

# Bhagavad Gita

## Chapter 17

### The Divisions of Faith

### Sraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga

# Section – I

The Modes Determine  
one's Faith and Worship  
(1-7)

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

|| 17.1 ||

arjuna uvāca

ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya  
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ  
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa  
sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇa**), what is the position of those (**teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā**) who give up the rules of scripture (**ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya**) but act without desire for sense enjoyment (**yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ**). Is this sattva, rajas or tamas (**sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ**)?

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa (**kṛṣṇa**), what is the position of those (**teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā**) who give up the rules of scripture (**ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya**) but worship with faith (**yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ**). Is this a sattva, or rajas and tamas condition (**sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ**)?

## SVCT

- In the seventeenth chapter according to the questions of Arjuna, the Lord gives a description of the sattvic, rajasic and tamasic things.
- “After describing the asuric persons, You concluded by saying that, giving up the injunctions of scripture, they do as they like and do not attain happiness in this life or the next. I have a question about this.”
- Thus Arjuna speaks this verse.

## SVCT

- You have spoken of those who give up scriptural authority and act out of personal desire (kāma-kāratāḥ).
- But what is the foundation (niṣṭhā) of those who give up the rules of scripture, and according to their inclination perform worship, such as tapa-yajña, jñāna-yajña or japa-yajña, but with faith, without desire to enjoy as they like (śraddhayānvitāḥ)?
- Is it sattva, rajas or tamas?
- Please tell me that.
- Āho is an interrogative particle.

## Baladeva

- Responding to the questions of Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa explains various items in sattva, rajas and tamas in the seventeenth chapter.
- Those who study the Vedas, and with faith in the scriptures, undertake activities according to its rules are called devas.
- Those who ignore the Vedas, and act as they please, without following Vedic rules, are called demons or asuras.
- You have said this in the previous chapter.
- Now this is my question.

## Baladeva

- Those who, having read and understood the Vedas which are difficult to understand, give up the rules out of laziness or other reasons, and worship the devas and others with faith born of local custom, are in what position?
- Are they considered among the godly and demonic types previously defined, by ignoring scripture but having faith (and worship)?
- Have they taken shelter of sattva, rajas or tamas?
- The word aho is placed in the middle to indicate the two choices: is it sattva, or is it rajas and tamas?

## Srila Prabhupada

- In the Fourth Chapter, thirty-ninth verse, it is said that a person faithful to a particular type of worship gradually becomes elevated to the stage of knowledge and attains the highest perfectional stage of peace and prosperity.
- In the Sixteenth Chapter, it is concluded that one who does not follow the principles laid down in the scriptures is called an asura, demon, and one who follows the scriptural injunctions faithfully is called a deva, or demigod.
- Now, if one, with faith, follows some rules which are not mentioned in the scriptural injunctions, what is his position?
- This doubt of Arjuna's is to be cleared by Kṛṣṇa.



## Srila Prabhupada

- Are those who create some sort of God by selecting a human being and placing their faith in him worshiping in goodness, passion or ignorance?
- Do such persons attain the perfectional stage of life?
- Is it possible for them to be situated in real knowledge and elevate themselves to the highest perfectional stage?
- Do those who do not follow the rules and regulations of the scriptures but who have faith in something and worship gods and demigods and men attain success in their effort?
- Arjuna is putting these questions to Kṛṣṇa.

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

|| 17.2 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā  
dehinām sā svabhāva-jā  
sāttvikī rājasī caiva  
tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu

The Lord said: The faith of embodied beings (**dehinām śraddhā**) is of three types (**tri-vidhā bhavati**), arising from their previous impressions (**sā svabhāva-jā**). It is made of sattva, rajas or tamas (**sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ca iti**). Hear about it (**tām śṛṇu**).

## SVCT

- O Arjuna, first hear from Me the situation of those who worship without giving up the rules of scripture.
- After that I will speak to you about the condition of those who give up the rules of scripture.
- Hear about the three types of faith which arise from svabhāva—particular impressions from previous experiences.

## Baladeva

- Being asked, the Lord begins to speak.
- That faith by which one worships the devas and other beings while giving up rules of scripture because of laziness or difficulties, should be understood to arise from virtuous and sinful impressions from previous lives (svabhāva jā).
- That faith is of three types, arising from states of sattva, rajas and tamas, for the beginningless, unrelenting births of embodied souls in beginningless contact with the three guṇas of prakṛti.

