mixed with the performance of prescribed duty, with devotion predominating.

KARMA-PRADHĀNĪ-BHŪTĀ-BHAKTI – Devotion mixed with the performance of prescribed duty, with devotion predominating. (This is a different term for *karma-miśrā-bhakti*.)

KARMA-SANNYĀSA – Renunciation of fruitive work.

KARMA-YAJÑA – Sacrifice performed for fruitive gain.

KARMA-YOGA – Path of spiritual realization in which the fruit of one's work is offered to Bhagavān.

KARMĪ – One who performs *karma* in accordance with Vedic injunctions.

KAURAVAS – Descendants of King Kuru who fought on the one side at Kurukṣetra.

KENA UPANIṢAD – Upaniṣad filled with questions relevant to the ultimate purpose of human life. It is known as the 'Why?' Upaniṣad.

KEVALĀ-BHAKTI – Exclusive devotion in which one has no attachment to anyone but Bhagavān.

KHASA – Mongolians, Chinese and certain races north of India.

KINNARA – A kind of demigod who plays musical instruments and sings with the Gandharvas.

KĪRTANA – Chanting of the names of Bhagavān; the most important limb of the nine limbs of *bhakti*.

KLEŚA-GHŪNĪ – Literally, 'destroyer of misery'.

KRIYĀ – Activity.

KṚṢṆA – Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

KṚṢṆACANDRA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose transcendental body bears twenty-four-and-a-half moons.

KṚṢṆA-PREMA – Pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

KṚṢṆA-TATTVA – Categorical knowledge about the unique position, qualities, etc., of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

KṢARA – Perishable.

KṢATRIYA – One of the four *varnas* in the *varṇāśrama* system, which refers to an administrator or a warrior. Literally, *kṣi* – 'destruction'; *tri* – 'deliverance'.

KṢETRA – Field of the body (13.1...).

KṢETRA-JÑA – Knower of the field. The partial *kṣetra-jña* is the living entity; the complete *kṣetra-jña* is Paramātmā. (13.1...)

KṢĪRODAKŚĀYĪ VIṢṆU – Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Viṣṇu expansion who lies within an ocean of *kṣīra* (milk). As the Paramātmā, He enters within every atom and the heart of all beings as a witness, and gives remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness.

KURUKṢETRA – 'Field of the Kurus', an ancient holy place where Paraśurāma performed penances of atonement. It is still visited to this day (especially when there is an eclipse), for shelter from inauspicious effects.

KŪṬA-STHA – Firmly situated in one's own transcendental position, free from any sensual agitation.

KUVERA – Treasurer of the demigods, god of wealth.

LĪLĀ – Divine sportive pastimes of the Supreme Lord or His eternal associates.

LĪLĀ-AVATĀRA – Kṛṣṇa's pastime manifestations eg. Nṛsiṃha, Varāha and Kūrma.

LĪLĀ-PURUṢOTTAMA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person whose pastimes are unsurpassed by any of His other incarnations.

MĀDHURYA – With sweetness, or beauty. It refers to devotion inspired by attraction to Bhagavān's sweet and intimate feature as a beautiful young cowherd boy and to the greatest exchange of love between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

MĀDHURYA-KĀDAMBINĪ – Book written by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, meaning 'cloud-bank of sweetness'. It describes the eight progressive stages of *bhakti*, culminating in *prema*.

MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ – 1540–1632; formerly a monist but became attracted to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. He was the author of *Gītā-gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*.

MADHVA – The chief *ācārya* of the Brahmā *sampradāya* who established the doctrine of *dvaita-vāda*, which emphasizes the eternal distinction between the living entity and the Supreme Lord.

MAHĀ-BĀHO – O mighty-armed one.

MAHĀ-BHĀGAVATA – Topmost devotee of the Supreme Lord.

MAHĀBHĀRATA – Epic describing the ancient history of the world leading up to the battle of Kurukṣetra. It was composed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva for the benefit of the people of this age of Kali, who have no interest in philosophy. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is strategically placed in the midst of this epic.

MAHĀJANA – Spiritual authority; one who truly understands religious principles; the twelve principal *mahājanas* are identified in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.3.20) as Lord Brahmā, Bhagavān Nārada, Śivajī, the four Kumāras, Kapiladeva, Svāyambhuva Manu, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Janaka Mahārāja, Grand sire Bhīṣma, Bali Mahārāja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Yamarāja.

MAHĀMĀYĀ – (See *māyā-śakti*).

MAHĀ-PURUṢA – Liberated soul, specifically a great devotee, who is detached from the material world.

MAHĀRATHĪ – Warrior who can face ten thousand opponents at one time.

MAHARṢI – Seer of the Truth. He has seen the worshipable deity of one's *mantra*.

