

Bhagavad Gita - Chapter Four

Transcendental Knowledge

Jñāna Vibhāga Yoga

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.1 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ
proktavān aham avyayam
vivasvān manave prāha
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt

The Lord said: I spoke (**aham proktavān**) this indestructible knowledge (**imaṁ avyayam yogaṁ**) to Vivasvān (**vivasvate**). He spoke it to Manu (**vivasvān manave prāha**). Manu spoke it to Ikṣvāku (**manur ikṣvākave abravīt**).

Baladeva

- In the fourth chapter the Lord, the son of Devakī, loudly proclaims the cause of His appearance, the eternal nature of his līlā amidst his eternal activities, jñāna yoga, and the glories of jñāna above all.
- Having explained in the previous two chapters that jñāna and karma yoga are one because of having the same goal, he praises them by glorifying the lineage of this knowledge.
- This yoga which I have taught to you (imam) I previously (purā) spoke to the sun god Vivasvān, a devotee, and origin of the kṣatriya lineage.
- This yoga is avyaya, eternal, because of being the essence of the Vedas (which have no creation or destruction), and thus ever fresh, and because its results are eternal in the senses of being permanent.
- Then my student Vivasvān spoke this yoga to his son Vaivasvata Manu, and Manu spoke it to his son Ikṣvāku.

Srila Prabhupada

- Herein we find the history of the Bhagavad-gītā traced from a remote time when it was delivered to the royal order of all planets, beginning from the sun planet.
- The kings of all planets are especially meant for the protection of the inhabitants, and therefore the royal order should understand the science of Bhagavad-gītā in order to be able to rule the citizens and protect them from material bondage to lust.
- Human life is meant for cultivation of spiritual knowledge, in eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the executive heads of all states and all planets are obliged to impart this lesson to the citizens by education, culture and devotion.
- In other words, the executive heads of all states are intended to spread the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that the people may take advantage of this great science and pursue a successful path, utilizing the opportunity of the human form of life.

Srila Prabhupada

- In this millennium, the sun-god is known as Vivasvān, the king of the sun, which is the origin of all planets within the solar system.
- In the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.52) it is stated:
**yac-cakṣur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇām
rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ
yasyājñayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi**
- "Let me worship," Lord Brahmā said, "the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the original person and under whose order the sun, which is the king of all planets, is assuming immense power and heat.
- The sun represents the eye of the Lord and traverses its orbit in obedience to His order."

Srila Prabhupada

- The sun is the king of the planets, and the sun-god (at present of the name Vivasvān) rules the sun planet, which is controlling all other planets by supplying heat and light.
- He is rotating under the order of Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Kṛṣṇa originally made Vivasvān His first disciple to understand the science of Bhagavad-gītā.
- The Gītā is not, therefore, a speculative treatise for the insignificant mundane scholar but is a standard book of knowledge coming down from time immemorial.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the Mahābhārata (Śānti-parva 348.51-52) we can trace out the history of the Gītā as follows:

**tretā-yugādau ca tato vivasvān manave dadau
manuś ca loka-bhr̥ty-arthaṁ sutāyekṣvākave dadau
ikṣvākuṇā ca kathito vyāpya lokān avasthitaḥ**

"In the beginning of the millennium known as Tretā-yuga this science of the relationship with the Supreme was delivered by Vivasvān to Manu. Manu, being the father of mankind, gave it to his son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this earth planet and forefather of the Raghu dynasty, in which Lord Rāmacandra appeared."

- Therefore, Bhagavad-gītā existed in human society from the time of Mahārāja Ikṣvāku.
- At the present moment we have just passed through five thousand years of the Kali-yuga, which lasts 432,000 years.

Srila Prabhupada

- Before this there was Dvāpara-yuga (800,000 years), and before that there was Tretā-yuga (1,200,000 years).
- Thus, some 2,005,000 years ago, Manu spoke the Bhagavad-gītā to his disciple and son Mahārāja Ikṣvāku, the king of this planet earth.
- The age of the current Manu is calculated to last some 305,300,000 years, of which 120,400,000 have passed.
- Accepting that before the birth of Manu the Gītā was spoken by the Lord to His disciple the sun-god Vivasvān, a rough estimate is that the Gītā was spoken at least 120,400,000 years ago; and in human society it has been extant for two million years.
- It was respoken by the Lord again to Arjuna about five thousand years ago.
- That is the rough estimate of the history of the Gītā, according to the Gītā itself and according to the version of the speaker, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Srila Prabhupada

- It was spoken to the sun-god Vivasvān because he is also a kṣatriya and is the father of all kṣatriyas who are descendants of the sun-god, or the sūrya-vamśa kṣatriyas.
- Because Bhagavad-gītā is as good as the Vedas, being spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, this knowledge is apauruṣeya, superhuman.
- Since the Vedic instructions are accepted as they are, without human interpretation, the Gītā must therefore be accepted without mundane interpretation.
- The mundane wranglers may speculate on the Gītā in their own ways, but that is not Bhagavad-gītā as it is.
- Therefore, Bhagavad-gītā has to be accepted as it is, from the disciplic succession, and it is described herein that the Lord spoke to the sun-god, the sun-god spoke to his son Manu and Manu spoke to his son Ikṣvāku.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.2 ||

evaṁ paramparā-prāptam
imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā
yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa

The saintly kings (**rājarṣayah**) understood this knowledge (**imaṁ viduḥ**) received in this disciplic succession (**evaṁ paramparā-prāptam**). By the influence of powerful time (**mahatā kālena**), this disciplic succession for yoga was broken (**iha yogo naṣṭaḥ**), O afflicter of enemies (**parantapa**).

Baladeva

- Thus the great saintly kings know this yoga which was received through the line of disciplic succession starting from Vivasvān, and which was taught by their forefathers such as Ikṣvāku.
- The sampradāya of this yoga in this world (iha) was broken by the influence of powerful time.

Srila Prabhupada

- It is clearly stated that the Gītā was especially meant for the saintly kings because they were to execute its purpose in ruling over the citizens.
- Certainly Bhagavad-gītā was never meant for the demonic persons, who would dissipate its value for no one's benefit and would devise all types of interpretations according to personal whims.
- As soon as the original purpose was scattered by the motives of the unscrupulous commentators, there arose the need to reestablish the disciplic succession.
- Five thousand years ago it was detected by the Lord Himself that the disciplic succession was broken, and therefore He declared that the purpose of the Gītā appeared to be lost.
- In the same way, at the present moment also there are so many editions of the Gītā (especially in English), but almost all of them are not according to authorized disciplic succession.

Srila Prabhupada

- There are innumerable interpretations rendered by different mundane scholars, but almost all of them do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, although they make a good business on the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- This spirit is demonic, because demons do not believe in God but simply enjoy the property of the Supreme.
- Since there is a great need of an edition of the Gītā in English, as it is received by the paramparā (disciplic succession) system, an attempt is made herewith to fulfill this great want.
- Bhagavad-gītā—accepted as it is—is a great boon to humanity; but if it is accepted as a treatise of philosophical speculations, it is simply a waste of time.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.3 ||

sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya
yogaḥ proktaḥ purātaṇaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti
rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam

As you are My devotee (**me bhakto asi**) and friend (**sakhā ca iti**), I have spoken (**mayā proktaḥ**) this yoga (**sah eva ayam purātaṇaḥ yogaḥ**), the ultimate secret (**etad uttamam rahasyam**), unto you today (**te adya**).

Baladeva

- This ancient yoga which should be spoken in this line of succession has been spoken today by Me, a friend to you, who am very attached to you, unto you, a friend to Me, who are very attached to Me.
- Because you are My devotee, surrendered to Me, and a friend, I have spoken to you, and no one else, since (hi) it is the most secret (rahasyam uttamam), and therefore should be concealed.

Srila Prabhupada

- There are two classes of men, namely the devotee and the demon.
- The Lord selected Arjuna as the recipient of this great science owing to his being a devotee of the Lord, but for the demon it is not possible to understand this great mysterious science.
- There are a number of editions of this great book of knowledge.
- Some of them have commentaries by the devotees, and some of them have commentaries by the demons.
- Commentation by the devotees is real, whereas that of the demons is useless.
- Arjuna accepts Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and any commentary on the Gītā following in the footsteps of Arjuna is real devotional service to the cause of this great science.

Srila Prabhupada

- The demonic, however, do not accept Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is.
- Instead they concoct something about Kṛṣṇa and mislead general readers from the path of Kṛṣṇa's instructions.
- Here is a warning about such misleading paths. One should try to follow the disciplic succession from Arjuna, and thus be benefitted by this great science of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.4 ||

arjuna uvāca

aparaṁ bhavato janma
paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ
katham etad vijānīyāṁ
tvam ādau proktavān iti

Arjuna said: You appeared after Vivasvān (**aparaṁ bhavato janma**). He was born previous to you (**paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ**). How can I understand (**katham etad vijānīyāṁ**) that you spoke this yoga in the beginning (**tvam ādau proktavān iti**)?

Baladeva

- Arjuna then spoke to defeat the ignorant people who doubt the omniscience and eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa.
- “How am I to understand that you who are recently born (aparam janma), spoke this yoga to ancient Vivasvān who was born previously to you (param janma)?”
- The meaning is this. It is not that Arjuna does not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all, because Arjuna appears in this world with a form similar to that of Kṛṣṇa, when Kṛṣṇa appears in a human form (he is nitya siddha), and because Arjuna says param brahma param dhāma: you are the supreme Brahman, the supreme form.
- He asks the question to remove the doubts of the ignorant persons concerning the omniscience and eternal nature of the Lord, which arise because Kṛṣṇa appeared in a human form and was born from Devakī.

Baladeva

- The Lord knows the truth about Himself, but others do not. Therefore, from the lotus mouth of the Lord, the real nature of His form and birth should be revealed for the benefit of the world.
- Thus, when the Lord speaks of His own glories, He should not be criticized as displaying conceit. Rather He should be praised for having a merciful nature.
- When a knowing person asks questions like a fool, saying, “You are the supreme Brahman taking a human form. How are Your form, birth and activities different from those of ordinary people? What is the purpose of the birth and when does it take place?” it should be understood that this is for the purpose of dispelling the doubts of the ignorant.
- If he is human he cannot be omniscient, and if he was born, he cannot be eternal.

Srila Prabhupada

- Arjuna is an accepted devotee of the Lord, so how could he not believe Kṛṣṇa's words?
- The fact is that Arjuna is not inquiring for himself but for those who do not believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead or for the demons who do not like the idea that Kṛṣṇa should be accepted as the Supreme Personality of Godhead; for them only Arjuna inquires on this point, as if he were himself not aware of the Personality of Godhead, or Kṛṣṇa.
- As it will be evident from the Tenth Chapter, Arjuna knew perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of everything and the last word in transcendence.
- Of course, Kṛṣṇa also appeared as the son of Devakī on this earth. How Kṛṣṇa remained the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal original person, is very difficult for an ordinary man to understand.

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore, to clarify this point, Arjuna put this question before Kṛṣṇa so that He Himself could speak authoritatively.
- That Kṛṣṇa is the supreme authority is accepted by the whole world, not only at present but from time immemorial, and the demons alone reject Him.
- Anyway, since Kṛṣṇa is the authority accepted by all, Arjuna put this question before Him in order that Kṛṣṇa would describe Himself without being depicted by the demons, who always try to distort Him in a way understandable to the demons and their followers.
- It is necessary that everyone, for his own interest, know the science of Kṛṣṇa.
- Therefore, when Kṛṣṇa Himself speaks about Himself, it is auspicious for all the worlds.

Srila Prabhupada

- To the demons, such explanations by Kṛṣṇa Himself may appear to be strange because the demons always study Kṛṣṇa from their own standpoint, but those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Kṛṣṇa when they are spoken by Kṛṣṇa Himself.
- The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Kṛṣṇa because they are always eager to know more and more about Him.
- The atheists, who consider Kṛṣṇa an ordinary man, may in this way come to know that Kṛṣṇa is superhuman, that He is sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha [Bs. 5.1]—the eternal form of bliss and knowledge—that He is transcendental, and that He is above the domination of the modes of material nature and above the influence of time and space.
- A devotee of Kṛṣṇa, like Arjuna, is undoubtedly above any misunderstanding of the transcendental position of Kṛṣṇa.
- Arjuna's putting this question before the Lord is simply an attempt by the devotee to defy the atheistic attitude of persons who consider Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary human being, subject to the modes of material nature

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.5 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
bahūni me vyatītāni
janmāni tava cārjuna
tāny ahaṁ veda sarvāṇi
na tvam vettha parantapa

The Lord said: You and I (**me tava ca**) have gone through many births (**bahūni janmāni vyatītāni**). I know all of these (**tāny sarvāṇi ahaṁ veda**), but you do not (**na tvam vettha**), O afflicter of enemies (**parantapa**).

Baladeva

- Though I am one, I have many eternal forms.
- This is confirmed by many statements in the śrutis such as eko'pi san bahudhā yo'vabhāti: though he is one he appears as man. (Gopāla Tāpaṇi, Upaniṣad.1.19)
- Holding those many, eternal forms within Myself, like the vaidurya stone, I taught him in another form previously.
- Intending to say this, the Lord says, “I have passed through many births.
- You, because you are My friend, also have passed through the same number of births.
- But you do not know this, because now your knowledge is covered for carrying out My pastimes, by My inconceivable energy.”

Baladeva

- By this statement coming from Lord's own mouth, He shows His omniscience.
- It should be understood from this statement that the Lord's births are real, because the statement comes from the mouth of the Lord Himself that He has undergone many births, and because further support is given with an example by saying "and you also had many births (tava ca)."
- But by being born, the Lord does not undergo any transformation, since this is refuted in later statements of the Lord.

SVCT

- In this verse, the Lord explains that He instructs through the agency of His avatāras.
- I appear as various avatāras, and you also appear as My companion at that time.
- I know, since I am omniscient, being the Supreme lord.
- You do not know, since I cover your knowledge for fulfilling the purpose of My pastimes.
- With knowledge covered, O afflicter of the enemy, you afflict (tapa) the enemies (param) by thinking of yourself as the son of Kuntī, a kṣatriya, during in this life.
- This is the influence of yoga-māyā.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.33) we have information of many, many incarnations of the Lord. It is stated there:

**advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam
ādyam purāṇa-puruṣam nava-yauvanam ca
vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi**

"I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is the original person—absolute, infallible, without beginning.

- Although expanded into unlimited forms, He is still the same original, the oldest, and the person always appearing as a fresh youth.
- Such eternal, blissful, all-knowing forms of the Lord are usually not understood by even the best Vedic scholars, but they are always manifest to pure, unalloyed devotees."

Srila Prabhupada

- It is also stated in Brahma-saṁhitā (5.39):

**rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvatāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

"I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], who is always situated in various incarnations such as Rāma, Nṛsimha and many subincarnations as well, but who is the original Personality of Godhead known as Kṛṣṇa, and who incarnates personally also."

- In the Vedas also it is said that the Lord, although one without a second, manifests Himself in innumerable forms.
- He is like the vaidūrya stone, which changes color yet still remains one.