## Baladeva

- They do not have the spiritual intelligence arising from scripture taught by the devotees which will allow them to change those impressions (svabhāva).
- Therefore the three types of faith which arise from those impressions appear.
- Faith born from the scriptures is different.
- It brings about performance of actions only according to the scriptural directions (not because of impressions of the three guṇas).

## Srila Prabhupada

- Those who know the rules and regulations of the scriptures but out of laziness or indolence give up following these rules and regulations are governed by the modes of material nature.
- According to their previous activities in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance, they acquire a nature which is of a specific quality.
- The association of the living entity with the different modes of nature has been going on perpetually; since the living entity is in contact with material nature, he acquires different types of mentality according to his association with the material modes.

## Srila Prabhupada

- But this nature can be changed if one associates with a bona fide spiritual master and abides by his rules and the scriptures.
- Gradually, one can change his position from ignorance to goodness, or from passion to goodness.
- The conclusion is that blind faith in a particular mode of nature cannot help a person become elevated to the perfectional stage.
- One has to consider things carefully, with intelligence, in the association of a bona fide spiritual master.
- Thus one can change his position to a higher mode of nature.

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

|| 17.3 ||

sattvānurūpā sarvasya  
śraddhā bhavati bhārata  
śraddhā-mayo 'yaṁ puruṣo  
yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ

This faith corresponds to the nature of the internal organ (**sattva anurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati**), O descendent of Bharata (**bhārata**). Man is made of his faith (**śraddhā-mayo ayaṁ puruṣaḥ**). He becomes similar to whatever form he worships with faith (**yo yat-śraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ**).



## SVCT

- Sattvam here means the heart or internal sense organ (antaḥkaraṇa).
- There are three types of antaḥkaraṇa: in the mode of sattva, rajas and tamas.
- Accordingly, those who have sattvic antaḥkaraṇa have sattvic faith.
- Those with rajasic antaḥkaraṇa have rajasic faith, and those with tamasic antaḥkaraṇa have tamasic faith.
- He becomes similar to whatever he faithfully worships—deva, asura or Rākṣasa (yac śraddhaḥ).

## Baladeva

- Though faith itself is a function of sattva guṇa, it becomes three types of faith for the embodied soul possessing an internal organ whose very nature is to hold the impressions (svabhāva).
- [Note: The internal organ or antaḥkaraṇa refers to the subtle internal organ consisting of the mind, intelligence, false ego and memory (citta).]
- The internal organ (sattvam) is composed of three guṇas, and corresponding to that, the faith of all living entities appears.
- The faith of the internal organ predominated by sattva guṇa is sattvic.

## Baladeva

- The internal organ predominated by raja guṇa is rajasic.
- The internal organ predominated by tama guṇa is tamasic.
- The ordinary person (ayam puruṣaḥ), a worshipper who has an object of worship, endowed with one of three types of faith (śraddhamayaḥ), will be faithful to one of three respective types of object—devas, yaksas or preṭas (yat śraddhaḥ).
- That worshipper (sa) becomes endowed with the qualities of the deity worshipped (sa eva).

# Srila Prabhupada

- Everyone has a particular type of faith, regardless of what he is.
- But his faith is considered good, passionate or ignorant according to the nature he has acquired.
- Thus, according to his particular type of faith, one associates with certain persons.
- Now the real fact is that every living being, as is stated in the Fifteenth Chapter, is originally a fragmental part and parcel of the Supreme Lord.
- Therefore one is originally transcendental to all the modes of material nature.

## Srila Prabhupada

- But when one forgets his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and comes into contact with the material nature in conditional life, he generates his own position by association with the different varieties of material nature.
- The resultant artificial faith and existence are only material.
- Although one may be conducted by some impression, or some conception of life, originally he is nirguṇa, or transcendental.
- Therefore one has to become cleansed of the material contamination that he has acquired, in order to regain his relationship with the Supreme Lord.

# Srila Prabhupada

- That is the only path back without fear: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- If one is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then that path is guaranteed for his elevation to the perfectional stage.
- If one does not take to this path of self-realization, then he is surely to be conducted by the influence of the modes of nature.
- The word śraddhā, or "faith," is very significant in this verse.
- Śraddhā, or faith, originally comes out of the mode of goodness.
- One's faith may be in a demigod or some created God or some mental concoction.