MAHĀ-TATTVA – The aggregate of five gross and three subtle material energies is called *pradhāna*. When it is activated by the glance of Mahā-Viṣṇu it becomes known as *mahā-tattva*.

MAHĀTMĀ – Magnanimous person, or great soul. It is a title of respect offered to those elevated in spiritual consciousness.

MAHĀ-VIṢṆU – Another name of Karaṇodakaśayī Viṣṇu, a plenary

portion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who creates the cosmic manifestation, consisting of countless universes.

MAHEŚVARA – Supreme Controller; it sometimes refers to Śambhu Śiva and sometimes to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

MANOMAYA – Third of the five stages of consciousness in which one is conscious of the mind (13.5).

MANTRA – Literally, *man* – ‘mind’, *tra* – ‘delivering’.

MANUS – Prajāpatis (universal progenitors) delegated by Śrī Bhagavān to generate human population. There are fourteen *manus* in one day of Brahmā, the present *manu* being Vaivasavata Manu.

MANUŚYA-LOKA – Middle planetary systems, specifically this earth planet.

MANVANTARA – The reign of one *manu*.

MĀRGA-ŚIRṢA – November–December; the best of months because grains are collected from the field at this time.

MARĪCI – Controlling deity of the fifty kinds of winds in the universe.

MARUTS – Wind-gods.

MATĪHA – A temple of the Lord with attached living quarters for *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs*; a monastery.

MAUDGALYA GOTRA – Lineage descending from the sage Mudgala.

MĀYĀ – Literally, *mā* – ‘not’, *yā* – ‘this’. In other words ‘that which is not’; an illusion; (See *māyā-śakti*).

MĀYĀ-ŚAKTI – External energy of Bhagavān, which influences the living entities to accept the false egoism of being independent enjoyers of this material world. There are three functions of *māyā*: *pradhāna*, which creates the illusory designations of the living entity; *avidyā*, which superimposes these designations; and *vidyā*, which removes them.

MĀYĀVĀDA – Doctrine of illusion. This theory, advocated by the impersonalist

followers of Śaṅkarācārya, holds that Bhagavān’s form, this material world and the individual existence of the living entities are *māyā*, or false. This philosophy accepts the authority of Vedic texts but interprets them in such a way as to advance an impersonal conception of the Absolute and deny the personal feature of Godhead. It is known as covered Buddhism, since Buddhism is overtly atheistic.

MĪMĀMSĀ – A philosophical doctrine that has two divisions: (1) *pūrva*, or *karma-mīmāṃsā*, founded by Jaiminī, which advocates that by carrying out the ritualistic duties given in the Vedas, one can attain the celestial planets, and (2) *uttara-mīmāṃsā* founded by Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsadeva, which deals with the nature of *brahma*, the Absolute Truth.

MĪMĀMSAKA – Philosopher; one who adheres to the *mīmāṃsā* philosophical doctrine. It usually refers to those who follow the *karma-mīmāṃsā* of Jaiminī.

MLECCHA – (1) Barbarian (2) Those who are unable to properly utter the Vedic *mantras*.

MOKṢA – Liberation from material bondage.

MUDGALA ṚṢI – A sage who used to perform sacrifice on the full moon and dark moon. Once Durvāsā Muni visited him. Pleased by his service attitude, Durvāsā blessed him that he could go to the higher planets in his present body. When the messengers of the demigods came in a celestial airplane to bring him there, he refused to go with them and instead preached to them about temporary nature of the higher planets.

MUKTI – Complete emancipation from the bondage of the material energy that is expressed by the false conceptions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. There are five types of *mukti*: *sārūpya* – obtaining the same form as Bhagavān; *sāmīpya* – living in close proximity to Bhagavān; *sālokyā* –

living on the same planet as Bhagavān; *sārṣṭi* having the same opulence as Bhagavān; and *sāyujya* – becoming one with Bhagavān by merging with His bodily effulgence, the *brahmajyoti*. Of these five, *sāyujya* is rejected by the Vaiṣṇavas.

MUNI – (1) Great sage (2) One who endeavours to approach the Absolute Truth by dint of mental prowess.

NĀGA – Divine serpent.

NAIMITTIKA – Occasional, causal, incidental.

NAIMITTIKA-KARMA – Occasional religious duties induced by specific circumstances, such as the worship of the forefathers and the demigods in the *śrāddha* ceremony. A person enters into the realm of exclusive devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa only when one completely abandons these activities.

NAIṢKARMYA – Freedom from prescribed duty and its reaction; action performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for which one suffers no reaction.

NĀMA – (1) Name (2) The holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. *Nāma* is invested with all potencies, with incarnations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, qualities, paraphernalia, entourage, pastimes, transcendental abode, and so forth, and it is chanted by the devotees in their practice of *bhakti*.

NĀMA-SAṆKĪRTANA – Congregational chanting of the holy names.

NĀRADA – (See *Devarṣi Nārada*).