Srila Prabhupada

- All those multiforms are understood by the pure, unalloyed devotees, but not by a simple study of the Vedas (vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau).
- Devotees like Arjuna are constant companions of the Lord, and whenever the Lord incarnates, the associate devotees also incarnate in order to serve the Lord in different capacities.
- Arjuna is one of these devotees, and in this verse it is understood that some millions of years ago when Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the Bhagavad-gītā to the sun-god Vivasvān, Arjuna, in a different capacity, was also present.
- But the difference between the Lord and Arjuna is that the Lord remembered the incident whereas Arjuna could not remember.

Srila Prabhupada

- That is the difference between the part-and-parcel living entity and the Supreme Lord.
- Although Arjuna is addressed herein as the mighty hero who could subdue the enemies, he is unable to recall what had happened in his various past births.
- Therefore, a living entity, however great he may be in the material estimation, can never equal the Supreme Lord.
- Anyone who is a constant companion of the Lord is certainly a liberated person, but he cannot be equal to the Lord.
- The Lord is described in the Brahma-saṁhitā as infallible (acyuta), which means that He never forgets Himself, even though He is in material contact.

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore, the Lord and the living entity can never be equal in all respects, even if the living entity is as liberated as Arjuna.
- Although Arjuna is a devotee of the Lord, he sometimes forgets the nature of the Lord, but by the divine grace a devotee can at once understand the infallible condition of the Lord, whereas a nondevotee or a demon cannot understand this transcendental nature.
- Consequently these descriptions in the Gītā cannot be understood by demonic brains.
- Kṛṣṇa remembered acts which were performed by Him millions of years before, but Arjuna could not, despite the fact that both Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are eternal in nature.
- We may also note herein that a living entity forgets everything due to his change of body, but the Lord remembers because He does not change His sac-cid-ānanda body.

Srila Prabhupada

- He is advaita, which means there is no distinction between His body and Himself.
- Everything in relation to Him is spirit—whereas the conditioned soul is different from his material body.
- And because the Lord's body and self are identical, His position is always different from that of the ordinary living entity, even when He descends to the material platform.
- The demons cannot adjust themselves to this transcendental nature of the Lord, which the Lord Himself explains in the following verse.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.6 ||

ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā
bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya
sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā

Though I am unborn (**ajo 'pi sann**) and the lord of all entities (**bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san**), having an imperishable body (**avyayātmā**), I appear with My own body (**prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy**) by My own energy (**ātma-māyayā**).

Baladeva

- In speaking of the uniqueness of His birth and form, the Lord indicates His eternal nature.
- In this verse, the word prakṛti means form (svarūpa), nature (svabhāva) or manner.
- Taking support of My own form (svam prakṛti), I appear.
- Amara Kośa gives this definition of prakṛti: saṁsiddhi-prakṛtī tvime svarūpaṁ ca svabhāvaś ca. I appear with My own spiritual form.
- The Lord expands on this in the first line, in order to bring out this meaning. Api is used in the emphatic sense.
- I am indeed without a birth which gives one a body caused by past karma (ajaḥ api).

Baladeva

- My intelligence and other elements (ātmā) are all without transformation (avyayātmā).
- This is indicated by statements such as ātmā puṁsi. I am also the controller of all the jīvas, all those beings other than Myself (bhūtānām īśvaraḥ).
- “I appear in My form” means “I appear in My supreme form of knowledge and bliss with qualities such as being without birth, without transformation, and being the controller of all beings.”
- The birth of His svarūpa is thus like the appearance of the sun. In this way, His birth and form have been shown to be completely different from those of people of this world, and by this, His eternal nature is also shown.

Baladeva

- Dependence on karma is rejected.
- In the first chapter, introduction Baladeva as given the meaning of ātmā: the word ātmā refers to īśvara, jīva, and their bodies, the mind, intelligence, determination, and effort.
- This is perhaps a definition given from a traditional dictionary, but not Amara Kośa.
- In this regard the śruti says:

ajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate

Though unborn, He appears in many forms. Mahānārāyaṇa

Upaniṣad 2.3

Baladeva

- The smṛti says:
pratyakṣam ca harer janma na vikārah kathamcana
- The birth of the Lord, though visible, takes place without transformation of His svarūpa. Padma Purāṇa
- Thus one should recall His appearance in the delivery room with divine form, decorated with divine ornaments, with the six opulences.
- The Lord then indicates the purpose of His appearance. I appear for delivering the jīvas out of My extreme mercy for those who worship Me (ātma māyayā).
- According to Viśva Kosa, māyā means pride and mercy: māyā dambhe kṛpāyām ca.

Baladeva

- Others say that ātma māyayā means “with My omniscience or through My own will” since māya can also mean knowledge according to the Nighaṇṭu Kośa: māyā vayunaṁ jñānaṁ ca.
- All people, even kings, being uninquisitive and ignorant, continue to take birth, giving up the previous body and accepting a new body according to karma. The Lord’s birth is distinct from this.
- By stating that He is the lord of all living beings, He also distinguishes Himself from perfected jīvas like yogīs, who do not take birth.
- The Supreme Lord consisting of knowledge and bliss, though devoid of difference between His body and Himself, between attribute and object (guṇa guṇi) has been acknowledged by the wise to possess those distinctions, as a Lord with qualities, through the power of viśeṣa.
- Viśeṣa is the power of objects to reveal their qualities as distinct from the object, though the qualities are inseparable from the object.

SVCT

- In this verse, He describes the manner of His appearance.
- “Though I am without birth, I appear. I descend in the forms of devas, humans and crawling animals and other forms.”
- “But what is remarkable about that? The jīva is also actually without birth, and is born again after the destruction of the gross body.”
- The Lord answers: “I have an indestructible body (avyaya ātmā).
- The jīva is without birth in the sense that he is a soul apart from his body.
- He takes birth just because of his relationship with the body which produces ignorance.

SVCT

- But My being without birth and My taking birth are not separate from My body, since I am the Lord.
- Both My birth and My not being born are integral to My svarūpa.
- As such a condition is difficult to occur, it is certainly astounding and inconceivable.
- And there is no worry that I will take birth in all sorts of wombs like the jīva who is under the influence of pāpa and puṇya, for I am the lord of all the living entities (bhūtānām īśvaraḥ), not under the control of karma.”
- “But the jīva receives bodies of deva, human and animal according to karma by his subtle body which causes his bondage.
- You, the Supreme Lord, are without a subtle body, and you are all pervading and control karma, time and all other elements.

SVCT

- You, the Supreme Lord, are without a subtle body, and you are all pervading and control karma, time and all other elements. The śruti says bahu syām: may I become many. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.3)
- From that, it is understood that you are the form of the whole universe.
- When you say ‘I appear in this particular way,’ I think that must mean that Your birth means simply that You are revealing to people the multitude of bodily forms throughout the universe, which are also eternal as types.”
- “But how can that be? I make My appearance, situated in My own form (prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya).”
- If the word prakṛti meant the external material energy, then its controller, the Supreme Lord, becomes, by inference, a material form, not a special object of realization.

SVCT

- Therefore, in conformity to the Amara Kośa dictionary meaning (saṁsiddhi-prakṛtī tv ime svarūpaṁ ca svabhāvaś ca), the word prakṛti means svarūpa in this verse.
- It does not refer to the material energy which arises from His svarūpa.
- The Lord's svarūpa is sac-cid-ānanda, full of eternal spiritual knowledge and bliss.
- Concerning the word prakṛti, Srīdhara Svāmī says, “Accepting a form (prakṛti) which is composed of śuddha-sattva (svām).”
- Rāmānujācārya says, “Prakṛti means ones own nature (svabhāva).
- Thus the phrase means ‘Being situated in My nature, I appear with My svarūpa (svam) by My own will.’”

SVCT

- In this case, prakṛti means the Lord's nature, which is condensed sac-cid-ānanda-rasa, which is distinct from material energy.
- The word svam along with prakṛti thus indicates “My own svarūpa, My true form.”
- For the śruti says:
 - sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhitaḥ sva mahimni
 - Dear sir, in what is the supreme situated? It is situated in its own glory. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.24.1
- Madhusūdana Sarasvatī gives the following meaning. “I appear, situated in My svarūpa. Being situated spiritually, I act without duality of soul and body.”

SVCT

- “But if You have indestructible bodies such as Matsya or Kūrma, then why do Your present form and the previous forms not appear all at once?”
- “I appear through My māyā coming from My self (ātmā means self, thus ātma-māyā means My own māyā), through My yoga-māyā, the function of the cit-śakti, which both covers and reveals My svarūpas.
- I appear revealing My present form, having covered the previous forms.”
- Śrīdhara Svāmī says sambhāvami ātma-māyayā means, “I appear by My energy of jñāna, bala and vīrya which strongly manifest.”
- According to Rāmānuja, ātma-māyayā can also mean “By My own knowledge,” since māya can mean knowledge in this context: māyā vayunam jñānam.

SVCT

- The usage is stated: “He continually knows the sin and piety of all entities by knowledge (māyayā).”
- Madhusūdana Sarasvatī says: “Māyā means the awareness through that body (ātmā) that I am the Lord, Vāsudeva, devoid of difference between body and soul.”

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- The Lord has spoken about the peculiarity of His birth: although He may appear like an ordinary person, He remembers everything of His many, many past "births," whereas a common man cannot remember what he has done even a few hours before.
- If someone is asked what he did exactly at the same time one day earlier, it would be very difficult for a common man to answer immediately.
- He would surely have to dredge his memory to recall what he was doing exactly at the same time one day before.
- And yet, men often dare claim to be God, or Kṛṣṇa.
- One should not be misled by such meaningless claims.
- Then again, the Lord explains His prakṛti, or His form. Prakṛti means "nature," as well as svarūpa, or "one's own form."
- The Lord says that He appears in His own body.

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- He does not change His body, as the common living entity changes from one body to another.
- The conditioned soul may have one kind of body in the present birth, but he has a different body in the next birth.
- In the material world, the living entity has no fixed body but transmigrates from one body to another. The Lord, however, does not do so.
- Whenever He appears, He does so in the same original body, by His internal potency.
- In other words, Kṛṣṇa appears in this material world in His original eternal form, with two hands, holding a flute.
- He appears exactly in His eternal body, uncontaminated by this material world.

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- Although He appears in the same transcendental body and is Lord of the universe, it still appears that He takes His birth like an ordinary living entity.
- And although His body does not deteriorate like a material body, it still appears that Lord Kṛṣṇa grows from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to youth.
- But astonishingly enough He never ages beyond youth.
- At the time of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, He had many grandchildren at home; or, in other words, He had sufficiently aged by material calculations.
- Still He looked just like a young man twenty or twenty-five years old.
- We never see a picture of Kṛṣṇa in old age because He never grows old like us, although He is the oldest person in the whole creation—past, present, and future.

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- Neither His body nor His intelligence ever deteriorates or changes.
-
- Therefore, it is clear that in spite of His being in the material world, He is the same unborn, eternal form of bliss and knowledge, changeless in His transcendental body and intelligence.
- Factually, His appearance and disappearance are like the sun's rising, moving before us, and then disappearing from our eyesight.
- When the sun is out of sight, we think that the sun is set, and when the sun is before our eyes, we think that the sun is on the horizon.
- Actually, the sun is always in its fixed position, but owing to our defective, insufficient senses, we calculate the appearance and disappearance of the sun in the sky.

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- And because Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and disappearance are completely different from that of any ordinary, common living entity, it is evident that He is eternal, blissful knowledge by His internal potency—and He is never contaminated by material nature.
- The Vedas also confirm that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is unborn yet He still appears to take His birth in multimanifestations.
-
- The Vedic supplementary literatures also confirm that even though the Lord appears to be taking His birth, He is still without change of body.
- In the Bhāgavatam, He appears before His mother as Nārāyaṇa, with four hands and the decorations of the six kinds of full opulences.
- His appearance in His original eternal form is His causeless mercy, bestowed upon the living entities so that they can concentrate on the Supreme Lord as He is, and not on mental concoctions or imaginations, which the impersonalist wrongly thinks the Lord's forms to be.

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- The word *māyā*, or *ātma-māyā*, refers to the Lord's causeless mercy, according to the *Viśva-kośa* dictionary.
- The Lord is conscious of all of His previous appearances and disappearances, but a common living entity forgets everything about his past body as soon as he gets another body.
- He is the Lord of all living entities because He performs wonderful and superhuman activities while He is on this earth.
- Therefore, the Lord is always the same Absolute Truth and is without differentiation between His form and self, or between His quality and body.
- A question may now be raised as to why the Lord appears and disappears in this world. This is explained in the next verse.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.7 ||

yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham

Whenever (**yadā yadā**) there is destruction in dharma (**dharmasya glānir bhavati**), O Bhārata (**bhārata**), and a rise in adharma (**adharmasya abhyutthānam**), I manifest My own body (**tadā aham ātmānam sṛjāmy**).

Baladeva

- In this verse the Lord explains the time when He appears.
- When there is destruction of the dharma taught in the Vedas and appearance of adharma, what is opposed to dharma, I manifest Myself (ātmānam sṛjāmi).
- The phrase ātmānam sṛjāmi cannot mean “I make My body” since the eternal nature of His body has already been established.
- Thus there is no fixed period for My appearance (such as every thousand years).

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- The word sṛjāmi is significant herein. Sṛjāmi cannot be used in the sense of creation, because, according to the previous verse, there is no creation of the Lord's form or body, since all of the forms are eternally existent.
- Therefore, sṛjāmi means that the Lord manifests Himself as He is.
- Although the Lord appears on schedule, namely at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga of the twenty-eighth millennium of the seventh Manu in one day of Brahmā, He has no obligation to adhere to such rules and regulations, because He is completely free to act in many ways at His will.
- He therefore appears by His own will whenever there is a predominance of irreligiosity and a disappearance of true religion.
- Principles of religion are laid down in the Vedas, and any discrepancy in the matter of properly executing the rules of the Vedas makes one irreligious.

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- In the Bhāgavatam it is stated that such principles are the laws of the Lord. Only the Lord can manufacture a system of religion.
- The Vedas are also accepted as originally spoken by the Lord Himself to Brahmā, from within his heart.
- Therefore, the principles of dharma, or religion, are the direct orders of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam [SB 6.3.19]).
- These principles are clearly indicated throughout the Bhagavad-gītā. The purpose of the Vedas is to establish such principles under the order of the Supreme Lord, and the Lord directly orders, at the end of the Gītā, that the highest principle of religion is to surrender unto Him only, and nothing more.

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- The Vedic principles push one towards complete surrender unto Him; and whenever such principles are disturbed by the demoniac, the Lord appears.
- From the Bhāgavatam we understand that Lord Buddha is the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared when materialism was rampant and materialists were using the pretext of the authority of the Vedas.
- Although there are certain restrictive rules and regulations regarding animal sacrifice for particular purposes in the Vedas, people of demonic tendency still took to animal sacrifice without reference to the Vedic principles.
- Lord Buddha appeared to stop this nonsense and to establish the Vedic principles of nonviolence.

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- Therefore each and every avatāra, or incarnation of the Lord, has a particular mission, and they are all described in the revealed scriptures.
- No one should be accepted as an avatāra unless he is referred to by scriptures. It is not a fact that the Lord appears only on Indian soil.
- He can manifest Himself anywhere and everywhere, and whenever He desires to appear. In each and every incarnation, He speaks as much about religion as can be understood by the particular people under their particular circumstances.
- But the mission is the same—to lead people to God consciousness and obedience to the principles of religion.
- Sometimes He descends personally, and sometimes He sends His bona fide representative in the form of His son, or servant, or Himself in some disguised form.