## Srila Prabhupada

- One's strong faith is supposed to be productive of works of material goodness.
- But in material conditional life, no works are completely purified. They are mixed.
- They are not in pure goodness. Pure goodness is transcendental; in purified goodness one can understand the real nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- As long as one's faith is not completely in purified goodness, the faith is subject to contamination by any of the modes of material nature.
- The contaminated modes of material nature expand to the heart.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore according to the position of the heart in contact with a particular mode of material nature, one's faith is established.
- It should be understood that if one's heart is in the mode of goodness his faith is also in the mode of goodness.
- If his heart is in the mode of passion, his faith is also in the mode of passion.
- And if his heart is in the mode of darkness, illusion, his faith is also thus contaminated.
- Thus we find different types of faith in this world, and there are different types of religions due to different types of faith.



## Srila Prabhupada

- The real principle of religious faith is situated in the mode of pure goodness, but because the heart is tainted we find different types of religious principles.
- Thus according to different types of faith, there are different kinds of worship.

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

|| 17.4 ||

yajante sāt̥tvikā devān  
yakṣa-rakṣāmsi rājasāḥ  
pretān bhūta-gaṇāms̥ cānye  
yajante tāmasā janāḥ

Those with sattvic nature worship the devas (**yajante sāt̥tvikā devān**). Those with rajasic nature worship the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas (**yakṣa-rakṣāmsi rājasāḥ**). Those with tamasic nature worship the Pretas and Bhūtas (**pretān bhūta-gaṇāms̥ ca anye yajante tāmasā janāḥ**).

## SVCT

- The Lord clarifies what He has said.
- Those with sattvic antaḥkaraṇa, with sattvic faith, with rules of sattvic scripture, worship devatās.
- Because of having faith in those devatās, they are said to be deva.
- In the same way, those with rajasic and tamasic antaḥkaraṇas take up such faith, and worship Rākṣasas and Bhūtas or Pretas, and are said to be Rākṣasas and Bhūtas.
- [Note: According to Baladeva, the Pretas are the spirits of those who have fallen from caste duties, or else a type of Piśāca. The Bhūtas are according to some, the seven mothers, or the followers of Śiva.]

## Baladeva

- The results of worshipping with the different faiths are described in this verse.
- Those persons who with faith born of their previous impressions worship sattvika devas such as Vasu and Rudra without the discrimination of scripture are called sāt̥tvika.
- Those who worship ṛajasic entities such as Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Kuvera and Nairṛti are in the mode of passion.
- Those who worship tamasic entities such as pretas and bhūtas are in the mode of ignorance.
- The pretas are fallen brāhmaṇas who attain an airy body after death in the form of ulāmukhas, kaṭas or pūtanas, according to Manu.

## Baladeva

- The pretas are a type of piśaca (evil spirit) according to others. Ca indicates the seven mothers [Note: These are said to be Brahmānī, Vaiṣṇavī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇi and Camuṇḍī] and other entities.
- [Note: The bhūta gaṇas are not explained. According to some commentators they are the followers of Śiva.]
- Thus the three types of faith arising from the differing natures due to previous impressions, without following the rules of scripture because of laziness, have been described.
- It should be understood that by conquering over their natures by association with persons following Vedic principles, these persons sometimes come under the authority of the Vedas.

## Srila Prabhupada

- In this verse the Supreme Personality of Godhead describes different kinds of worshipers according to their external activities.
- According to scriptural injunction, only the Supreme Personality of Godhead is worshipable, but those who are not very conversant with, or faithful to, the scriptural injunctions worship different objects, according to their specific situations in the modes of material nature.
- Those who are situated in goodness generally worship the demigods.
- The demigods include Brahmā, Śiva and others such as Indra, Candra and the sun-god. There are various demigods.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Those in goodness worship a particular demigod for a particular purpose.
- Similarly, those who are in the mode of passion worship the demons.
- We recall that during the Second World War a man in Calcutta worshiped Hitler because thanks to that war he had amassed a large amount of wealth by dealing in the black market.
- Similarly, those in the modes of passion and ignorance generally select a powerful man to be God.
- They think that anyone can be worshiped as God and that the same results will be obtained.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Now, it is clearly described here that those who are in the mode of passion worship and create such gods, and those who are in the mode of ignorance, in darkness, worship dead spirits.
- Sometimes people worship at the tomb of some dead man. Sexual service is also considered to be in the mode of darkness.
- Similarly, in remote villages in India there are worshipers of ghosts. We have seen that in India the lower-class people sometimes go to the forest, and if they have knowledge that a ghost lives in a tree, they worship that tree and offer sacrifices.
- These different kinds of worship are not actually God worship.