NĀRADA-PAÑCARĀTRA – A narrative in five parts: knowledge that gives the supreme truth; knowledge that awards *mukti*; knowledge that awards *bhakti*; knowledge that awards mystic perfection and knowledge in the mode of ignorance that is interspersed with numerous *mantras*, *stotras* and *kavacas*.

NARĀDHAMA – (1) Lowest of mankind (2) One who gives up the path of *bhakti* due to lack of faith.

NĀRĀYAṆA – The four-armed expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the all-opulent Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.

NAVA-YOGENDRAS – Nine *yogīs* in the mellow of servitude who are the nine saintly sons of Ṛṣabhadeva.

NINEFOLD PROCESS OF BHAKTI – Hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the Lord's lotus feet, worshipping, offering prayers, making friendship with the Lord and surrendering one's very self to Him.

NIRGUṆA – Devoid of material qualities; transcendental to the modes of nature.

NIRGUṆĀ-BHAKTI – Devotion beyond the influence of the three modes.

NIRGUṆA-BRAHMA – An erroneous conception of *brahma* in which it is supposed that the Supreme Absolute Reality is devoid of all qualities, *Nirguṇa-brahma* actually refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is free from all material qualities and yet is the master of them.

NIRGUṆĀ-ŚRĀDDHĀ – Faith unaffected by the modes of nature.

NIRGUṆA-TATTVA – Scientific knowledge of transcendence.

NIRVIŚEṢA – Devoid of variety, featureless, without distinction.

NIRVIŚEṢA-BRAHMA – The featureless aspect of the Supreme Lord.

NIRVIŚEṢA-SVARŪPA – Indistinct aspect of Bhagavān; His effulgence.

NIṢKĀMA – Without selfish desire.

NIṢKĀMA-KARMA – Performance of one's prescribed duty without any desire for the fruits, performed by one who desires *jñāna*, or liberation.

NIṢKĀMA-KARMA-YOGA – Selfless performance of one's prescribed duty in which one unites (*yoga*) with the Supreme Lord by offering Him the fruit of that work. Although *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* is certainly conducive to pure devotion, it is not pure devotion in and of itself, because Kṛṣṇa's happiness and well-being are not the exclusive consideration.

NIṢṬHĀ – Fixed adherence, or resolve; devotional practice that does not waver at any time. It is the fifth stage in the development of the creeper of devotion.

NISTRAIGUNYA – Freedom from the three modes of material nature.

NITYA – (1) Eternal (2) Regulated.

NITYA-KARMA – Daily, or routine, obligatory duties.

OMKĀRA – Sound representation of *para-tattva brahma*.

OM TAT SAT – The three words indicating the Supreme Absolute Reality.

PADA – Line of Sanskrit verse; abode; a foot; that which gives evidence in establishing the Supreme Lord.

PĀDA-SEVANAM – Service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān and His pure devotees; one of the nine limbs of *bhakti*.

PADMA – Lotus.

PADMA PURĀṆA – One of the *sāttvika* Purāṇas.

PAÑCARĀTRA – Group of devotional scriptures that assist in the practice of the principal limbs of *bhakti*; they cover five topics: (a) the process of cleansing the temple, (b) performing *ārātika* with flowers, incense, etc., (c) worship, bathing, etc. of the deity of Śrī Viṣṇu (d) the performance of meditation on the holy name and on *śrī gāyatrī*, (e) recitation of verses and prayers, performance of *nāma-kīrtana* and study of scriptures such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which establish *tattva-jñāna*. The Pañcarātras are numerous, some of them being prominent in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineage: *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra*, *Śrī Hayaśirṣa-pañcarātra* and *Śrī Śaṅḍilya-pañcarātra*.

PĀṆDAVA – (1) A name for Arjuna (2) A son of King Pāṇḍu.

PANḌITA – Learned scholar.

PĀṆḌU – The great king of the Kuru dynasty and younger brother of

Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He died an untimely death and left his five sons, the Pāṇḍavas, under the care of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

PĀPA – Sin.

PARĀ-BHAKTI – Transcendental *bhakti*.

PARABRAHMA – The Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; the supreme *brahma*. (See *brahma*).

PARA-DHARMA – The prescribed duty of another.

PARAMA-DHĀMA – Supreme abode.

PARAMA-PURUṢA – Śrī Bhagavān, the supreme enjoyer.

PARAMĀTMĀ – Supersoul; He who is situated in the hearts of all living entities as a witness and the source of remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness.

PARAMEŚVARA – Supreme controller.

PARANTAPA – ‘Chastiser of the enemy’, Arjuna.

PARĀ-ŚAKTI – Śrī Bhagavān’s transcendental potency, which has three divisions: *cit* (spiritual), *taṭastha* (marginal) and *māyā* (material).