Srila Prabhupada

- The principles of the Bhagavad-gītā were spoken to Arjuna, and, for that matter, to other highly elevated persons, because he was highly advanced compared to ordinary persons in other parts of the world.
- Two plus two equals four is a mathematical principle that is true in the beginner's arithmetic class and in the advanced class as well. Still, there are higher and lower mathematics.
- In all incarnations of the Lord, therefore, the same principles are taught, but they appear to be higher and lower in varied circumstances.
- The higher principles of religion begin with the acceptance of the four orders and the four statuses of social life, as will be explained later.
- The whole purpose of the mission of incarnations is to arouse Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere. Such consciousness is manifest and nonmanifest only under different circumstances.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.8 ||

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge

In every age (**yuge yuge**) I appear (**sambhavāmi**) in order to protect the devotees (**paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām**), to destroy the demons (**vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām**) and to establish dharma (**dharma-saṁsthāpana arthāya**).

Baladeva

- “But your devotees, the saintly kings, appear to wipe out the rise of adharma and destruction of dharma. So why do You say that You appear in order to do this?”
- My devotees are absorbed in relishing My form and qualities, they long to see My form, and thus suffer from not seeing My form.
- In order to deliver them from this suffering, by showing My attractive form directly, I appear.
- I also appear to destroy those performing evil deeds (duṣkṛtām), persons like Rāvaṇa and Kaṁśa who cannot be killed by anyone except Me, and who torment My devotees.
- I also appear to spread dharma, pure bhakti yoga, with meditation on Me and deity worship only to Me, and vedic dharma as well, which cannot be spread by anyone other than Me.
- These are the three reasons for My appearance.

Baladeva

- At those times when this is necessary, I appear (yuge yuge).
- There is no impropriety in the Lord for killing the evil persons, for by bestowing on them the bliss of liberation on killing them, the cruelty is transformed into an act of mercy.

Srila Prabhupada

- According to Bhagavad-gītā, a sādhu (holy man) is a man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- A person may appear to be irreligious, but if he has the qualifications of Kṛṣṇa consciousness wholly and fully, he is to be understood to be a sādhu.
- And duṣkṛtām applies to those who do not care for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Such miscreants, or duṣkṛtām, are described as foolish and the lowest of mankind, even though they may be decorated with mundane education, whereas a person who is one hundred percent engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is accepted as a sādhu, even though such a person may be neither learned nor well cultured.
- As far as the atheistic are concerned, it is not necessary for the Supreme Lord to appear as He is to destroy them, as He did with the demons Rāvaṇa and Kāmsa..

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- The Lord has many agents who are quite competent to vanquish demons. But the Lord especially descends to appease His unalloyed devotees, who are always harassed by the demoniac.
- The demon harasses the devotee, even though the latter may happen to be his kin.
- Although Prahlāda Mahārāja was the son of Hiranyakaśipu, he was nonetheless persecuted by his father; although Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa, was the sister of Kāṁsa, she and her husband Vasudeva were persecuted only because Kṛṣṇa was to be born of them.
- So Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared primarily to deliver Devakī, rather than kill Kāṁsa, but both were performed simultaneously.
- Therefore it is said here that to deliver the devotee and vanquish the demon miscreants, the Lord appears in different incarnations.

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- In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, the following verses (Madhya 20.263-264) summarize these principles of incarnation:

**sṛṣṭi-hetu yei mūrti prapañce avatare
sei īśvara-mūrti 'avatāra' nāma dhare
māyātīta paravyome sabāra avasthāna
viśve avatari' dhare 'avatāra' nāma**

"The avatāra, or incarnation of Godhead, descends from the kingdom of God for material manifestation. And the particular form of the Personality of Godhead who so descends is called an incarnation, or avatāra.

- Such incarnations are situated in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God. When they descend to the material creation, they assume the name avatāra.“
- There are various kinds of avatāras, such as puruṣāvatāras, guṇāvatāras, līlāvatāras, śakty-āveśa avatāras, manvantara-avatāras and yugāvatāras—all appearing on schedule all over the universe.

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- But Lord Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Lord, the fountainhead of all avatāras. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends for the specific purpose of mitigating the anxieties of the pure devotees, who are very anxious to see Him in His original Vṛndāvana pastimes.
- Therefore, the prime purpose of the Kṛṣṇa avatāra is to satisfy His unalloyed devotees.
- The Lord says that He incarnates Himself in every millennium. This indicates that He incarnates also in the Age of Kali.
- As stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the incarnation in the Age of Kali is Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who spread the worship of Kṛṣṇa by the saṅkīrtana movement (congregational chanting of the holy names) and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout India.

Srila Prabhupada

- He predicted that this culture of saṅkīrtana would be broadcast all over the world, from town to town and village to village.
- Lord Caitanya as the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, is described secretly but not directly in the confidential parts of the revealed scriptures, such as the Upaniṣads, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavatam.
- The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa are very much attracted by the saṅkīrtana movement of Lord Caitanya. This avatāra of the Lord does not kill the miscreants, but delivers them by His causeless mercy.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.9 ||

janma karma ca me divyam
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna

He who understands in truth (**yah evaṁ tattvataḥ vetti**) My spiritual birth and activities (**me divyam janma ca karma**), attains Me (**sah mām eti**) on giving up his body (**dehaṁ tyaktvā**), and does not take birth again (**punar janma na eti**).

SVCT

- You will be successful just by knowing in truth about My birth which was previously described, and after My birth, My activities. That is expressed in this verse.
- Rāmānujācārya and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī say that divya means “non material, spiritual.” Śrīdhara Svāmī says divya means “uncommon.”
- As this means that it is not related to this material world, it also means “spiritual.”
- Being spiritual, beyond the guṇas, means that the Lord’s birth and activities are eternal.
- Jīva Gosvāmī also explains, quoting from Bhāgavatam in the Bhagavat Sandarbha that the Lord has no material birth or activities:

SVCT

**na vidyate yasya ca janma karma vā
na nāma-rūpe guṇa-doṣa eva vā
tathāpi lokāpyaya-sambhavāya yaḥ
sva-māyayā tāny anukālam ṛcchati**

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no material birth, activities, name, form, qualities or faults. To fulfill the purpose for which this material world is created and destroyed, He comes in the form of a human being like Lord Rāma or Lord Kṛṣṇa by His original internal potency. He has immense potency, and in various forms, all free from material contamination, He acts wonderfully. He is therefore the Supreme Brahman. I offer my respects to Him. SB 8.3.8

- Or the word divya can mean “not approachable by logic,” or “inconceivable,” on the strength of the words of śruti and smṛti.

SVCT

- The Puruṣa Bodhinī Śruti (4.3) of the Pippalādi branch of the Vedas says:

eko devo nitya-līlānurakto bhakta-vyāpī bhakta-hṛdayāntarātmā

The one Lord, who is inconceivable (deva), engaged in eternal pastimes, is spread in the devotees and resides in the devotee's heart.

- The eternal nature of the Lord's birth and activities is mentioned frequently in the Bhāgavatam as well.
- Yo vetti tattvataḥ means “he who knows that My birth and activities are truly eternal,” based on My statements that I am unborn and with indestructible body (ajo 'pi san avyayātmā) and that My birth and activities are non material (janma karma ca me divyam), and not just an appearance of being eternal, dependent on some sort of trick.

SVCT

- Yo vetti tattvataḥ can also mean “one who knows Me as the very form of Brahman.”
- This is because later Kṛṣṇa will say om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ: the three words om tat sat all indicate Brahman. (BG 17.18)
- Therefore tattva means the state of being Brahman (tat). Yo vetti tattvataḥ means “one who know Me as the form of Brahman.”
- That person does not take birth again, but rather, attains Me.
- The words tyaktvā deham only indicate the last condition of life, for, not only on giving up the body one does not take birth again, but even while not giving up the body, before that, one attains Me.

SVCT

- Rāmānujācārya says, “Destroying all sins which are unfavorable for surrender to Me by true knowledge of My spiritual birth and activities, taking shelter of Me in this life in the prescribed way, that person who holds Me alone as dear, constantly thinking of Me, attains Me.”

Srila Prabhupada

- The Lord's descent from His transcendental abode is already explained in the 6th verse.
- One who can understand the truth of the appearance of the Personality of Godhead is already liberated from material bondage, and therefore he returns to the kingdom of God immediately after quitting this present material body.
- Such liberation of the living entity from material bondage is not at all easy. The impersonalists and the yogīs attain liberation only after much trouble and many, many births.
- Even then, the liberation they achieve—merging into the impersonal brahmajyoti of the Lord—is only partial, and there is the risk of returning to this material world.

Srila Prabhupada

- But the devotee, simply by understanding the transcendental nature of the body and activities of the Lord, attains the abode of the Lord after ending this body and does not run the risk of returning to this material world.
- In the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.33) it is stated that the Lord has many, many forms and incarnations: *advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam*.
- Although there are many transcendental forms of the Lord, they are still one and the same Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- One has to understand this fact with conviction, although it is incomprehensible to mundane scholars and empiric philosophers. As stated in the Vedas (Puruṣa-bodhinī Upaniṣad):
*eko devo nitya-līlānurakto
bhakta-vyāpī hr̥dy antar-ātmā*
- "The one Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternally engaged in many, many transcendental forms in relationships with His unalloyed devotees."

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- This Vedic version is confirmed in this verse of the Gītā personally by the Lord. He who accepts this truth on the strength of the authority of the Vedas and of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and who does not waste time in philosophical speculations attains the highest perfectional stage of liberation.
- Simply by accepting this truth on faith, one can, without a doubt, attain liberation.
- The Vedic version tat tvam asi is actually applied in this case.
- Anyone who understands Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme, or who says unto the Lord "You are the same Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead," is certainly liberated instantly, and consequently his entrance into the transcendental association of the Lord is guaranteed.

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- In other words, such a faithful devotee of the Lord attains perfection, and this is confirmed by the following Vedic assertion:

**tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya**

"One can attain the perfect stage of liberation from birth and death simply by knowing the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and there is no other way to achieve this perfection." (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.8)

- That there is no alternative means that anyone who does not understand Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is surely in the mode of ignorance and consequently he will not attain salvation simply, so to speak, by licking the outer surface of the bottle of honey, or by interpreting the Bhagavad-gītā according to mundane scholarship.

Srila Prabhupada

- Such empiric philosophers may assume very important roles in the material world, but they are not necessarily eligible for liberation. Such puffed-up mundane scholars have to wait for the causeless mercy of the devotee of the Lord.
- One should therefore cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness with faith and knowledge, and in this way attain perfection.

Section-I – Transcendental Knowledge of Kṛṣṇa (1-10)

|| 4.10 ||

vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā
man-mayā mām upāśritāḥ
bahavo jñāna-tapasā
pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ

Having given up attachment, fear and anger towards the demons (**vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā**), absorbed in Me with hearing and chanting (**man-mayā**), having taken shelter of Me (**mām upāśritāḥ**), many persons (**bahavo**), purified by the austerity (tolerating opposition) of that true knowledge of My birth and activities (**jñāna-tapasā pūtā**), attained love for Me (**mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ**).

Baladeva

- As in the present time, in the past also, many persons gained liberation by knowing the eternal nature of My birth and activities.
- The Lord speaks to confirm the eternal nature of His birth and activities.
- Many persons in ancient times, being purified by the austerity of knowledge, attained bhāva for Me.
- That is the order of the sentence.
- Knowledge means “knowledge of My eternal birth and activities.”
- Because this knowledge of My eternal birth and activities arises only by analysis of the difficult śruti passages, it is called an austerity.
- Or austerity can refer to the suffering in removal of the bad arguments and opposing ideas.

Baladeva

- Being purified by that removal of bad ideas, cleansed of ignorance, many persons attained prema for Me (bhāvam), or attained existence (bhāvam) with Me-- direct association with Me.
- What type of people were these?
- These persons had given up attraction to, fear of, and hatred of those persons who oppose the eternality of the Lord's birth, because they were completely engaged in serving Me (upaśritāḥ), with faith in Me alone (man mayā).

Srila Prabhupada

- As described above, it is very difficult for a person who is too materially affected to understand the personal nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth.
- Generally, people who are attached to the bodily conception of life are so absorbed in materialism that it is almost impossible for them to understand how the Supreme can be a person.
- Such materialists cannot even imagine that there is a transcendental body which is imperishable, full of knowledge and eternally blissful. In the materialistic concept, the body is perishable, full of ignorance and completely miserable.
- Therefore, people in general keep this same bodily idea in mind when they are informed of the personal form of the Lord. For such materialistic men, the form of the gigantic material manifestation is supreme.
- Consequently they consider the Supreme to be impersonal. And because they are too materially absorbed, the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter frightens them.

Srila Prabhupada

- When they are informed that spiritual life is also individual and personal, they become afraid of becoming persons again, and so they naturally prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void.
- Generally, they compare the living entities to the bubbles of the ocean, which merge into the ocean. That is the highest perfection of spiritual existence attainable without individual personality.
- This is a kind of fearful stage of life, devoid of perfect knowledge of spiritual existence.
- Furthermore there are many persons who cannot understand spiritual existence at all.
- Being embarrassed by so many theories and by contradictions of various types of philosophical speculation, they become disgusted or angry and foolishly conclude that there is no supreme cause and that everything is ultimately void.

Srila Prabhupada

- Such people are in a diseased condition of life. Some people are too materially attached and therefore do not give attention to spiritual life, some of them want to merge into the supreme spiritual cause, and some of them disbelieve in everything, being angry at all sorts of spiritual speculation out of hopelessness.
- This last class of men take to the shelter of some kind of intoxication, and their affective hallucinations are sometimes accepted as spiritual vision.
- One has to get rid of all three stages of attachment to the material world: negligence of spiritual life, fear of a spiritual personal identity, and the conception of void that arises from frustration in life.
- To get free from these three stages of the material concept of life, one has to take complete shelter of the Lord, guided by the bona fide spiritual master, and follow the disciplines and regulative principles of devotional life.
- The last stage of the devotional life is called bhāva, or transcendental love of Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada

- According to Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15-16), the science of devotional service:

**ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ**

- In the prema stage there is constant engagement in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.
- So, by the slow process of devotional service, under the guidance of the bona fide spiritual master, one can attain the highest stage, being freed from all material attachment, from the fearfulness of one's individual spiritual personality, and from the frustrations that result in void philosophy.
- Then one can ultimately attain to the abode of the Supreme Lord.

Section-II – Applying Transcendental Knowledge (11-15)

|| 4.11 ||

**ye yathā mām prapadyante
tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ**

I respond to persons (**tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham**) according to the manner and mood in which they surrender to Me (**ye yathā mām prapadyante**). All blessed men (**manuṣyāḥ sarvaśaḥ**) follow these various paths of worship, of Me, the one Lord (**mama vartma anuvartante**), O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**).

SVCT

- “Your dedicated devotees consider Your birth and activities to be eternal, but others such as jñānīs, surrendering to You for the purpose of perfecting jñāna or other goals, do not consider Your birth and activities to be eternal.”
- “In whatever way they worship Me (prapadyante), I also give them the fruits of their worship (bhajāmi) in an appropriate manner.”
- The meaning is this. Those who think that My birth and activities are eternal and, having a particular desire for those pastimes, worship and please Me.
- And I, because I am the Lord, can respond, or not respond, or respond in a different way than they expect.