## Srila Prabhupada

- God worship is for persons who are transcendently situated in pure goodness.
- In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.3.23) it is said, sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam: "When a man is situated in pure goodness, he worships Vāsudeva."
- The purport is that those who are completely purified of the material modes of nature and who are transcendently situated can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- The impersonalists are supposed to be situated in the mode of goodness, and they worship five kinds of demigods.
- They worship the impersonal Viṣṇu form in the material world, which is known as philosophized Viṣṇu.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Viṣṇu is the expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but the impersonalists, because they do not ultimately believe in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, imagine that the Viṣṇu form is just another aspect of the impersonal Brahman; similarly, they imagine that Lord Brahmā is the impersonal form in the material mode of passion.
- Thus they sometimes describe five kinds of gods that are worshipable, but because they think that the actual truth is impersonal Brahman, they dispose of all worshipable objects at the ultimate end.
- In conclusion, the different qualities of the material modes of nature can be purified through association with persons who are of transcendental nature.

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

॥ 17.5-6 ॥

aśāstra-vihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ  
dambhāhaṅkāra-samyuktāḥ kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ

karṣayantaḥ śarīra-stham bhūta-grāmam acetasaḥ  
mām caivāntaḥ śarīra-stham tān viddhy āsura-niścayān

Know that those people are demonic in nature (**tān viddhy āsura-niścayān**) who, out of ostentation and pride (**dambha ahaṅkāra-samyuktāḥ**), filled with attachment, lust and strength to endure (**kāma-rāga-balānvitāḥ**), having no discrimination (**acetasaḥ**), undergo extreme austerities (**ghoram tapah tapyante**) not prescribed in the scriptures (**aśāstra-vihitam**), and afflict the elements in the body (**karṣayantaḥ śarīra-stham bhūta-grāmam**) and Me residing in the body (**mām ca eva antaḥ śarīra-stham**).

## SVCT

- “You asked the question ‘What is the position of those who, giving up the rules of scripture but with faith, and not simply enjoying as much as possible, perform worship?’ Now hear the answer.” The Lord answers in two verses.
- They perform austerities which are harmful to living entities (ghoram).
- The mention of austerities is representative of other acts such as japa and sacrifice as well.
- They perform all these acts against the rules of scriptures.
- The absence of whimsical enjoyment and endowment of faith (sraddhānvitāḥ) are understood in this context.

## SVCT

- But they are endowed with ostentation (dambhaḥ) and pride (ahaṅkāraḥ) because without those two, they could not transgress the rules of scripture.
- They also have desire for eternal youth, eternal life, kingdom and such things (kāma), attachment to their particular austerity (rāga), and ability to perform the austerity (bala), like that Hiraṇyakaśipu and others.
- Endowed with these qualities, they starve or cause suffering (karṣyantaḥ) to all elements such as earth (bhūtā-gramam), to Me (mām) and to My aṁśa the jīva, situated in their bodies.
- Know these people to be also situated on the level of asuras.

## Baladeva

- In the previous chapter the Lord said that those who do not follow Vedic authority are never freed from lower births. This is confirmed now in two verses.
- Endowed with obstinacy (balam), given by Me alone to let them accomplish their deeds, and endowed with desires for sense objects (kāma raga), they perform terrible austerities, giving pain to others, according to their own scriptures, which are contrary to the Vedas (aśāstra vihitam), and make the combination of elements (bhūta gramam) which are basic components of the body (śarīram satham) wither away (karṣayantaḥ), by means of such things as useless fasting, and they also make Me wither away, by offending Me, who am situated within their bodies (antaḥ śarīram satham).

## Baladeva

- They are devoid of discriminating scriptural knowledge (acetasaḥ).
- Know for certain that these person are demonic (āsurā niścayān), who do not follow the injunctions of the Vedas. It is understood that they cannot avoid the unfortunate destinations described in the last chapter.
- Those who worship the yakṣas, rakṣas, and pretas with faith arising from their natures, by the very strong mercy of followers of Vedic principles, can have their demonic natures destroyed, by developing faith in the scriptures.
- [Note: Those with rajasic and tamasic natures and faith would be more likely to indulge in the activities mentioned in the verse. Then they would be classed as asura.]

## Baladeva

- But it is accepted that those who worship the devas, by attaining the mercy of those fixed in Vedic principles, very easily begin to follow the rules of scripture, because of being situated in sattva.
- [Note: They would not indulge in the practices mentioned in this verse because of their sattvika nature.]