PARAŚURĀMA – Son of Jamadagni and Renukā and the sixth of the ten *avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu mentioned in *Śrī Daśavatāra-stotram* by Jayadeva Gosvāmī. He slew all the *kṣatriyas* of the world to give protection to the *brāhmaṇas*. Literally, *rāma* – ‘one who delights’, *paraśu* – ‘in fighting with the axe’.

PARA-TATTVA – Science of understanding the highest truth.

PAROKṢA-VĀDA – That which remains hidden, or secret, being expressed in an indirect way.

PĀRTHA – ‘Son of Pṛthā’, Arjuna.

PIŚĀCA – Fiend.

PĪTĀMBARA – Yellow *dhofī*.

PITR-YĀNA – Voyage on the path of the forefathers.

PRADHĀNA – (See *māyā-śakti*).

PRADHĀNĪ-BHŪTĀ-BHAKTI – Activities related to *bhakti* that are

mixed with *karma* and *jñāna*, *bhakti* being prominent.

PRAJĀPATI – A living entity empowered to create living beings (*prajā*) throughout the universe. The chief Prajāpati is Brahmā.

PRAKĀŚIKĀ-VṚTTI – ‘Commentary that illuminates’.

PRAKṚTI – Material nature.

PRAMEYA-RATNĀVALĪ – A book by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, meaning ‘a list of proven Truths’.

PRĀṆA – (1) Life energy; life-air (2) The in-coming breath (4.27).

PRAṆĀMA – Offering respectful obeisance.

PRAṆAMAYA – The second of the five stages of consciousness in which one perceives life in terms of preservation (13.5).

PRAṆAVA – The syllable that gives life, derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *praṇu*, to make a reverberating humming the syllable *om* (10.25).

PRAṆĀYĀMA – Yogic breathing.

PRĀRABDHA-KARMA – Results of previous activities that have begun to bear fruit in the form of happiness and distress.

PRASĀDA – Grace, mercy. Generally refers to remnants of food offered to the deity. It may also refer to other sanctified or blessed articles such as incense, flowers, garlands and clothing.

PRASANNĀTMĀ – Joyful soul; the first characteristic of one situated in *brahma-bhūta*, having transcended the gross and subtle bodies manipulated by the three modes of material nature.

PRATIṢṬHĀ – Support.

PRATYĀHĀRA – Withdrawal of the senses from the sense objects; the fifth step in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

PREMA – Pure love for Kṛṣṇa, which is extremely concentrated, which completely melts the heart, and which gives rise to a deep sense of *mamatā*, or possessiveness, in relationship to Him.

PREMA-BHAKTI – Stage of *bhakti* characterized by pure love; the perfectional stage of devotion.

PREMA-DEVĪ – Goddess of love.

PRESCRIBED DUTY – The work prescribed by Vedic scriptures in accordance with a person’s natural propensity, either as a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *sūdra* in one of the four *āśramas*: *brahmacāri*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*; refers to both regular, daily, occupational duties and duties performed on certain occasions.

PŪJĀ – Worship.

PŪJYAPĀDA – Literally, ‘whose feet are to be revered’; an honorific title.

PURĀṆAS – Eighteen major and eighteen minor supplements to the Vedas, written by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa.

PURU – Son of of Mahārāja Yayāti who accepted his father’s request to exchange his old age for his youth (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 9.18–20).

PURUṢA – Enjoyer; refers to either the living entity or the Supreme Lord.

PURUṢA-AVATĀRA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s three expansions that create the cosmic manifestation for the upliftment of the rebellious living entities: Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.1–3 and 2.6.39–42).

PURUṢA-SŪKTA – A hymn from the *Ṛg-Veda* glorifying the Supersoul.

PURUṢOTTAMA – Supreme enjoyer.

RĀGA – (1) Deep attachment for Kṛṣṇa, permeated by spontaneous and intense absorption in the object of one’s affection (2) A deep and overpowering thirst for the object of one’s affection.

RĀGA-MĀRGA – Path of spontaneous attachment.

RAHASYA – Confidential, or secret.

RĀJASIKA – Of the material mode of passion.

RAJO-GUṆA – Mode of passion.

RĀKSASA – Flesh-eating demon, generally endowed with mystic powers.

RĀMĀNUJĀCĀRYA – *Ācārya* of the *Śrī sampradāya* and propounder of qualified monism (*viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda*) which states that although all of the energies of God are one, each maintain its speciality (*vaiśiṣṭya*).

RASA – The exact English equivalent is untranslatable, but is herein rendered as ‘mellow quality’. It is the spiritual transformation of the heart which takes place when the perfected state of love for Kṛṣṇa, known as *rati*, is converted into heart-melting emotions by combining with various types of transcendental ecstasies.

RASIKA-RĀÑJANA – Lit, ‘that which pleases those who relish transcendental mellows’, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s Bengali translation-commentary of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.