SVCT

- But, making them My associates, I appear and disappear with them in this world at the appropriate time, in order to give My birth and pastimes their eternal nature.
- Favoring them at every moment, I bestow upon them the fruit of their worship.
- The jñānīs and others who surrender unto Me while thinking of My birth and activities as temporary, and thinking of My deity forms as material--I throw those jñānīs again and again into the noose of māyā with its temporary births and action, and bestow upon them the sorrows of birth and death.
- This is the appropriate fruit of their worship (They receive temporary bodies because they think My body is temporary.)

SVCT

- But those jñānīs who accept the eternal nature of My birth and activities, consider My deity form to be sac-cid-ānanda, and surrender to Me for perfection of their jñāna-- I liberate those jñānīs, since they desire the destruction of their gross and subtle bodies, and I give them the bliss of Brahman.
- I bestow upon them the desired result of their worship: the destruction of birth and death born from ignorance.
- Therefore, not only devotees surrender to Me, but rather everyone (sarvaśaḥ), all men, jñānīs, karmīs, yogīs, and worshippers of the devatās, follow My path (they surrender either directly or indirectly).
- Jñāna, karma and other processes are all My path, since I am the essence of all those paths.

Srila Prabhupada

- Everyone is searching for Kṛṣṇa in the different aspects of His manifestations.
- Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is partially realized in His impersonal brahmajyoti effulgence and as the all-pervading Supersoul dwelling within everything, including the particles of atoms.
- But Kṛṣṇa is fully realized only by His pure devotees. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa is the object of everyone's realization, and thus anyone and everyone is satisfied according to one's desire to have Him.
- In the transcendental world also, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with His pure devotees in the transcendental attitude, just as the devotee wants Him.
- One devotee may want Kṛṣṇa as supreme master, another as his personal friend, another as his son, and still another as his lover. Kṛṣṇa rewards all the devotees equally, according to their different intensities of love for Him.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the material world, the same reciprocations of feelings are there, and they are equally exchanged by the Lord with the different types of worshipers.
- The pure devotees both here and in the transcendental abode associate with Him in person and are able to render personal service to the Lord and thus derive transcendental bliss in His loving service.
- As for those who are impersonalists and who want to commit spiritual suicide by annihilating the individual existence of the living entity, Kṛṣṇa helps also by absorbing them into His effulgence.
- Such impersonalists do not agree to accept the eternal, blissful Personality of Godhead; consequently they cannot relish the bliss of transcendental personal service to the Lord, having extinguished their individuality.

Srila Prabhupada

- Some of them, who are not firmly situated even in the impersonal existence, return to this material field to exhibit their dormant desires for activities.
- They are not admitted into the spiritual planets, but they are again given a chance to act on the material planets.
- For those who are fruitive workers, the Lord awards the desired results of their prescribed duties, as the yajñeśvara; and those who are yogīs seeking mystic powers are awarded such powers.
- In other words, everyone is dependent for success upon His mercy alone, and all kinds of spiritual processes are but different degrees of success on the same path.

Srila Prabhupada

- Unless, therefore, one comes to the highest perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, all attempts remain imperfect, as is stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.3.10):

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

"Whether one is without desire [the condition of the devotees], or is desirous of all fruitive results, or is after liberation, one should with all efforts try to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead for complete perfection, culminating in Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Section-II – Applying Transcendental Knowledge (11-15)

|| 4.12 ||

kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhim
yajanta iha devatāḥ
kṣipram hi mānuṣe loke
siddhir bhavati karma-jā

Among men (**mānuṣe loke**), those desiring results from their work (**karmaṇām siddhim kāṅkṣantaḥ**) worship the devatās (**yajanta iha devatāḥ**). The results coming from such actions (**karma-jā siddhir**) appear quickly (**kṣipram bhavati**).

Baladeva

- Having spoken on a related topic, the Lord will now speak on the original topic, explaining how niṣkāma karma transforms to jñāna.
- In this verse the Lord speaks about the rarity of such practitioners.
- In this world (iha), living entities under the sway of beginningless impressions of enjoyment, hanker for results to their actions, in the form of domestic animals and sons.
- They worship devatāṣ such as Indra who can give temporary things in small quantity, by actions filled with desire.
- They do not worship Me, the master of those devatās, who can give eternal bliss, by their performance of desireless actions.

Baladeva

- They act in this way because (hi) in this world of men, results of such actions come quickly.
- The other result in the form of liberation, from knowing Me through worship by niṣkāma karma, comes slowly.
- All men, whose discrimination of temporary and eternal is eclipsed by desire for enjoyment, wanting quick enjoyment, worship My servants, the devatās, for that purpose.
- And even the person who has attained discrimination of the temporary and is fearful of suffering in this world does not worship Me, the lord of the devatās, through niṣkāma karma, in order to extinguish that suffering.
- In other words, such qualification for worship is very rare.

Srila Prabhupada

- There is a great misconception about the gods or demigods of this material world, and men of less intelligence, although passing as great scholars, take these demigods to be various forms of the Supreme Lord.
- Actually, the demigods are not different forms of God, but they are God's different parts and parcels. God is one, and the parts and parcels are many.
- The Vedas say, *nityo nityānām*: God is one. *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*.
- The Supreme God is one—Kṛṣṇa—and the demigods are delegated with powers to manage this material world.
- These demigods are all living entities (*nityānām*) with different grades of material power.
- They cannot be equal to the Supreme God—Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. Anyone who thinks that God and the demigods are on the same level is called an atheist, or *pāṣaṇḍī*.

Srila Prabhupada

- Even the great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva cannot be compared to the Supreme Lord.
- In fact, the Lord is worshiped by demigods such as Brahmā and Śiva (śiva-viriñci-nutam [SB 11.5.33]).
- Yet curiously enough there are many human leaders who are worshiped by foolish men under the misunderstanding of anthropomorphism or zoomorphism. Iha devatāḥ denotes a powerful man or demigod of this material world.
- But Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, does not belong to this world.
- He is above, or transcendental to, material creation. Even Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, the leader of the impersonalists, maintains that Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa, is beyond this material creation.

Srila Prabhupada

- However, foolish people (hr̥ta-jñāna [Bg. 7.20]) worship the demigods because they want immediate results.
- They get the results, but do not know that results so obtained are temporary and are meant for less intelligent persons.
- The intelligent person is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he has no need to worship the paltry demigods for some immediate, temporary benefit.
- The demigods of this material world, as well as their worshipers, will vanish with the annihilation of this material world.
- The boons of the demigods are material and temporary.
- Both the material worlds and their inhabitants, including the demigods and their worshipers, are bubbles in the cosmic ocean.

Srila Prabhupada

- In this world, however, human society is mad after temporary things such as the material opulence of possessing land, family and enjoyable paraphernalia.
- To achieve such temporary things, people worship the demigods or powerful men in human society. If a man gets some ministership in the government by worshiping a political leader, he considers that he has achieved a great boon.
- All of them are therefore kowtowing to the so-called leaders or "big guns" in order to achieve temporary boons, and they indeed achieve such things.
- Such foolish men are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the permanent solution to the hardships of material existence.

Srila Prabhupada

- They are all after sense enjoyment, and to get a little facility for sense enjoyment they are attracted to worship empowered living entities known as demigods.
- This verse indicates that people are rarely interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- They are mostly interested in material enjoyment, and therefore they worship some powerful living entity.

Section-II – Applying Transcendental Knowledge (11-15)

|| 4.13 ||

**cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam
guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api mām
viddhy akartāram avyayam**

The four varṇas were created by Me (**cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam**) according to distinctions of quality and work (**guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ**). Though I made the system (**tasya mām kartāram api**), know that (**viddhy**) I, being undeviating and impartial (**avyayam**), am also detached from the system (**akartāram**).

SVCT

- “Indeed, the paths of bhakti and jñāna give liberation, but the path of karma leads to bondage.
- Therefore, there is some inequality in You, the creator of all paths, the Supreme Lord.”
- “That is not so at all. I have created the four varṇas for people who want their own enjoyment.”
- The suffix ya in the word cātur-varṇya indicates self-interest in the four orders.
- The brāhmaṇas, predominated by sattva, perform activities such as controlling the senses and mind.
- The kṣatriyas, who are predominated by rajas and sattva, perform actions such as warfare and acts of heroism.

SVCT

- The vaiyśas, predominately tamas and rajas, do farming and raise cows.
- The śūdras, predominated by tamas, serve others.
- I have created this system of four varṇas divided according to guṇa and activity, taking shelter of the path of dharma.
- Know Me as the creator (kārtāram) of the system, since it is created from the guṇas of prakṛti which is My energy.
- In that way I am the creator, but actually I am not the creator, since My svarūpa is beyond the guṇas and prakṛti.
- Therefore, I am said to be indestructible (avyayam). I am not at all similar to the varṇas or matter, though I have created them.

Srila Prabhupada

- The Lord is the creator of everything.
- Everything is born of Him, everything is sustained by Him, and everything, after annihilation, rests in Him.
- He is therefore the creator of the four divisions of the social order, beginning with the intelligent class of men, technically called brāhmaṇas due to their being situated in the mode of goodness.
- Next is the administrative class, technically called the kṣatriyas due to their being situated in the mode of passion.
- The mercantile men, called the vaiśyas, are situated in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, and the śūdras, or laborer class, are situated in the ignorant mode of material nature.

Srila Prabhupada

- In spite of His creating the four divisions of human society, Lord Kṛṣṇa does not belong to any of these divisions, because He is not one of the conditioned souls, a section of whom form human society.
- Human society is similar to any other animal society, but to elevate men from the animal status, the above-mentioned divisions are created by the Lord for the systematic development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- The tendency of a particular man toward work is determined by the modes of material nature which he has acquired.
- Such symptoms of life, according to the different modes of material nature, are described in the Eighteenth Chapter of this book.
- A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is above even the brāhmaṇas.

Srila Prabhupada

- Although brāhmaṇas by quality are supposed to know about Brahman, the Supreme Absolute Truth, most of them approach only the impersonal Brahman manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- But a man who transcends the limited knowledge of a brāhmaṇa and reaches the knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, becomes a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—or, in other words, a Vaiṣṇava.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness includes knowledge of all different plenary expansions of Kṛṣṇa, namely Rāma, Nṛsimha, Varāha, etc.
- And as Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to this system of the four divisions of human society, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is also transcendental to all divisions of human society, whether we consider the divisions of community, nation or species

Section-II – Applying Transcendental Knowledge (11-15)

|| 4.14 ||

**na mām karmāṇi limpanti
na me karma-phale sprhā
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti
karmabhir na sa badhyate**

Actions do not contaminate Me (**na mām karmāṇi limpanti**). I have no desire for the fruits of work (**na me karma-phale sprhā**). One who knows this about Me (**iti mām yo abhijānāti**) is not bound by actions (**karmabhir na sa badhyate**).

Baladeva

- This verse elaborates the last.
- These actions such as creation do not contaminate Me with the fault of unfair dealings or desire, unlike the case of the jīva.
- This is because My acts of creation, maintenance and destruction are in response to the karmas of the jīva in his body, not to Me.
- I have no desire for results in actions such as creation of the universe or the bodies of the jīvas.
- Thus I am not contaminated by the acts of creation and destruction.
- He who acts with desire for results is contaminated by the results.

Baladeva

- I am full of bliss in My svarūpa and simply bestow what arises from the desires for enjoyment of the jīvas merged in prakṛti.
- As the efficient cause I am like the rain, and simply put into motion their actions (decided by them).
- The smṛti says:
**nimitta-mātram evāsau sṛjyānām sarga-karmani
pradhāna-kāraṇībhūtā yato vai sṛjya-śaktayaḥ**

The Lord is only the efficient cause for creation of bodies for the jīvas with mentality of men and devas. The causes of the variety in the mentalities of men and devatās are the powers of their previous actions. **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**

- The rain pours water on all seeds, and according to the type of seed, they all sprout into different plants.
- Similarly the Lord inspires the jīvas to act, but they act differently according to their past desires.

Baladeva

- The Supreme Lord (asau) is the efficient cause (nimitta mātram) in the creation of bodies for the living entities with various mentalities as men and devatās (sṛjyānām).
- What causes the great variety in the states of men and devatās (pradhāna kāraṇībhūtā) are the powers arising from their old karmas (sṛjya śaktayaḥ).
- The author of the Vedānta Sūtras says:
- vaiṣamya-nairghṛṇye na sāpekṣatvāt tathā hi darśayati
- The Lord does not show injustice or hatred to the living entities because of His concern for them. For the scriptures declare it so. Brahma Sūtras 2.1.35

Baladeva

- The result of knowing this is then stated.
- He who knows Me in this way is not bound by previous karmas which are the causes of his bodies, and which create problems for his body.
- He becomes freed from those karmas.
- He who knows that the Lord is transcendental to the material world attains liberation.

Srila Prabhupada

- As there are constitutional laws in the material world stating that the king can do no wrong, or that the king is not subject to the state laws, similarly the Lord, although He is the creator of this material world, is not affected by the activities of the material world.
- He creates and remains aloof from the creation, whereas the living entities are entangled in the fruitive results of material activities because of their propensity for lording it over material resources.
- The proprietor of an establishment is not responsible for the right and wrong activities of the workers, but the workers are themselves responsible.
- The living entities are engaged in their respective activities of sense gratification, and these activities are not ordained by the Lord.
- For advancement of sense gratification, the living entities are engaged in the work of this world, and they aspire to heavenly happiness after death.

Srila Prabhupada

- The Lord, being full in Himself, has no attraction for so-called heavenly happiness.
- The heavenly demigods are only His engaged servants.
- The proprietor never desires the low-grade happiness such as the workers may desire. He is aloof from the material actions and reactions.
- For example, the rains are not responsible for different types of vegetation that appear on the earth, although without such rains there is no possibility of vegetative growth.
- Vedic smṛti confirms this fact as follows:
nimitta-mātram evāsau sṛjyānām sarga-karmaṇi
pradhāna-kāraṇī-bhūtā yato vai sṛjya-śaktayah
- "In the material creations, the Lord is only the supreme cause. The immediate cause is material nature, by which the cosmic manifestation is made visible."

Srila Prabhupada

- The created beings are of many varieties, such as the demigods, human beings and lower animals, and all of them are subject to the reactions of their past good or bad activities.
- The Lord only gives them the proper facilities for such activities and the regulations of the modes of nature, but He is never responsible for their past and present activities.
- In the Vedānta-sūtra (2.1.34) it is confirmed, vaiṣamya-nairghṛṇye na sāpekṣatvāt: the Lord is never partial to any living entity.
- The living entity is responsible for his own acts. The Lord only gives him facilities, through the agency of material nature, the external energy.
- Anyone who is fully conversant with all the intricacies of this law of karma, or fruitive activities, does not become affected by the results of his activities.

Srila Prabhupada

- In other words, the person who understands this transcendental nature of the Lord is an experienced man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and thus he is never subjected to the laws of karma.
- One who does not know the transcendental nature of the Lord and who thinks that the activities of the Lord are aimed at fruitive results, as are the activities of the ordinary living entities, certainly becomes entangled himself in fruitive reactions.
- But one who knows the Supreme Truth is a liberated soul fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Section-II – Applying Transcendental Knowledge (11-15)

|| 4.15 ||

evam jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma
pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam
pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam

Knowing this about Me (**evam jñātvā**), those desiring liberation (**mumukṣubhiḥ api**) in ancient times (**pūrvaiḥ**) performed actions without desire (**karma kṛtaṁ**). Therefore (**tasmāt**) perform action (**tvam karma eva kuru**) which the ancients performed (**pūrvaiḥ kṛtam**), following after their predecessors (**pūrvataram**).