## Srila Prabhupada

- There are persons who manufacture modes of austerity and penance which are not mentioned in the scriptural injunctions.
- For instance, fasting for some ulterior purpose, such as to promote a purely political end, is not mentioned in the scriptural directions. The scriptures recommend fasting for spiritual advancement, not for some political end or social purpose.
- Persons who take to such austerities are, according to Bhagavad-gītā, certainly demoniac.
- Their acts are against the scriptural injunctions and are not beneficial for the people in general. Actually, they act out of pride, false ego, lust and attachment for material enjoyment.

## Srila Prabhupada

- By such activities, not only is the combination of material elements of which the body is constructed disturbed, but also the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself living within the body.
- Such unauthorized fasting or austerities for some political end are certainly very disturbing to others. They are not mentioned in the Vedic literature.
- A demoniac person may think that he can force his enemy or other parties to comply with his desire by this method, but sometimes one dies by such fasting.
- These acts are not approved by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He says that those who engage in them are demons.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Such demonstrations are insults to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because they are enacted in disobedience to the Vedic scriptural injunctions.
- The word acetasaḥ is significant in this connection. Persons of normal mental condition must obey the scriptural injunctions.
- Those who are not in such a position neglect and disobey the scriptures and manufacture their own way of austerities and penances.
- One should always remember the ultimate end of the demoniac people, as described in the previous chapter. The Lord forces them to take birth in the wombs of demoniac persons.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Consequently they will live by demoniac principles life after life without knowing their relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- If, however, such persons are fortunate enough to be guided by a spiritual master who can direct them to the path of Vedic wisdom, they can get out of this entanglement and ultimately achieve the supreme goal.

## Section-I The Modes Determine one's Faith and Worship (1-7)

|| 17.7 ||

āhāras tv api sarvasya  
tri-vidho bhavati priyaḥ  
yajñas tapas tathā dānam  
teṣām bhedaṃ imaṃ śṛṇu

The food the people enjoy (āhāras tv api sarvasya priyaḥ), their sacrifice, austerity and charity (yajñas tapas tathā dānam) have three divisions also (tri-vidho bhavati). Please hear about these (teṣām bhedaṃ imaṃ śṛṇu).

## SVCT

- I have described in the previous chapter those who give up scriptural rules and do things according to their desire, and in this chapter I have described those who, according the asuras' scriptures, worship Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Pretas and other beings (verses 4); and I have also described those who perform austerities and other acts (which appear religious) with no scripture at all (verses 5 and 6).
- These all end up as asuric beings.
- Please consider and understand, in like manner, as much as possible, the categories of deva and asura assumed by foods and other things to be described according to division of the three guṇas. Thirteen verses describe these items.

## Srila Prabhupada

- In terms of different situations in the modes of material nature, there are differences in the manner of eating and performing sacrifices, austerities and charities. They are not all conducted on the same level.
- Those who can understand analytically what kind of performances are in what modes of material nature are actually wise; those who consider all kinds of sacrifice or food or charity to be the same cannot discriminate, and they are foolish.
- There are missionary workers who advocate that one can do whatever he likes and attain perfection.
- But these foolish guides are not acting according to the direction of the scripture.
- They are manufacturing ways and misleading the people in general.

# Section – II

## Foods in the Three Modes (8-10)



## Section-II Foods in the Three Modes (8-10)

|| 17.8 ||

āyuh-sattva-balārogya-  
sukha-prīti-vivardhanāḥ  
rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā hṛdyā  
āhārāḥ sāttvika-priyāḥ

Foods (**āhārāḥ**) which prolong (**vivardhanāḥ**) life span, increase will, strength, immunity to disease (**āyuh-sattva-bala-ārogya**), happiness and appetite (**sukha-prīti**), and are tasty, mild, substantial, and beneficial (**rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā hṛdyā**) are dear to those in sattva guṇa (**sāttvika-priyāḥ**).

## SVCT

- It is well known that sattvic foods increase the life span (āyuh).
- They also increase strength of will (sattva) as well as physical strength, freedom from disease, happiness and delightfulness in eating them. The food should be tasty or juicy (rasyāḥ).
- Jaggery has taste but is coarse or dry. Sattvic food should thus be mild, with oil (snigdhā).
- The foam of milk, though tasty and mild, is insubstantial. Sattvic food should be substantial, with long lasting effect in the body (sthirā).
- Jack fruit and other items are sweet, mild, and substantial, but are not beneficial to the stomach and other organs.