RASO VAI SAḤ – Literally, ‘He, Bhagavān, is certainly the embodiment of all *rasa*’.

RATI – (1) Attachment, fondness (2) A stage in the development of *bhakti* which is synonymous with *bhāva*.

ṚTVIK – Priest who performs a sacrifice on someone’s behalf.

RUDRA – One of the eleven expansions of Lord Śiva.

RŪPĀ GOŚVĀMĪ – The foremost follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His mission was to show living entities the path to their highest auspiciousness, service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the damsels of Vraja within whom the acme of spontaneous devotion resides eternally and inherently. The three commentators of this *Gītā* are purely in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and dedicated to disseminating his teachings.

ŚABDA – Sound; word; noun.

ŚABDA-BRAHMA – (1) Imports of Vedic scripture (2) Sound incarnation of the Absolute Truth.

SAC-CID-ĀNANDA – Eternality, cognizance and bliss.

SAD-GURU – Bona fide spiritual master; spiritual preceptor who follows *sat* (the pure path of the *sādhus* as described within scripture and as delivered through *paramparā*).

SĀDHAKA – One who performs regulated spiritual discipline to achieve a specific goal.

SĀDHANA – Method, or practice adopted to accomplish a specific goal. Without *sādhana* one cannot obtain the goal. *Sādhana* corresponds to various goals: those who desire material enjoyment adopt the path of *karma* as their *sādhana*, those who desire liberation adopt the path of *jñāna*, and those who aspire for the eternal loving service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa adopt the path of *bhakti*, which involves the spiritual practices of hearing, chanting and so on.

SĀDHU – Highly advanced devotees who embody devotion to the Supreme Lord. In a general sense this refers to any saintly, or religious person.

SĀDHU-SANĠA – The association of saintly persons; the second stage in the development of the creeper of *bhakti* and the most important factor for advancement in *bhakti*.

SĀDHYA – Object, or goal, for which one undergoes a corresponding practice.

SAGUṆA – (1) With material qualities (2) Possessing transcendental qualities.

SA-GUṆA-BRAHMA – The Absolute Truth endowed with all transcendental qualities.

SAKĀMA – With desire.

SAKĀMA-BHAKTI – Devotion performed with material desires.

SAKĀMA-KARMA – Actions performed with a desire to taste the material result.

SAKĀMA-KARMĪ – One who accepts a regulated life but maintains material desires.

SAKHĀ – Male friend, companion or attendant. In the *Gītā*, this refers to Arjuna.

SAKHYA-BHĀVA – Mood of friendship with Kṛṣṇa.

ŚAKTI – Potency, or energy.

ŚAKTIMĀN – Possessor of potency, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

ŚAKTYĀVEŚA-AVATĀRA – Empowered incarnation; a living entity who, in submission to Bhagavān, becomes empowered (*āveśa*) by Him to act powerfully on His behalf.

SĀLOKYA – The liberation of attaining the same planet as Śrī Bhagavān.

SAMA-DARŚĪ – One who possesses equal vision.

SAMĀDHI – Concentration of the mind; meditation or deep trance, either on Paramātmā or Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

SAMPRADĀYA – Unbroken disciplic successive line transmitted from *guru* to disciple. *Mantra* is only effective when received in a bona fide *sampradāya*, of which there are four: Brahma, Śrī, Rudra and Sanaka.

SAMPRAJŪĀTA-SAMĀDHI – *Samādhi* in which one is conscious of the difference between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower.

SĀMSKĀRA – (1) Sacred, or sanctifying, ceremony (2) Reformation or training of the mind (3) Impression on the mind of any previous purificatory act in this or in prior births.

SĀMVIT – The potency that bestows transcendental knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān.

SANĀTANA – Eternal.

SANĀTANA GOSVĀMĪ – One of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana; elder brother of Rūpa Gosvāmī and author of numerous literatures, the most prominent of which are the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

SANĠA – Association.

SANĠJAYA – The charioteer and minister of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He received divine vision by the mercy of Vyāsadeva and was therefore able to narrate all the events of the war to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

SANĠKALPA – The mind's function of acceptance and determination.

ŚĀNĠARĀCĀRYA – A propagator of *māyāvāda*, or impersonalism, understood to be an incarnation of Lord Śiva.

SĀNĠHYA – (1) Analytically discriminating between spirit and matter (2) The path of *bhakti* practised by analyzing the twenty-four universal elements.

SĀNĠHYA-YOGA – *Yoga* that gives analytical knowledge about scientific knowledge of the soul, the Supersoul and inert objects.

SANĠĪRTANA-YAJŪĀ – Congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names; the *yuga-dharma* for the age of Kali.