Baladeva

- Knowing Me thus (evam), previous persons desiring liberation (pūrvaiḥ mumukṣubhiḥ), My students such as Vivasvān, who followed the teaching, performed niṣkāma karma.
- You also should indeed perform action, and not renounce action.
- If one is impure in heart one should perform these actions to purify the heart, which lead to jñāna.
- If one is already pure in heart one should perform the action to teach others.
- How did the previous persons perform the actions?
- They performed actions, following the actions of people much previous to them, long ago (pūrvataram).

Srila Prabhupada

- There are two classes of men. Some of them are full of polluted material things within their hearts, and some of them are materially free.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness is equally beneficial for both of these persons.
- Those who are full of dirty things can take to the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a gradual cleansing process, following the regulative principles of devotional service.
- Those who are already cleansed of the impurities may continue to act in the same Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that others may follow their exemplary activities and thereby be benefited.
- Foolish persons or neophytes in Kṛṣṇa consciousness often want to retire from activities without having knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Arjuna's desire to retire from activities on the battlefield was not approved by the Lord. One need only know how to act.

Srila Prabhupada

- To retire from the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to sit aloof making a show of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is less important than actually engaging in the field of activities for the sake of Kṛṣṇa.
- Arjuna is here advised to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, following in the footsteps of the Lord's previous disciples, such as the sun-god Vivasvān, as mentioned hereinbefore.
- The Supreme Lord knows all His past activities, as well as those of persons who acted in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the past.
- Therefore He recommends the acts of the sun-god, who learned this art from the Lord some millions of years before.
- All such students of Lord Kṛṣṇa are mentioned here as past liberated persons, engaged in the discharge of duties allotted by Kṛṣṇa.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.16 ||

kim karma kim akarmeti
kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt

Even the wise (**kavayah apy**) are bewildered about (**atra mohitāḥ**) action and inaction of karma containing jñāna (**kim karma kim akarma iti**). I will speak to you about that action and non-action (**tat te karma pravakṣyāmi**), by knowing which (**yaj jñātvā**) you will be liberated from saṁsāra (**mokṣyase aśubhāt**).

Baladeva

- “Is there some doubt about karma, since you speak with great insistence about acting as previous persons did, according to their predecessors.”
- “Certainly there is. What type of action should be performed by those desiring liberation?”
- And what is the jñāna, the opposite of action (akarma), included in the actions which they perform?
- Akarma here means what is different from or opposite to action.
- Even those who are wise (kavayah) have become bewildered about this (atra), because they are unable to discern the truth about it. I, controlling everything, knowing everything, will speak to you about karma (tat) and akarma.”

Srila Prabhupada

- Action in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to be executed in accord with the examples of previous bona fide devotees.
- This is recommended in the 15th verse.
- Why such action should not be independent will be explained in the text to follow.
- To act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one has to follow the leadership of authorized persons who are in a line of disciplic succession as explained in the beginning of this chapter.
- The system of Kṛṣṇa consciousness was first narrated to the sun-god, the sun-god explained it to his son Manu, Manu explained it to his son Ikṣvāku, and the system is current on this earth from that very remote time.

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore, one has to follow in the footsteps of previous authorities in the line of disciplic succession.
- Otherwise even the most intelligent men will be bewildered regarding the standard actions of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- For this reason, the Lord decided to instruct Arjuna in Kṛṣṇa consciousness directly.
- Because of the direct instruction of the Lord to Arjuna, anyone who follows in the footsteps of Arjuna is certainly not bewildered.
- It is said that one cannot ascertain the ways of religion simply by imperfect experimental knowledge.
- Actually, the principles of religion can only be laid down by the Lord Himself.

Srila Prabhupada

- Dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam (SB 6.3.19). No one can manufacture a religious principle by imperfect speculation.
- One must follow in the footsteps of great authorities like Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada, Manu, the Kumāras, Kapila, Prahlāda, Bhīṣma, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Yamarāja, Janaka, and Bali Mahārāja.
- By mental speculation one cannot ascertain what is religion or self-realization.
- Therefore, out of causeless mercy to His devotees, the Lord explains directly to Arjuna what action is and what inaction is.
- Only action performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can deliver a person from the entanglement of material existence.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.17||

**karmaṇo hy api boddhavyam
boddhavyam ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyam
gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ**

One should understand (**boddhavyam**) about karma, vikarma and akarma (**karmaṇaḥ vikarmaṇaḥ akarmaṇaḥ ca**). The truth about these is difficult to understand (**gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ**).

One should understand (**boddhavyam**) about karma, kāmya karma and jñāna (**karmaṇaḥ vikarmaṇaḥ akarmaṇaḥ ca**). The truth about these is difficult to understand (**gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ**).

Baladeva

- “But even the wise have become bewildered about it (as you said in the previous verse, so how can I understand?)”
- You should understand the real nature of niṣkāma karma which is to be performed by those desiring liberation.
- You should understand the real nature of kāmya karma which is contrary to jñāna (vikarmaṇaḥ).
- You should also know the real nature of jñāna, different from karma (akarma).
- Boddhavyam means “You should try discern the true nature of these topics in the association of those who know the natures of these.”
- It is hard to understand (gahanā) the workings of karma and akarma. Therefore, even the wise are bewildered.

SVCT

- One should understand the truth about vikarma--that performance of forbidden actions leads to misery.
- As for the truth about akarma--avoidance of action by the sannyāsī--how can that lead to auspiciousness?
- How will one obtain the highest goal without knowing the truth about these?
- The real truth (gati) about karma, akarma and vikarma is hard to understand. In the last line the word karma is used to represent all three types.

Srila Prabhupada

- If one is serious about liberation from material bondage, one has to understand the distinctions between action, inaction and unauthorized actions.
- One has to apply oneself to such an analysis of action, reaction and perverted actions because it is a very difficult subject matter.
- To understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness and action according to its modes, one has to learn one's relationship with the Supreme; i.e., one who has learned perfectly knows that every living entity is an eternal servitor of the Lord and that consequently one has to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- The entire Bhagavad-gītā is directed toward this conclusion. Any other conclusions, against this consciousness and its attendant actions, are vikarmas, or prohibited actions.

Srila Prabhupada

- To understand all this one has to associate with authorities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and learn the secret from them; this is as good as learning from the Lord directly.
- Otherwise, even the most intelligent persons will be bewildered.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.18 ||

**karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed
akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu
sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt**

He who sees inaction in action (**karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed**) and action in inaction (**akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ**) is intelligent among men (**sah manuṣyeṣu buddhimān**). He is qualified for liberation (**sah yuktaḥ**) and has performed all actions (**kṛtsna-karma-kṛt**).

Baladeva

- This verse speaks of the real natures of karma and akarma, which are to be understood.
- He who sees inaction or ātmā jñāna, in the actions of niṣkāma karma being performed, because it is undertaken to reach akarma, and sees action in ātmā jñāna, is wise.
- What has been said is explained as follows.
- The desirer of liberation who sees action undertaken for purification of the heart as a form of jñāna since it aims at jñāna (inaction in action), and who sees jñāna as a form of action because action is the means to jñāna (action in inaction)--in other words, he who knows that karma and jñāna are one because the goal is one, and thus seeks out the truth about ātmā through his actions being performed, is intelligent or learned among men (buddhimān).

SVCT

- This verse gives an understanding of the truth of action and non-action.
- He is intelligent who sees that persons of pure heart fixed in knowledge like Janaka who do not renounce activity, but rather engage in action, in niṣkāma-karma-yoga, do not accrue karma (akarma); and who sees that one who does not perform actions, renouncing actions as a sannyāsī, being of impure heart without knowledge, though talking profusely of knowledge because of knowledge of scriptures, actually obtains bondage of karma leading to misery.
- He engages in all activities; he does not renounce action even through instructions or association of those who think themselves knowledgeable, talking a lot about jñāna.

Srila Prabhupada

- A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is naturally free from the bonds of karma.
- His activities are all performed for Kṛṣṇa; therefore he does not enjoy or suffer any of the effects of work. Consequently he is intelligent in human society, even though he is engaged in all sorts of activities for Kṛṣṇa.
- Akarma means without reaction to work.
- The impersonalist ceases fruitive activities out of fear, so that the resultant action may not be a stumbling block on the path of self-realization, but the personalist knows rightly his position as the eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore he engages himself in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because everything is done for Kṛṣṇa, he enjoys only transcendental happiness in the discharge of this service.
- Those who are engaged in this process are known to be without desire for personal sense gratification.
- The sense of eternal servitorship to Kṛṣṇa makes one immune to all sorts of reactionary elements of work.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.19 ||

yasya sarve samārambhāḥ
kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ
jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ
tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ

The wise say (**budhāḥ āhuḥ**) that he is learned (**tam paṇḍitaṁ**) who, engaging in all activities (**yasya sarve samārambhāḥ**), but being devoid of desire for enjoyment (**kāma-saṅkalpa-varjitāḥ**), has burned up all actions by the fire of knowledge (**jñānāgni-dagdha-karmāṇaṁ**).

Baladeva

- In five verses the Lord speaks karma as a form of jñāna.
- He whose performance of all actions (samārambhāḥ) is devoid of expectation of desired results (kāma saṅkalpa varijitāḥ), who aims at realizing ātmā through his actions, is called a learned man, one who knows ātmā (paṇḍitam), by the wise (budhāḥ).
- Why is he called so?
- When his heart becomes pure by execution of desireless duties, then all his accumulated karmas will have been burned up by the fire of ātmā jñāna which has made its appearance.

SVCT

- This concept is further explained in five verses.
- One who completely engages in activity (samārambhāḥ) devoid of desires to attain objects of enjoyment performs actions consumed by the fire of knowledge, whether the actions are prescribed (karma) or forbidden (vikarma).
- In this way the nature of vikarma should be understood.
- Just as the qualified person sees that karma does not lead to bondage, he also sees that vikarma or forbidden action do not accrue bondage.
- This verse is in agreement with the previous verse (seeing inaction in action).
- Vikarma is not directly discussed in the text, though it was mentioned in verse 17.

SVCT

- Later it will be said:

**api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinam santariṣyasi**

**yathaidhāmsi samiddho 'gnir bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā**

Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries.

As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities.

BG 4.36-37

Srila Prabhupada

- Only a person in full knowledge can understand the activities of a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Because the person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is devoid of all kinds of sense-gratificatory propensities, it is to be understood that he has burned up the reactions of his work by perfect knowledge of his constitutional position as the eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- He is actually learned who has attained to such perfection of knowledge. Development of this knowledge of eternal servitorship to the Lord is compared to fire.
- Such a fire, once kindled, can burn up all kinds of reactions to work.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.4.20 ||

**tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgam
nitya-tr̥pto nirāśrayaḥ
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi
naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ**

Though intently engaged in actions (**karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi**), having given up the desire for results of action (**tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgam**), being always satisfied (**nitya-tr̥pto**), non-dependent on others (**nirāśrayaḥ**), this person does nothing at all (**naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ**).

Baladeva

- This verse elaborates the point.
- Having given up attachment to the results of work, satisfied with constant realization of ātmā to be accomplished in the future, devoid of taking shelter of anything even for livelihood, a person so qualified, though engaged in actions, does nothing at all.
- This is the state of ārurukṣu, one aspiring for the goal, in which one produces steadiness in jñāna under the pretext of performing actions.
- This indicates that one should understand that the very nature of vikarma or kāmya karma is to produce bondage.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- This person is always satisfied by his own bliss (nitya-tr̥ptaḥ). He does not take shelter at all of anything for his livelihood (nirāśrayaḥ).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- This freedom from the bondage of actions is possible only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, when one is doing everything for Kṛṣṇa.
- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person acts out of pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore he has no attraction for the results of the action.
- He is not even attached to his personal maintenance, for everything is left to Kṛṣṇa.
- Nor is he anxious to secure things, nor to protect things already in his possession.
- He does his duty to the best of his ability and leaves everything to Kṛṣṇa.

SP

- Such an unattached person is always free from the resultant reactions of good and bad; it is as though he were not doing anything.
- This is the sign of akarma, or actions without fruitive reactions.
- Any other action, therefore, devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is binding upon the worker, and that is the real aspect of vikarma, as explained hereinbefore.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.4.21 ||

nirāśīr yata-cittātmā
tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma
kurvan nāpnoti kilbiṣam

Having given up all sense of taking from others (**tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ**), being without desire (**nirāśīr**), and controlled in mind and body (**yata-cittātmā**), performing acts (**kurvan karma**) only to support his body (**śārīraṁ kevalaṁ**), he does not incur sin (**nāpnoti kilbiṣam**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Three verses now speak of the state of āruḍha or one who has attained the goal, steadiness in jñāna.
- He from whom desire for results has departed (nirāśīḥ), whose mind and body are controlled (yata cittātmā), who is devoid of possessiveness of material objects, because his purpose is only to see ātmā, though engaging in action to gain material objects to support his body (śāṛiram kevalam karma), does not incur sin (kilbiṣam).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not expect good or bad results in his activities.
- His mind and intelligence are fully controlled.
- He knows that because he is part and parcel of the Supreme, the part played by him, as a part and parcel of the whole, is not his own activity but is only being done through him by the Supreme.
- When the hand moves, it does not move out of its own accord, but by the endeavor of the whole body.
- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person is always dovetailed with the supreme desire, for he has no desire for personal sense gratification.
- He moves exactly like a part of a machine.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- As a machine part requires oiling and cleaning for maintenance, so a Kṛṣṇa conscious man maintains himself by his work just to remain fit for action in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.
- He is therefore immune to all the reactions of his endeavors.
- Like an animal, he has no proprietorship even over his own body.
- A cruel proprietor of an animal sometimes kills the animal in his possession, yet the animal does not protest.
- Nor does it have any real independence.
- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, fully engaged in self-realization, has very little time to falsely possess any material object.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- For maintaining body and soul, he does not require unfair means of accumulating money.
- He does not, therefore, become contaminated by such material sins. He is free from all reactions to his actions.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

॥ 4.4.22 ॥

yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭo
dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ
samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca
kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate

Satisfied with what comes of its own accord (**yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭo**), free of dualities (**dvandvātīto**), free of envy (**vimatsaraḥ**), calm in the face of success or failure (**samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca**), though engaging in work (**kṛtvāpi**), that person is not bound (**na nibadhyate**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- This verses shows that one should not make extra effort to attain food or clothing for ones bodily maintenance.
- That person is satisfied with what is attained on its own, without asking for it. He is tolerant (atītaḥ) of dualities such as heat and cold.
- He does not have hatred of those who attack him (vimatsaraḥ).
- He is equal (samaḥ), being devoid of joy at what comes of its own accord, and devoid of lamentation when nothing comes.
- Though doing actions to maintain his body in this way, he is not bound by the various actions.
- He is not contaminated because of the influence of steadiness in jñāna.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not make much endeavor even to maintain his body.
- He is satisfied with gains which are obtained of their own accord.
- He neither begs nor borrows, but he labors honestly as far as is in his power, and is satisfied with whatever is obtained by his own honest labor.
- He is therefore independent in his livelihood. He does not allow anyone's service to hamper his own service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- However, for the service of the Lord he can participate in any kind of action without being disturbed by the duality of the material world.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.4.23 ||

**gata-saṅgasya muktasya
jñānāvasthita-cetasah
yajñāyācarataḥ karma
samagraṁ pravilīyate**

Devoid of desire for results (**muktasya**), free from attachment (**gata-saṅgasya**), absorbed in knowledge (**jñāna-avasthita-cetasah**), and engaged in actions of yajña (**yajñāya ācarataḥ karma**), he does not accrue karmic reactions (**samagraṁ pravilīyate**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- For the person who is niṣkāma (gata saṅgasya), devoid of attraction and repulsion (muktasya), whose mind is absorbed in knowledge of his own ātmā, and who performs those actions while thinking that they are for the pleasure of Viṣṇu (yajñāya), all previous karmas, causes of bondage, are destroyed.