SANNYĀSA – (1) Completely giving up the results of one's activities (2) The fourth stage of life in the *varṇāśrama* system. There are four stages of *sannyāsa*: (a) *Kūṭicaka*. He resides in a hut (*kūṭir*) and accepts alms from a family or *āśrama* till his *sādhana* reaches maturity; (b) *Bahūdaka*. He then travels on pilgrimage and bathes in many (*bahu*) waters (*udakas*), practising detachment through dependence on Bhagavān; (c) *Parivrājak*. When transcendental knowledge arises in his heart, he preaches his realizations to everyone, in every village; (d) *Paramahamsa*. By full absorption in *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, *kṛṣṇa-tattva* and *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, he becomes fully mature and the swan (*hamsa*) of his mind always dives and surfaces in Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's ever fresh pastimes.

SANNYĀSĪ – (1) One in the renounced order of life, which is the highest order in the *varṇāśrama-dharma* system (2) One who renounces the fruits of one's activity.

ŚĀNTA-RASA – Mellow of neutrality in which one appreciates the greatness of Śrī Bhagavān, just as a Paramātmā-realized *yogī* does. It is one of the primary *rasas*.

ŚARAṆĠGATI – Surrender. The six symptoms of surrender (*śaraṇa*) are (a) acceptance of anything that fosters the growth of the creeper of devotion, (b) avoidance of anything that hinders that growth, (c) the firm faith that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will always extend the protective umbrella of Their lotus

feet over Their devoted servants, (d) acceptance of Their Lordships as one's exclusive guardians, (e) submissive offering of one's full self at Their lotus feet and (f) always feeling one's self lowly and humble.

SĀRĀRTHA-VARṢINĪ – *Sāra* means 'essence' or 'cream', *artha* means 'meaning', *varṣinī* means 'shower'. Literally, 'a shower of the essential meanings'.

SARVA-SVARŪPA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who manifests to the worshipper in whatever form the worshipper desires to see Him.

ŚĀSTRA – Vedic scripture; derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *śās* – to govern, command.

SAT – Eternal, pure, godly. It is used to describe the Absolute Truth. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the complete *sat* entity. It also refers to His abodes, incarnations, devotees, the bona fide *guru*, etc.

ṢAṬĀKA – Literally, 'a group of six'.

SATTAMAḤ – Best of godly men.

SATTVA-GUṆA – Mode of goodness. (See *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*).

SĀTTVIKA – Of the mode of goodness.

SATYA – Truth.

SATYA-SĀNKALPA – Name of Bhagavān meaning that His resolve (*sankalpa*) becomes fact (*satya*).

ŚAUNAKA – The head of the great sages at Naimiśāraṇya who were present when Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī spoke *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Parikṣit Mahārāja.

SAVIṢEṢA – With features and unique qualities.

SĀYUJYA-MUKTI – The liberation of merging one's existence with the effulgence of Bhagavān. Since there is no facility to render service to Kṛṣṇa in this liberation, it is never accepted by Vaiṣṇavas, even if offered by Śrī Bhagavān, Himself.

SIDDHA – Perfection.

SIDDHĀNTA – Conclusive truth; authoritative principle of scripture.

SIDDHI – Perfection. There are eight mystic *siddhis* achieved by *aṣṭāṅga-yogīs*.

ŚIKṢĀ – Instruction.

ŚIKṢĀ-GURU – *Guru* who instructs one on the path of *bhajana*.

ŚĪSUPĀLA – A demon in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

ŚĪSYA – Disciple. It is derived from the verbal root *śās* – to command – indicating that a disciple must accept *śrī guru*'s order as his very life.

ŚIVA – (1) Auspicious (2) The destroyer of the material creation and the presiding deity of the mode of ignorance.

SKANDA PURĀṆA – Purāṇa written for those in the mode of passion.

ŚLOKA – Verse in Sanskrit composition.

SMARAṆAM – Remembrance of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; the third step of the ninefold process of *bhakti*.

SMĀRTA – (1) One who rigidly adheres to the Smṛtis, being overly attached to external rituals without comprehending the underlying essence, or conclusion, of *śāstra*. (2) The *brāhmaṇa* followers of Śaṅkara.

SMṚTI – That which is remembered. The body of sacred literature which remembers Śrī Bhagavān (in contradistinction to Śruti, which is directly heard by or revealed to the *ṛṣis*). They include the six Vedāṅgas, the *dharma-śāstras* such as *Manu-saṁhita*, the Purāṇas, and the Itihāsas (histories).

SOMA-RASA – Nectar drunk by the demigods that grants them relative immortality.

ŚRADDHĀ – Faith in the statements of scripture awakened when one has accumulated pious devotional activities over many births or by the association and mercy of a pure Vaiṣṇava; the first manifestation of the creeper of devotion. The inner essence of the seed of *śraddhā* is the conception implanted

within the disciple's heart to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a particular capacity.

ŚRĀDDHA – Ceremony in honour of and for the benefit of deceased relatives.