SVCT

- For one who performs actions for the purpose of yajña, which will now be described, karma dissolves. The state of non-action or no reactions to work is attained by this.

Srila Prabhupada

- Becoming fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, one is freed from all dualities and thus is free from the contaminations of the material modes.
- He can become liberated because he knows his constitutional position in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and thus his mind cannot be drawn from Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Consequently, whatever he does, he does for Kṛṣṇa, who is the primeval Viṣṇu.
- Therefore, all his works are technically sacrifices because sacrifice aims at satisfying the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa.
- The resultant reactions to all such work certainly merge into transcendence, and one does not suffer material effects.

Section-III – Understanding Karma on the platform of Jñāna (16-24)

|| 4.24 ||

**brahmārpaṇam brahma havir
brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam
brahma-karma-samādhinā**

The oblations consisting of Brahman (**brahmārpaṇam**), with brahman as the ladle (**brahma havir**), is offered into the fire which is Brahman (**brahmāgnau hutam**), by the person who is brahman (**brahmaṇā**). The person brahman attains brahman (**brahmaiva tena gantavyam**) by being absorbed in actions of brahman (**brahma-karma-samādhinā**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- It has been stated in the previous verse that one should perform actions for the purpose of yajña.
- What type of yajña is this? This verse explains.
- Arpaṇam refers to the instruments such as the wooden spoon used to offer the ghee into the fire. This is Brahman. The substance used as oblation is Brahman.
- The fire in which the oblation is placed is Brahman. The performer of the yajña is Brahman.
- The person who sees things in this way attains Brahman alone, not any other result.
- Why? It is because he has concentrated his attention on the action which is composed only of Brahman (brahma-karma-samādhinā).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- How activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can lead one ultimately to the spiritual goal is described here.
- There are various activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and all of them will be described in the following verses. But, for the present, just the principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is described.
- A conditioned soul, entangled in material contamination, is sure to act in the material atmosphere, and yet he has to get out of such an environment.
- The process by which the conditioned soul can get out of the material atmosphere is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- For example, a patient who is suffering from a disorder of the bowels due to overindulgence in milk products is cured by another milk product, namely curds.
- The materially absorbed conditioned soul can be cured by Kṛṣṇa consciousness as set forth here in the Gītā.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- This process is generally known as yajña, or activities (sacrifices) simply meant for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa.
- The more the activities of the material world are performed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or for Viṣṇu only, the more the atmosphere becomes spiritualized by complete absorption.
- The word brahma (Brahman) means "spiritual." The Lord is spiritual, and the rays of His transcendental body are called brahmajyoti, His spiritual effulgence.
- Everything that exists is situated in that brahmajyoti, but when the jyoti is covered by illusion (māyā) or sense gratification, it is called material.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- This material veil can be removed at once by Kṛṣṇa consciousness; thus the offering for the sake of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the consuming agent of such an offering or contribution, the process of consumption, the contributor, and the result are—all combined together—Brahman, or the Absolute Truth.
- The Absolute Truth covered by māyā is called matter. Matter dovetailed for the cause of the Absolute Truth regains its spiritual quality.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the process of converting the illusory consciousness into Brahman, or the Supreme.
- When the mind is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is said to be in samādhi, or trance.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Anything done in such transcendental consciousness is called yajña, or sacrifice for the Absolute.
- In that condition of spiritual consciousness, the contributor, the contribution, the consumption, the performer or leader of the performance, and the result or ultimate gain—everything—becomes one in the Absolute, the Supreme Brahman.
- That is the method of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.25 ||

daivam evāpare yajñam
yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāv apare yajñam
yajñenaivopajuhvati

Others however (**apare**), karma yogīs (**yoginaḥ**), engage in worship of devatās (**daivam yajñam paryupāsate**). Others offer oblations (**apare yajñam upajuhvati**) into the fire of brahman (**brahmāgnāv**) by means of the ladle (**yajñena**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Having described how actions become jñāna by having the quest for the Lord (and the jīva) as the goal, the Lord now speaks specifically of the different types of karma yoga.
- Other yogīs are devoted to or have complete faith in (paryupāsate) sacrifice in the form of worship of devatās like Indra (daivam yajñam).
- Others, such as those described in the previous verse, are absorbed in offering oblations of ghee and grains (yajñam) into the fire which represents Brahman using the ladle (yajñena).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- As described above, a person engaged in discharging duties in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is also called a perfect yogī or a first-class mystic.
- But there are others also, who perform similar sacrifices in the worship of demigods, and still others who sacrifice to the Supreme Brahman, or the impersonal feature of the Supreme Lord.
- So there are different kinds of sacrifices in terms of different categories. Such different categories of sacrifice by different types of performers only superficially demark varieties of sacrifice.
- Factually sacrifice means to satisfy the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, who is also known as Yajña.
- All the different varieties of sacrifice can be placed within two primary divisions: namely, sacrifice of worldly possessions and sacrifice in pursuit of transcendental knowledge.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Those who are in Kṛṣṇa consciousness sacrifice all material possessions for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, while others, who want some temporary material happiness, sacrifice their material possessions to satisfy demigods such as Indra, the sun-god, etc.
- And others, who are impersonalists, sacrifice their identity by merging into the existence of impersonal Brahman.
- The demigods are powerful living entities appointed by the Supreme Lord for the maintenance and supervision of all material functions like the heating, watering and lighting of the universe.
- Those who are interested in material benefits worship the demigods by various sacrifices according to the Vedic rituals.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- They are called bahv-īśvara-vādī, or believers in many gods.
- But others, who worship the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth and regard the forms of the demigods as temporary, sacrifice their individual selves in the supreme fire and thus end their individual existences by merging into the existence of the Supreme.
- Such impersonalists sacrifice their time in philosophical speculation to understand the transcendental nature of the Supreme.
- In other words, the fruitive workers sacrifice their material possessions for material enjoyment, whereas the impersonalist sacrifices his material designations with a view to merging into the existence of the Supreme.
- For the impersonalist, the fire altar of sacrifice is the Supreme Brahman, and the offering is the self being consumed by the fire of Brahman.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The Kṛṣṇa conscious person, like Arjuna, however, sacrifices everything for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and thus all his material possessions as well as his own self—everything—is sacrificed for Kṛṣṇa.
- Thus, he is the first-class yogī; but he does not lose his individual existence.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.26 ||

śrotrādīnīndriyāṅy anye
saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati
śabdādīn viṣayān anyā
indriyāgniṣu juhvati

The naiṣṭhikī brahmacārīs (**anye**) offer the senses (**śrotra-ādīnī indriyāṅi**) into the controlled mind (**saṁyama agniṣu juhvati**). Other brahmacārīs (**anyā**) offer the sense objects (**śabdādīn viṣayān**) into the fire of the senses (**indriyāgniṣu juhvati**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- Others, naiṣṭhikī brahmacārīs, offer the senses such as ear into the fire of the controlled mind.
- This means that the senses completely disappear in the pure mind.
- [Note: This means that the senses stop functioning in relation to external objects, turning inward when the mind attains samādhi.]
- Others, less controlled brahmacārīs, offer the sense objects such as sound into fires of the senses.
- The sense objects disappear in the senses.
- [Note: This means that the senses contact sense objects, but remain detached.]

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- The members of the four divisions of human life, namely the brahmacārī, the gr̥hastha, the vānaprastha and the sannyāsī, are all meant to become perfect yogīs or transcendentalists.
- Since human life is not meant for our enjoying sense gratification like the animals, the four orders of human life are so arranged that one may become perfect in spiritual life.
- The brahmacārīs, or students under the care of a bona fide spiritual master, control the mind by abstaining from sense gratification.
- A brahmacārī hears only words concerning Kṛṣṇa consciousness; hearing is the basic principle for understanding, and therefore the pure brahmacārī engages fully in harer nāmānukīrtanam—chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Srila Prabhupada

- He restrains himself from the vibrations of material sounds, and his hearing is engaged in the transcendental sound vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- Similarly, the householders, who have some license for sense gratification, perform such acts with great restraint.
- Sex life, intoxication and meat-eating are general tendencies of human society, but a regulated householder does not indulge in unrestricted sex life and other sense gratification.
- Marriage on the principles of religious life is therefore current in all civilized human society because that is the way for restricted sex life.
- This restricted, unattached sex life is also a kind of yajña because the restricted householder sacrifices his general tendency toward sense gratification for higher, transcendental life.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.27 ||

sarvāṇīndriya-karmāṇi
prāṇa-karmāṇi cāpare
ātma-saṁyama-yogāgnau
juhvati jñāna-dīpīte

Others offer (**apare juhvati**) all the activities of the senses (**sarvāṇi indriya-karmāṇi**) and the prāṇas (**prāṇa-karmāṇi**) into the fire of the mind (**ātma-saṁyama-yogāgnau**), lit by knowledge of ātmā (**jñāna-dīpīte**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- Others, knowledgeable of tvam, the pure soul, offer the activities of all the senses, such as hearing and seeing as well as the activities of the ten prāṇas into the fire of purity (sam̐yama) of the jīva (tvam).
- These yogīs make the mind, intelligence, senses and ten prāṇas disappear.
- They think that only the soul perceiving inwards (pratyag-atmā) exists, not anything else such as the mind or other things.
- Ātmā here refers to soul rather than mind, because offering sense to the mind has already been stated in verse 26, and it cannot mean param brahman since that has been stated in verse 25.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- The actions of the ten prāṇas are as follows.
- The prāṇa goes outward (exhaling), the apāna goes downwards (expelling). The samāna assimilates food and drink.
- The udāna leads upwards and the vyāna is pervading, regulating the other prāṇas.

udgāre nāga ākhyātaḥ kūrmas tūnmīlane smṛtaḥ
kṛkaraḥ kṣut-karo jñeyo devadatto vijṛmbhaṇe
na jahāti mṛte kvāpi sarvavyāpī dhanañjayaḥ

- Nāga governs belching, kūrma causes opening of the eyes, kṛkara causes sneezing and hunger, and devadatta causes yawning and sleep. Dhanañjaya, pervading the whole body, lingers after death, causing decomposition. Gheraṇḍa-saṁhitā 5.64

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The yoga system conceived by Patañjali is referred to herein. In the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali, the soul is called pratyag-ātmā and parāg-ātmā.
- As long as the soul is attached to sense enjoyment it is called parāg-ātmā, but as soon as the same soul becomes detached from such sense enjoyment it is called pratyag-ātmā.
- The soul is subjected to the functions of ten kinds of air at work within the body, and this is perceived through the breathing system.
- The Patañjali system of yoga instructs one on how to control the functions of the body's air in a technical manner so that ultimately all the functions of the air within become favorable for purifying the soul of material attachment.
- According to this yoga system, pratyag-ātmā is the ultimate goal. This pratyag-ātmā is withdrawn from activities in matter.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The senses interact with the sense objects, like the ear for hearing, eyes for seeing, nose for smelling, tongue for tasting, hand for touching, and all of them are thus engaged in activities outside the self. They are called the functions of the prāṇa-vāyu.
- The apāna-vāyu goes downwards, vyāna-vāyu acts to shrink and expand, samāna-vāyu adjusts equilibrium, udāna-vāyu goes upwards—and when one is enlightened, one engages all these in searching for self-realization.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.28 ||

**dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā
yoga-yajñās tathāpare
svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñās ca
yatayaḥ saṁśita-vratāḥ**

Others (**apare**) engage in severe vows of charity, austerities, visiting holy places (**dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā yoga-yajñās**), and studying the Vedas and their meaning (**svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñās ca**). They make great endeavor with intense actions (**yatayaḥ saṁśita-vratāḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Some karma yogīs are dedicated to giving charity such as food (dravya yajña).
- Some are engaged in severe austerities like the cāndrāyaṇa fast. Some are engaged in going to holy places.
- Some are dedicated to sacrifice in the form of study of the Vedas (svādhyāya), and finding the meaning of the Vedas (jñāna yajña).
- They all make great endeavor, with intense conduct (saṁśita vratāḥ).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- These sacrifices may be fitted into various divisions.
- There are persons who are sacrificing their possessions in the form of various kinds of charities.
- In India, the rich mercantile community or princely orders open various kinds of charitable institutions like dharma-śālā, anna-kṣetra, atithi-śālā, anāthālaya and vidyā-pīṭha.
- In other countries, too, there are many hospitals, old age homes and similar charitable foundations meant for distributing food, education and medical treatment free to the poor.
- All these charitable activities are called dravyamaya-yajña. There are others who, for higher elevation in life or for promotion to higher planets within the universe, voluntarily accept many kinds of austerities such as candrāyaṇa and cāturmāsya.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- These processes entail severe vows for conducting life under certain rigid rules.
- For example, under the cāturmāsya vow the candidate does not shave for four months during the year (July to October), he does not eat certain foods, does not eat twice in a day or does not leave home.
- Such sacrifice of the comforts of life is called tapomaya-yajña.
- There are still others who engage themselves in different kinds of mystic yogas like the Patañjali system (for merging into the existence of the Absolute), or haṭha-yoga or aṣṭāṅga-yoga (for particular perfections). And some travel to all the sanctified places of pilgrimage.
- All these practices are called yoga-yajña, sacrifice for a certain type of perfection in the material world.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- There are others who engage themselves in the studies of different Vedic literatures, specifically the Upaniṣads and Vedānta-sūtras, or the Sāṅkhya philosophy.
- All of these are called svādhyāya-yajña. or engagement in the sacrifice of studies. All these yogīs are faithfully engaged in different types of sacrifice and are seeking a higher status of life.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is different from these because it is the direct service of the Supreme Lord.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be attained by any one of the above-mentioned types of sacrifice but can be attained only by the mercy of the Lord and His bona fide devotees.
- Therefore, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is transcendental.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.29 ||

apāne juhvati prāṇam
prāṇe 'pānam tathāpare
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā
prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ
apare niyatāhārāḥ
prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati

Others (**apare**), dedicated to controlling the breath (**prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ**), stopping the movement of prāṇa and apāna (**prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā**), offer the prāṇa into the apāna (**apāne juhvati prāṇam**) or offer the apāna into the prāṇa (**prāṇe 'pānam**). Others (**apare**), controlling eating (**niyatāhārāḥ**), offer the senses into the weakened prāṇas (**prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Others, of three types, are dedicated to controlling the breath. Some offer the prāṇa which goes up, into the apāna, which moves down.
- This means that they make the prāṇa merge with the apāna through pūraka (inhalation).
- Others offer the apāna into the prāṇa.
- This means they make the apāna merge with the prāṇa through recaka, while exhaling.
- Having stopped the movement of prāṇa and apāna, of exhaling and inhaling, by kumbhaka, by holding the breath, they remain in that state.
- The movement of prāṇa is exhaling the internal air through the nostrils. The movement of apāna is inhaling the external air through the nostrils.
- Stopping both exhalation and inhalation is called kumbhaka.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- There are two types.
- One can fill the lungs with air and then hold the breath, or exhale completely and then hold the breath.
- Others, practicing restricting the regular intake of food, offer the senses (prāṇān) into the prāṇas.
- This means that the senses become no longer capable of grasping sense objects, since they depend on the prāṇas to function, and the prāṇas have withered up due to restriction on food.
- They thus disappear in the prāṇas like drops of water sprinkled on a hot piece of iron.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- This system of yoga for controlling the breathing process is called prāṇāyāma, and in the beginning it is practiced in the haṭha-yoga system through different sitting postures.
- All of these processes are recommended for controlling the senses and for advancement in spiritual realization.
- This practice involves controlling the airs within the body so as to reverse the directions of their passage.
- The apāna air goes downward, and the prāṇa air goes up.
- The prāṇāyāma-yogī practices breathing the opposite way until the currents are neutralized into pūraka. equilibrium.
- Offering the exhaled breath into the inhaled breath is called recaka.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- When both air currents are completely stopped, one is said to be in kumbhaka-yoga.
- By practice of kumbhaka-yoga. one can increase the duration of life for perfection in spiritual realization.
- The intelligent yogī is interested in attaining perfection in one life, without waiting for the next.
- For by practicing kumbhaka-yoga. the yogīs increase the duration of life by many, many years.
- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, being always situated in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, automatically becomes the controller of the senses.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- His senses, being always engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, have no chance of becoming otherwise engaged.
- So at the end of life, he is naturally transferred to the transcendental plane of Lord Kṛṣṇa; consequently he makes no attempt to increase his longevity.
- He is at once raised to the platform of liberation, as stated in Bhagavad-gītā (14.26):

**mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate**

"One who engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Lord transcends the modes of material nature and is immediately elevated to the spiritual platform."

- A Kṛṣṇa conscious person begins from the transcendental stage, and he is constantly in that consciousness.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Therefore, there is no falling down, and ultimately he enters into the abode of the Lord without delay.
- The practice of reduced eating is automatically done when one eats only kṛṣṇa-prasādam, or food which is offered first to the Lord.
- Reducing the eating process is very helpful in the matter of sense control.
- And without sense control there is no possibility of getting out of the material entanglement.

Surrender Unto Me

- Kṛṣṇa begins to sum up the purpose of all these sacrifices in the next verse.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.30 ||

sarve 'py ete yajña-vido
yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ
yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo
yānti brahma sanātanam

All of these knowers of sacrifice (**sarve 'py ete yajña-vido**) destroy sin through sacrifice (**yajña-kṣapita-kalmaṣāḥ**). Enjoying the material results of the sacrifice (**yajña-śiṣṭāmṛta-bhujo**), they then attain the eternal brahman (**yānti brahma sanātanam**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- These knowers of yajña, who all desire to conquer the senses (yajña vidah), practicing the previously described sacrifices, destroyed their sins by these sacrifices.
- The secondary results are described: they enjoy the nectar of the remnants of sacrifice such as food and the attainment of enjoyment and power.
- The main results are then described: as described previously, by the perfection of jñāna, they finally attain Brahman.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- From the foregoing explanation of different types of sacrifice (namely sacrifice of one's possessions, study of the Vedas or philosophical doctrines, and performance of the yoga system), it is found that the common aim of all is to control the senses.
- Sense gratification is the root cause of material existence; therefore, unless and until one is situated on a platform apart from sense gratification, there is no chance of being elevated to the eternal platform of full knowledge, full bliss and full life.
- This platform is in the eternal atmosphere, or Brahman atmosphere. All the above-mentioned sacrifices help one to become cleansed of the sinful reactions of material existence.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- By this advancement in life, not only does one become happy and opulent in this life, but also, at the end, he enters into the eternal kingdom of God, either merging into the impersonal Brahman or associating with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.31 ||

**nāyaṁ loko 'sty ayajñasya
kuto 'nyaḥ kuru-sattama**

The person who does not perform sacrifice (**ayajñasya**) attains nothing in this life (**nāyaṁ loko asty**), what to speak of the next (**kuto anyah**), O best of the Kurus (**kuru-sattama**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- The fault in not performing the sacrifice is described.
- He who do not perform the sacrifices just described (ayajñasya) does not achieve this material world (ayam lokaḥ) of artha, dharma and kāma, what to speak of liberation (anyaḥ)?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Whatever form of material existence one is in, one is invariably ignorant of his real situation.
- In other words, existence in the material world is due to the multiple reactions to our sinful lives.
- Ignorance is the cause of sinful life, and sinful life is the cause of one's dragging on in material existence.
- The human form of life is the only loophole by which one may get out of this entanglement.
- The Vedas, therefore, give us a chance for escape by pointing out the paths of religion, economic comfort, regulated sense gratification and, at last, the means to get out of the miserable condition entirely.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The path of religion, or the different kinds of sacrifice recommended above, automatically solves our economic problems.
- By performance of yajña we can have enough food, enough milk, etc.—even if there is a so-called increase of population.
- When the body is fully supplied, naturally the next stage is to satisfy the senses.
- The Vedas prescribe, therefore, sacred marriage for regulated sense gratification.
- Thereby one is gradually elevated to the platform of release from material bondage, and the highest perfection of liberated life is to associate with the Supreme Lord.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Perfection is achieved by performance of yajña (sacrifice), as described above.
- Now, if a person is not inclined to perform yajña according to the Vedas, how can he expect a happy life even in this body, and what to speak of another body on another planet?
- There are different grades of material comforts in different heavenly planets, and in all cases there is immense happiness for persons engaged in different kinds of yajña.
- But the highest kind of happiness that a man can achieve is to be promoted to the spiritual planets by practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- A life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is therefore the solution to all the problems of material existence.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.32 ||

evam̐ bahu-vidhā yajñā
vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe
karma-jān viddhi tān sarvān
evam̐ jñātvā vimokṣyase

Thus many types of sacrifice (**evam̐ bahu-vidhā yajñā**) have been described in the Vedas (**vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe**). Know that they are all based on prescribed actions of body, mind and words (**karma-jān viddhi tān sarvān**). Knowing and practicing this, you will be liberated (**evam̐ jñātvā vimokṣyase**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- These many sacrifices are spread in the mouth of the Vedas (brahmaṇaḥ).
- This means that these sacrifices are clearly described by the Vedas, the mouth of the Lord, which present the means of understanding the real self.
- Know that these sacrifices are all born from activities of the body, mind and words (karma jān).
- Understanding (jñātvā), that is, practicing these sacrifices described by the Vedas as means of attaining ātmā and the Lord, on seeing both ātmā and paramātmā by realization that arises from that practice, you will be liberated from saṁsāra.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Different types of sacrifice, as discussed above, are mentioned in the Vedas to suit the different types of worker.
- Because men are so deeply absorbed in the bodily concept, these sacrifices are so arranged that one can work either with the body, with the mind, or with the intelligence.
- But all of them are recommended for ultimately bringing about liberation from the body.
- This is confirmed by the Lord herewith from His own mouth.

Section-IV – Sacrifices lead to Transcendental Knowledge (25-33)

|| 4.33 ||

śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj
jñāna-yajñah parantapa
sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha
jñāne parisamāpyate

O afflicter of the enemies (**parantapa**), the sacrifice involving jñāna (**jñāna-yajñah**) is higher than the sacrifice of materials (**śreyān dravya-mayād yajñāj**). With attainment of knowledge (**jñāne**), O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**), all actions cease (**sarvaṁ karmākhilam parisamāpyate**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- All the types of karma yoga just described have two forms because of containing within them the quest for the individual ātmā, just like a forest. (Externally they are karma but internally they are jñāna.)
- Among all those different types of karma yoga, the forms with jñāna or the jñāna aspect of the actions are praised in this verse as the best.
- In the action having two forms, the jñāna portion of the sacrifice is considered better than the gross portion consisting of action (dravya maya).
- Dravya maya, meaning composed of material elements such as giving charity, stands for all the external methods mentioned such as sense control and starving the prāṇas.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- The Lord further explains. When jñāna appears, all karmas with their parts (aṅgas) disappear.
- This is stated because it is known that a sādhana (action to attain the goal) disappears with attainment of the goal (jñāṇa).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The purpose of all sacrifices is to arrive at the status of complete knowledge, then to gain release from material miseries, and, ultimately, to engage in loving transcendental service to the Supreme Lord (Kṛṣṇa consciousness).
- Nonetheless, there is a mystery about all these different activities of sacrifice, and one should know this mystery.
- Sacrifices sometimes take different forms according to the particular faith of the performer.
- When one's faith reaches the stage of transcendental knowledge, the performer of sacrifices should be considered more advanced than those who simply sacrifice material possessions without such knowledge, for without attainment of knowledge, sacrifices remain on the material platform and bestow no spiritual benefit.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Real knowledge culminates in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the highest stage of transcendental knowledge.
- Without the elevation of knowledge, sacrifices are simply material activities.
- When, however, they are elevated to the level of transcendental knowledge, all such activities enter onto the spiritual platform.
- Depending on differences in consciousness, sacrificial activities are sometimes called karma-kāṇḍa (fruitive activities) and sometimes jñāna-kāṇḍa (knowledge in the pursuit of truth).
- It is better when the end is knowledge.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.34 ||

**tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ**

Know this by surrender (**tad viddhi praṇipātena**), questioning and service (**paripraśnena sevayā**). The seers of truth (**tattva-darśinaḥ**), the jñānīs (**te jñāninaḥ**), will teach you this knowledge (**jñānam upadekṣyanti**)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- After teaching knowledge of ātmā and the method of attaining that knowledge with its components, the Lord now teaches knowledge of worshipping the Lord's svarūpa.
- To attain this knowledge a person must take association with devotees. That he teaches in this verse.
- You who now know your svarūpa as ātmā, attain (viddhi) knowledge related to the paramātmā, through the saintly persons (jñāninaḥ) who have been pleased with your humility and other qualifications, for which purpose I have already taught about both the jīva and paramātmā with verses such as avināśi tu tad viddhi. (BG 2.17)

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Praṇipāta means offering respects like dandavats.
- Sevā means serving these devotees like menial servants. Paripraśna means to ask various questions about the Lord's form, qualities and powers.
- “But they will not teach this, since they are indifferent to the world.”
- “These men with knowledge, who understand their own ātmā and the Supreme ātmā, seeing your desire to know, indicated through your obeisances, questions and service, will teach such a person as you that knowledge of the Lord, for having seen the truth (tattva darśinaḥ), they are merciful and preach that knowledge.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult.
- The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself.
- No one can be a bona fide spiritual master without following this principle of disciplic succession.
- The Lord is the original spiritual master, and a person in the disciplic succession can convey the message of the Lord as it is to his disciple.
- No one can be spiritually realized by manufacturing his own process, as is the fashion of the foolish pretenders.
- The Bhāgavatam (6.3.19) says, *dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam*: the path of religion is directly enunciated by the Lord.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Therefore, mental speculation or dry arguments cannot help lead one to the right path.
- Nor by independent study of books of knowledge can one progress in spiritual life.
- One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge.
- Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige.
- Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Inquiries and submission constitute the proper combination for spiritual understanding.
- Unless there is submission and service, inquiries from the learned spiritual master will not be effective.
- One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master, and when he sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding.
- In this verse, both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries.
- A bona fide spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple.
- Therefore when the student is submissive and is always ready to render service, the reciprocation of knowledge and inquiries becomes perfect.

Surrender Unto Me

- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a spiritual master is the first item of devotional service (adau gurupādāśraya). The knowledge one receives from his spiritual master will now be described.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.35 ||

yaj jñātvā na punar moham
evam yāsyasi pāṇḍava
yena bhūtāny aśeṣāṇi
drakṣyasy ātmany atho mayi

O son of Pāṇḍu (**pāṇḍava**), knowing this (**evam yaj jñātvā**), you will no longer be bewildered (**na punar moham yāsyasi**). By this loss of bewilderment (**yena**), you will see (**drakṣyasy**) that all entities (**aśeṣāṇi bhūtāny**) are situated in their own forms and also in Me (**ātmany atho mayi**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- This verse describes the result of this knowledge. Realizing this knowledge of paramātmā along with that of jīva, you will not again fall under bewilderment, which causes you to think you are killing your relatives.
- “Why will I not fall under bewilderment?”
- “By this knowledge you will see all bodies of men and devatās (bhūtāni aśeṣena) situated separately as jīvas but with material identification (upādhi).
- And you will see those bodies situated in Me, the Lord of all, the cause of everything, as they are My products.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- What has been said is this.
- For the jīvas who are distinct from their two bodies (gross and subtle) but who are opposed to the Lord, thinking of their own benefit, My energy furnishes them with sense of possessiveness in material bodies with material facilities.
- By that māyā, they also take on the conceptions of killer and persons that are killed.
- Their true, pure forms do not have relationship with this misconception or the bodies.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- The paramātmā, the Lord of everything, supplies to the jīvas under His shelter bodies and senses, means to support their bodies, and happiness and enjoyment within planets, according to their individual karmas, but being worshipped by them, He awards them liberation.
- The person who understands this cannot fall under bewilderment.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The result of receiving knowledge from a self-realized soul, or one who knows things as they are, is learning that all living beings are parts and parcels of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- The sense of an existence separate from Kṛṣṇa is called māyā (mā-not, yā-this).
- Some think that we have nothing to do with Kṛṣṇa, that Kṛṣṇa is only a great historical personality and that the Absolute is the impersonal Brahman.
- Factually, as it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, this impersonal Brahman is the personal effulgence of Kṛṣṇa.
- Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the cause of everything. In the Brahma-saṁhitā it is clearly stated that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Even the millions of incarnations are only His different expansions. Similarly, the living entities are also expansions of Kṛṣṇa.
- The Māyāvādī philosophers wrongly think that Kṛṣṇa loses His own separate existence in His many expansions.
- This thought is material in nature.
- We have experience in the material world that a thing, when fragmentally distributed, loses its own original identity.
- But the Māyāvādī philosophers fail to understand that absolute means that one plus one is equal to one, and that one minus one is also equal to one.
- This is the case in the absolute world.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- For want of sufficient knowledge in the absolute science, we are now covered with illusion, and therefore we think that we are separate from Kṛṣṇa.
- Although we are separated parts of Kṛṣṇa, we are nevertheless not different from Him.
- The bodily difference of the living entities is māyā, or not actual fact. We are all meant to satisfy Kṛṣṇa.
- By māyā alone Arjuna thought that the temporary bodily relationship with his kinsmen was more important than his eternal spiritual relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- The whole teaching of the Gītā is targeted toward this end: that a living being, as Kṛṣṇa's eternal servitor, cannot be separated from Kṛṣṇa, and his sense of being an identity apart from Kṛṣṇa is called māyā.
- The living entities, as separate parts and parcels of the Supreme, have a purpose to fulfill.
- Having forgotten that purpose since time immemorial, they are situated in different bodies, as men, animals, demigods, etc.
- Such bodily differences arise from forgetfulness of the transcendental service of the Lord. But when one is engaged in transcendental service through Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one becomes at once liberated from this illusion.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- One can acquire such pure knowledge only from the bona fide spiritual master and thereby avoid the delusion that the living entity is equal to Kṛṣṇa.
- Perfect knowledge is that the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa, is the supreme shelter for all living entities, and giving up such shelter, the living entities are deluded by the material energy, imagining themselves to have a separate identity.
- Thus, under different standards of material identity, they become forgetful of Kṛṣṇa.
- When, however, such deluded living entities become situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is to be understood that they are on the path of liberation, as confirmed in the Bhāgavatam (2.10.6): *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih*.
- Liberation means to be situated in one's constitutional position as an eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa consciousness).