ŚRAVAṆAM – Hearing; the first of the ninefold process of *bhakti*

ŚRĪ – (1) An honorific prefix to a name (2) Beauty (3) Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune (4) Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

ŚRĪDHARA SVĀMĪPĀDA – Author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentary accepted by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM – Crest jewel of Vedic literatures and the nectarean ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic knowledge. It is the spotless Purāṇa, which offers no fruitive motivation for the performance of pious deeds, since it only encourages unmotivated devotion (See *Vedānta*).

ŚRUTI – (1) That which is heard (2) Revelation, as distinguished from Smṛti (3) Infallible knowledge that descends in disciplic succession. It is the body of literature that was directly manifest by the Supreme Lord, in other words, the original four Vedas (also known as *nigama*) and the Upaniṣads.

STHITA-PRAJÑĀ – One whose intelligence is fixed in self-realization.

STUTI – Praise, or prayers, in glorification of Śrī Bhagavān.

SUDĀMĀ VIPRA – *Brahmaṇa* friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

SUDARŚANA CAKRA – Invincible disc weapon of Śrī Bhagavān.

ŚUDDHA-BHAKTI – Pure devotion.

ŚUDDHA-SATTVA – Pure, transcendental goodness (See *viśuddha-sattva*).

ŚŪDRA – Labourer or artisan.

SU-DURĀCĀRA – One who commits the most abominable actions (9.30).

SUKHA – Happiness.

ŚUKRĀCĀRYA – *Guru* of the demons.

SUKṚTI – Spiritual merit.

SUMERU – The golden mountain on which the Ganges waters fall.

ŚŪNYAVĀDĪ – (1) Voidist (2) Follower of the teachings of Buddha.

SŪRYA – Sun-god.

SŪTA GOSVĀMĪ – The great sage who spoke *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in Naimisāranya.

SŪTRAS – Concise aphorisms, which contain compressed knowledge for easy learning and remembrance.

SVA-BHĀVA – One's nature, disposition.

SVA-DHARMA – One's prescribed duty; occupation according to one's nature.

SVĀMŚĀ – Śrī Bhagavān's plenary portions.

SVARŪPA – The eternal nature and identity of the self; one's transcendental form.

SVARŪPA-ŚAKTI – Internal potency of Śrī Bhagavān, superior to His marginal and external potencies. It has three divisions: *sandhīnī* (existence), *samvit* (knowledge) and *hlādinī* (transcendental bliss).

SVAYAM BHAGAVĀN ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, from whom all His incarnations emanate.

SVAYAMVARA – Contest to win the hand of a princess in marriage, wherein the princess herself (*svayam*) chooses (*vara*).

TĀMASIKA – Related to the material mode of ignorance.

TAMO-GUṆA – Material mode of ignorance, or darkness.

TAPA – Austerity.

TAPASYĀ – Austerity.

TAPO-YAJÑĀ – Sacrifice of performing austerities.

TAT – Supreme Spirit (*brahma*); the cause of the universe.

TATĀSTHA-ŚAKTI – Literally, *taṭa* – 'marginally', *stha* – 'situated', *śakti* – energy. In other words, it is the marginal energy of Śrī Bhagavān which manifests the living entities.

TATTVA – Fundamental truth.
TATTVA-DARŚĪ – One who has realized the Absolute Reality.
TATTVA-JÑĀNA – Conclusive knowledge of fundamental truths.
TATTVA-VIT – Conversant with categorical knowledge of the Truth, such as *guru-tattva*, *māyā-tattva* and *īśvara-tattva*.
ṬĪKĀ – Commentary.
TRETĀ-YUGA – Second of the four *yugas*: Satya, Tretā, Dvāparā and Kali.
TYĀGA – Renunciation of possessiveness.
UDDHAVA – Advisor, minister and close friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā; a disciple of Bṛhaspati; a *jñāna-miśra-bhakta*.
UPANIṢADS – 108 principle philosophical treatises that appear within the Vedas.
UPĀSAKA – Worshipper.
UPĀSANĀ – Spiritual practices.
UTTAMA-BHĀGAVĀTA – Highest level of devotee.
VAIRĀGYA – (1) Detachment from this world (2) Spiritual discipline involving voluntary austerities to achieve detachment from the objects of the senses.
VAIṢṆAVA – One in whose heart and mind only Śrī Viṣṇu, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa, resides; a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Literally, 'belonging to Lord Viṣṇu'.
VAIŚYA – Agriculturalists, cowherds, businessmen.
VĀNTĀŚĪ – One who returns to worldly sense enjoyment after taking *sannyāsa*. Literally, *vānta* – 'vomit', *āśī* – 'eater'.
VARĀHA PURĀṆA – One of the *sāttvika* Purāṇas.
VARNA – Occupational division, or caste, which is ascertained according to one's nature.