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.36 ||

api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ
sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva
vṛjinam̐ santariṣyasi

Even if you are (**api ced**) the most sinful among sinners (**sarvebhyaḥ pāpebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛt-tamaḥ asi**), you will cross over all sins (**sarvaṁ vṛjinam̐ santariṣyasi**) just by the boat of knowledge (**jñāna-plavenaiva**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- This verse is a glorification of knowledge.
- The verse states “If you are more sinful than all sinners...”
- But how could a person who is sinful be pure hearted, and without purity of heart, how could he attain realization of knowledge?
- Actually, it is not possible for one who has attained knowledge to commit sinful acts.
- Madhusūdana Sarasvatī explains: the words *api* and *cet* are used to show the assumption of the impossible; though the commission of sin would be impossible, the assumption is made to show the results of attaining knowledge.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Proper understanding of one's constitutional position in relationship to Kṛṣṇa is so nice that it can at once lift one from the struggle for existence which goes on in the ocean of nescience.
- This material world is sometimes regarded as an ocean of nescience and sometimes as a blazing forest.
- In the ocean, however expert a swimmer one may be, the struggle for existence is very severe.
- If someone comes forward and lifts the struggling swimmer from the ocean, he is the greatest savior.
- Perfect knowledge, received from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the path of liberation.
- The boat of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very simple, but at the same time the most sublime.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.37 ||

yathaidhāmsi samiddho 'gnir
bhasma-sāt kurute 'rjuna
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi
bhasma-sāt kurute tathā

As a blazing fire (**yatha samiddho agnir**) burns to ashes (**bhasma-sāt kurute**) all fuel wood (**edhāmsi**), the fire of knowledge (**tathā jñānāgniḥ**) turns all actions to ashes (**sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- It has just been said that sinful reactions are destroyed by brahma vidyā (knowledge of the Lord and ātmā).
- Now this verse says that even puṇya karmas are destroyed by brahma vidyā.
- Just as blazing (samiddhaḥ) fire turns fuel wood (edhāmsi) to ashes, the fire of knowledge, the fire of realization of ones own ātmā and paramātmā, turns to ashes all reactions, including those arising from pious acts, but not the prārabdha reactions.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- That knowledge burns up all accumulated past karmas which are like reeds but not the prārabdha ones.
- And that knowledge also transforms the actions performed in the present life, and makes them like drops of water rolling off a lotus leaf, having no reactions.
- Though the prārabdha karmas are extremely weakened by the influence of this knowledge, they are still situated in the person with realization of ātmā, by the will of the Lord, in order to preach the proper path of conduct.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- The śruti says:

ubhe uhaivaiṣa ete taraty amṛtaḥ sādhasādhanī

The realizer of Brahman overcomes all reactions to sinful and pious actions (sādhasādhanī), of both accumulated and present types (ubhe). Brhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22

- The meaning of the verse is this. The realizer of Brahman (eṣa) overcomes the past reactions (except prārabdha) and presently accruing reactions by actions in this life (ubhe) in the form of pious and sinful reactions (sādhasādhanī).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- The author of the Sūtras says:

tad-adhigama uttara-pūrvārdhayor aśleṣa-vināśau tad-
vyapadeśāt

- On attaining this, there is destruction previous sins and non-clinging of future sins. Because it is declared. Vedānta Sūtra 4.1.13

SVCT

- Knowledge arising from purity of heart destroys all karmas except the prārabdha-karmas. This verse illustrates with an example. Samiddhaḥ means “blazing.”

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Perfect knowledge of self and Superself and of their relationship is compared herein to fire.
- This fire not only burns up all reactions to impious activities, but also all reactions to pious activities, turning them to ashes.
- There are many stages of reaction: reaction in the making, reaction fructifying, reaction already achieved, and reaction a priori.
- But knowledge of the constitutional position of the living entity burns everything to ashes.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- When one is in complete knowledge, all reactions, both a priori and a posteriori, are consumed.
- In the Vedas (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22) it is stated, ubhe uhaivaiṣa ete taraty amṛtaḥ sādhy-asādhūnī: "One overcomes both the pious and impious reactions of work."

Surrender Unto Me

- Transcendental knowledge thus destroys all reactions, both pious and sinful; all, that is, except pārabdha-karma, or matured reactions, such as one's present material body.
- Kṛṣṇa now further glorifies transcendental knowledge.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.38 ||

na hi jñānena sadṛśam
pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayaṁ yoga-sāmsiddhaḥ
kālenātmani vindati

In this world (**iha**) there is nothing as pure as knowledge (**na hi jñānena sadṛśam pavitram vidyate**). After some time (**kālena**) it is attained of itself from within (**tat svayaṁ ātmani vindati**), through practice of niṣkāma-karma-yoga (**yoga-sāmsiddhaḥ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Because (hi) nothing (such as going to holy places or austerity) purifies as much as knowledge, this knowledge which destroys all sin is not easily available for all people.
- This knowledge, attained through maturity of niṣkāma karma yoga (yoga saṁsiddhaḥ), with time, not immediately, is attained in the ātmā on its own, not by just accepting saṁnyāsa or other external means.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SVCT

- In this world, among those who engage in austerities, yoga and other processes, there is nothing to compare to knowledge.
- That knowledge is not easily attained by everyone, but is fully attained (sam siddhaḥ) by practicing niṣkāma-karma-yoga.
- It is not unobtainable, but is attained in time, not immediately.
- That knowledge is attained spontaneously within the self (ātmāni), not by accepting external sannyāsa. Sam stands for samyak, meaning “completely”.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- When we speak of transcendental knowledge, we do so in terms of spiritual understanding.
- As such, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge.
- Ignorance is the cause of our bondage, and knowledge is the cause of our liberation.
- This knowledge is the mature fruit of devotional service, and when one is situated in transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself.
- In other words, this knowledge and peace culminate in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the last word in the Bhagavad-gītā.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.39 ||

śraddhāvāl labhate jñānam
tat-paraḥ samyatendriyaḥ
jñānam labdhvā parām śāntim
acireṇādhigacchati

Having faith in this process (**śraddhāvān**), being steady in practice of the process (**tat-paraḥ**), and controlling the senses (**samyatendriyaḥ**), one attains knowledge (**labhate jñānam**). Attaining knowledge (**jñānam labdhvā**), one quickly attains liberation (**parām śāntim acireṇādhigacchati**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- What type of persons attain this knowledge and when?
- One who has strong faith that this knowledge will arise with purification of the heart through niṣkāma karma (śraddhāvān), one who is steady in this performance (tat paraḥ), and who moreover attains control of his senses (samyatendriyaḥ), attains this knowledge.
- At that time, he attains liberation (parām śāntim).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Such knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be achieved by a faithful person who believes firmly in Kṛṣṇa.
- One is called a faithful man who thinks that simply by acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he can attain the highest perfection.
- This faith is attained by the discharge of devotional service, and by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, which cleanses one's heart of all material dirt.
- Over and above this, one should control the senses.
- A person who is faithful to Kṛṣṇa and who controls the senses can easily attain perfection in the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness without delay.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.40 ||

ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca
saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro
na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ

The person ignorant of scripture (**ajñāś**), or one who knows scripture but has no faith in it (**aśraddadhānaś**), or one who is doubtful of attaining the goal even with faith (**saṁśayātmā**), perishes (**vinaśyati**). One who is afflicted with doubt (**saṁśayātmanaḥ**) attains nothing in this life (**nāyaṁ loko 'sti**), nothing in the next (**na paro**), and no happiness (**na sukhaṁ**).

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Having described those qualified for knowledge and the results, the Lord now describes the unqualified person and the result for that person.
- The ignorant person, like an animal, with no knowledge of scriptures; or the person who, in spite of having knowledge of scriptures, has no faith, since he has a quarrelsome nature; or the person who, in spite of having faith, doubts if he can attain the perfection—this person is destroyed.
- This means he deviates from his own interest. Among these persons, the one with doubts is especially criticized.
- This doubtful person does not have happiness from the gross world or the next world.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

Baladeva

- Happiness is generated from actions prescribed by scriptures.
- That action is accompanied by knowledge of the individual ātmā.
- Where is that happiness for one who has doubts about attaining the goal?

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- Out of many standard and authoritative revealed scriptures, the Bhagavad-gītā is the best. Persons who are almost like animals have no faith in, or knowledge of, the standard revealed scriptures; and some, even though they have knowledge of, or can cite passages from, the revealed scriptures, have actually no faith in these words.
- And even though others may have faith in scriptures like Bhagavad-gītā, they do not believe in or worship the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such persons cannot have any standing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- They fall down. Out of all the above-mentioned persons, those who have no faith and are always doubtful make no progress at all.
- Men without faith in God and His revealed word find no good in this world, nor in the next.

Points from Commentaries and Purports

SP

- For them there is no happiness whatsoever.
- One should therefore follow the principles of revealed scriptures with faith and thereby be raised to the platform of knowledge.
- Only this knowledge will help one become promoted to the transcendental platform of spiritual understanding.
- In other words, doubtful persons have no status whatsoever in spiritual emancipation.
- One should therefore follow in the footsteps of great ācāryas who are in the disciplic succession and thereby attain success.

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

|| 4.41 ||

**yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ
jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayam
ātmavantam na karmāṇi
nibadhnanti dhanañjaya**

Actions do not bind the person (**na karmāṇi nibadhnanti**) whose actions are transformed into jñāna through niṣkāma karma yoga (**yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ**), who has then cut all doubts through jñāna yoga (**jñāna-sañchinna-saṁśayam**), and who has then attained directly realization of the ātmā (**ātmavantam**).

Baladeva

- Such a person will attain the perfection of stopping all actions. Actions do not bind that person who has renounced all actions by yoga.
- This means that the actions have become jñāna, being executed without attachment, by niṣkāma karma yoga, expressed by words like yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi: perform your duty with composure, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. (BG 2.48)
- Actions do not bind the person who has vanquished all doubts by the knowledge spoken by Me and who is seeing the ātmā (ātmavantam).
- The actions do not bind because they have been destroyed by knowledge.

SVCT

- This verse concludes the topic. Cutting the doubts situated in the heart, taking shelter of niṣkāma-karma-yoga, rise up in order to fight the battle.
- Having spoken of the various means of liberation, jñāna is praised in this chapter. But the means to jñāna is karma.
- That has been pointed out in this chapter.
- Thus, the commentaries on the fourth chapter of the Gītā for the pleasure of the devotees' minds have been completed following after the ācāryas.

SP

- One who follows the instruction of the Bhagavad-gītā, as it is imparted by the Lord, the Personality of Godhead Himself, becomes free from all doubts by the grace of transcendental knowledge.
- He, as a part and parcel of the Lord, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is already established in self-knowledge.
- As such, he is undoubtedly above bondage to action

Section V (4.34 – 4.42) — Conclusion

॥ 4.42 ॥

**tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṃ
hṛt-sthaṃ jñānāsinātmanaḥ
chittvainaṃ saṁśayaṃ yogam
ātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata**

Therefore (**tasmād**), cutting all doubts (**chittvainaṃ saṁśayaṃ**) which have arisen from ignorance (**hṛt-sthaṃ ajñāna-sambhūtaṃ**) with the sword of knowledge (**jñāna asinā atmanaḥ**), taking shelter of niṣkāma karma yoga (**yogam**), rise, O Bhārata (**ātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata**).

Baladeva

- Cutting with the sword of knowledge taught by Me the doubt in the heart concerning the ātmā, perform niṣkāma karma as taught by Me (yogam).
- For that purpose, stand up.
- Karma or action has two parts like grain with husk.
- As the rice is superior to the husk, jñāna is superior to the gross part.
- That is the conclusion of the fourth chapter.

SVCT

- In such a state, a person will reach a state of no karma (naiṣkarmyam).
- Having renounced all actions by sannyāsa, after performance of niṣkāma-karma-yoga, and having eradicated all doubts through practice of jñāna, actions do not bind that person, who has attained realization of the soul.

Srila Prabhupada

The goal of sacrifice (part one)

- The yoga system instructed in this chapter is called sanātana-yoga, or eternal activities performed by the living entity.
- This yoga has two divisions of sacrificial actions: one is called sacrifice of one's material possessions, and the other is called knowledge of self, which is pure spiritual activity.
- If sacrifice of one's material possessions is not dovetailed for spiritual realization, then such sacrifice becomes material.
- But one who performs such sacrifices with a spiritual objective, or in devotional service, makes a perfect sacrifice.

The two levels of spiritual knowledge

- When we come to spiritual activities, we find that these are also divided into two: namely, understanding of one's own self (or one's constitutional position), and the truth regarding the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada

- For him there is no difficulty in obtaining perfect knowledge of the self as part and parcel of the Lord.
- And such understanding is beneficial, for such a person can easily understand the transcendental activities of the Lord.

Learning of the Lord's transcendental activities

- In the beginning of this chapter, the transcendental activities of the Lord were discussed by the Supreme Lord Himself.
- One who does not understand the instructions of the Gītā is faithless, and is to be considered to be misusing the fragmental independence awarded to him by the Lord.
- In spite of such instructions, one who does not understand the real nature of the Lord as the eternal, blissful, all-knowing Personality of Godhead is certainly fool number one.

Srila Prabhupada

The goal of sacrifice (part two)

- Ignorance can be removed by gradual acceptance of the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness is awakened by different types of sacrifices to the demigods, sacrifice to Brahman, sacrifice in celibacy, in household life, in controlling the senses, in practicing mystic yoga, in penance, in forgoing material possessions, in studying the Vedas, and in partaking of the social institution called varṇāśrama-dharma.
- All of these are known as sacrifice, and all of them are based on regulated action.
- But within all these activities, the important factor is self-realization.
- One who seeks that objective is the real student of Bhagavad-gītā, but one who doubts the authority of Kṛṣṇa falls back.

Srila Prabhupada

Properly learning transcendental knowledge

- One is therefore advised to study Bhagavad-gītā, or any other scripture, under a bona fide spiritual master, with service and surrender.
- A bona fide spiritual master is in the disciplic succession from time eternal, and he does not deviate at all from the instructions of the Supreme Lord as they were imparted millions of years ago to the sun-god, from whom the instructions of Bhagavad-gītā have come down to the earthly kingdom.
- One should, therefore, follow the path of Bhagavad-gītā as it is expressed in the Gītā itself and beware of self-interested people after personal aggrandizement who deviate others from the actual path.
- The Lord is definitely the supreme person, and His activities are transcendental.
- One who understands this is a liberated person from the very beginning of his study of Bhagavad-gītā.