VARNĀŚRAMA-DHARMA – The Vedic social system, which arranges society into four occupational divisions based on a person's qualities and four stages of spiritual development. (See prescribed duty).
VARUṆA – God of the waters.
VĀSUDEVA – The son of Vasudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
VASUS – Eight demigods.
VEDA – Knowledge, or the four primary books of knowledge compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva: the *Ṛg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda* and *Yajur Veda*.
VEDĀṄGA – Six auxiliary portions of the Vedas: (a) *Śikṣā*, proper pronunciation and articulation of Vedic Sanskrit, (b) *chanda*, rhythmic metres for chanting *ślokas*, (c) *vyākaraṇa*, grammar, (d) *nirukta*, an explanation of difficult Vedic words, (e) *vyōtiṣa*, astrology, (f) *kalpa*, the ceremonial process of Vedic ceremonies for sacrifice.
VEDĀNTA – Literally, *veda* – 'Vedic knowledge', *anta* – 'conclusion'. The Upaniṣads are the latter portion of the Vedas, and the *Vedānta-sūtra* summarizes the philosophy of the Upaniṣads in concise statements. Therefore the word 'Vedānta' especially refers to the *Vedānta-sūtra*.
VEDĀNTA-ĀCĀRYA – A most exalted teacher of Vedānta. The *vedānta-ācārya* in the Gaudīya *sampradāya* is Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
VEDĀNTA-SŪTRA – (See *Brahma-sūtra*).
VIBHINNĀMŚA – Separated parts of Bhagavān, the living entities.
VIBHŪTI – Bhagavān's divine opulences.
VIBHŪTI-YOGA – *Yoga* through comprehending Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine glories.
VIDVAD-RAŅJANA – Lit, 'that which pleases the wise', Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Bengali translation-commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.
VIDVAT-PRATĪTI – Perception based on transcendental knowledge.

- VIDYĀ** – Knowledge.
- VIJÑĀNA** – (1) Realization of divine knowledge (2) Realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurya* (sweetness).
- VIJÑĀNA-MAYA**– Fourth of the five stages of consciousness in which one is conscious of the soul (13.5).
- VIKARMA** – Action that disobeys Vedic injunction; sinful activity.
- VIPRA** – A learned *brāhmaṇa*.
- VIROCANA** – The demon the son of Prahāda Mahārāja and the father of Bali Mahārāja.
- VISMAYA** – Wonder.
- VISMAYA-RASA** – Mellow of astonishment.
- VIṢṆU** – Literally, *viś* – 'pervading', *nu* – 'person'. One who is all-pervasive, the Supreme Lord of the cosmos who presides over the mode of goodness.
- VIṢṆU-TATTVA** – Categorical knowledge of the unlimited expansions of Viṣṇu.
- VIŚUDDHĀ-BHAKTI** – Exclusive, supremely pure devotion, in which one has no attachment to anyone but Bhagavān.
- VIŚUDDHA-SATTVA** – State of unalloyed goodness that is beyond the influence of material nature.
- VIŚVANĀTHA CAKRAVARTĪ**
ṬHĀKURA – A prominent *ācārya* of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism who authored many books and commentaries, including this *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*.
- VIŚVARŪPA** – Universal form.
- VIŚVARŪPA-UPĀSANĀ** – Worship of the universal form.
- VRAJABHŪMI** – Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode.
- VRAJENDRA-NANDANA** – The son of the king of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- VRATA** – Vow undertaken for self-purification and spiritual benefit.
- VRṢNIS** – Kings of the Yadu dynasty.
- VYĀSA** – Vedavyāsa, the literary incarnation of the Lord and the compiler of Vedas, Purāṇas, Upaniṣads, *Brahma-sūtra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
- YĀDAVA** – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yādu dynasty.
- YAJÑA** – (1) Sacrifice in which a deity is propitiated by the chanting of prayers and *mantras* and the offering of ghee into the sacred fire (2) Any kind of intense endeavour that is directed at achieving a particular goal.
- YAKṢA** – Ghost, or spirit.
- YAŚODĀ-NANDANA** – Son of Yaśodā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- YAVANA** – Barbarian, i.e. one who does not follow a pure lifestyle.
- YOGA** – Spiritual discipline practised to become linked with the Supreme.
- YOGAMĀYĀ** – The internal potency of Bhagavān that arranges and enhances all His pastimes.
- YOGA-MIŚRĀ-BHAKTI** – *Bhakti* mixed with *yoga*, where *bhakti* predominates.
- YOGEŚVARA** – The supreme master of mystic power, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- YOGĪ** – (1) One whose heart remains connected with Śrī Bhagavān (2) One who endeavours for spiritual perfection.
- YUGA** – One age within the cycle of the universal four ages, named Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.
- YUGA-AVATĀRA** – Incarnations of the Lord who teach the particular religion for each *yuga*.

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