## SVCT

- Sattvic food should thus also be beneficial to the heart, stomach and other organs (hr̥dyā) as well.
- Thus it is understood that foods such as rice, wheat, other grains, milk and sugar are dear to the sattvic people, because they have all four of the above mentioned qualities.
- As those foods are dear to them, the foods are understood to be sattvic.
- However, even if food has those four qualities, if it is impure, the sattvic people do not like it. Thus, purity should be added as a quality of sattvic food.
- One should compare the description of tamasic food mentioned later. The adjective used to describe tamasic food is amedhya, ritually impure, not to be offered in sacrifice.

## Srila Prabhupada

- The purpose of food is to increase the duration of life, purify the mind and aid bodily strength.
- This is its only purpose. In the past, great authorities selected those foods that best aid health and increase life's duration, such as milk products, sugar, rice, wheat, fruits and vegetables.
- These foods are very dear to those in the mode of goodness.
- Some other foods, such as baked corn and molasses, while not very palatable in themselves, can be made pleasant when mixed with milk or other foods.

## Srila Prabhupada

- They are then in the mode of goodness. All these foods are pure by nature.
- They are quite distinct from untouchable things like meat and liquor.
- Fatty foods, as mentioned in the eighth verse, have no connection with animal fat obtained by slaughter.
- Animal fat is available in the form of milk, which is the most wonderful of all foods.
- Milk, butter, cheese and similar products give animal fat in a form which rules out any need for the killing of innocent creatures.

## Srila Prabhupada

- It is only through brute mentality that this killing goes on.
- The civilized method of obtaining needed fat is by milk.
- Slaughter is the way of subhumans. Protein is amply available through split peas, dāl, whole wheat, etc.
- Foods in the mode of passion, which are bitter, too salty, or too hot or overly mixed with red pepper, cause misery by reducing the mucus in the stomach, leading to disease.
- Foods in the mode of ignorance or darkness are essentially those that are not fresh.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Any food cooked more than three hours before it is eaten (except prasādam, food offered to the Lord) is considered to be in the mode of darkness.
- Because they are decomposing, such foods give a bad odor, which often attracts people in this mode but repulses those in the mode of goodness.
- Remnants of food may be eaten only when they are part of a meal that was first offered to the Supreme Lord or first eaten by saintly persons, especially the spiritual master.
- Otherwise the remnants of food are considered to be in the mode of darkness, and they increase infection or disease.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Such foodstuffs, although very palatable to persons in the mode of darkness, are neither liked nor even touched by those in the mode of goodness.
- The best food is the remnants of what is offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- In Bhagavad-gītā the Supreme Lord says that He accepts preparations of vegetables, flour and milk when offered with devotion.
- Patram puṣpam phalam toyam. Of course, devotion and love are the chief things which the Supreme Personality of Godhead accepts.



## Srila Prabhupada

- But it is also mentioned that the prasādam should be prepared in a particular way.
- Any food prepared by the injunctions of the scripture and offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead can be taken even if prepared long, long ago, because such food is transcendental.
- Therefore to make food antiseptic, eatable and palatable for all persons, one should offer food to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

## Section-II Foods in the Three Modes (8-10)

|| 17.9 ||

kaṭv-amlā-lavaṇāty-uṣṇa-  
tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ  
āhārā rājasasyeṣṭā  
duḥkha-śokāmaya-pradāḥ

Foods (**āhārā**) that are excessively bitter, sour, salty, hot (**kaṭv-amlā-lavaṇa-aty-uṣṇa**), pungent, dry and burning (**tīkṣṇa-rūkṣa-vidāhinaḥ**), and which produce pain while eating, sorrow afterwards and finally disease (**duḥkha-śoka-āmaya-pradāḥ**), are dear to the rajasic person (**rājasasya iṣṭā**).

## SVCT

- In this list the adjective “extremely” should be added to each quality. Very bitter food (kaṭu) means such food as nīma.
- Very sour, very salty and very hot foods are well known.
- Very sharp foods (tīkṣṇa) are turmeric root and other items, or pepper.
- Very drying foods (rūkṣa) are hing and kodrava.
- Burning foods (vidāhinaḥ) are those that cause internal heat, such as burned chick peas.

## SVCT

- These cause suffering (duḥkha), lamentation (śoka), and disease (āmayam).
- The word “suffering” here refers to suffering when eating, causing pain to the tongue, throat or other organ.
- “Lamentation” means afterward, in the future, those foods cause despair. Āmaya means disease.

## Section-II Foods in the Three Modes (8-10)

|| 17.10 ||

yāta-yāmaṃ gata-rasaṃ  
pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat  
ucchiṣṭam api cāmedhyaṃ  
bhojanaṃ tāmasa-priyam

Stale food, food without taste (**yāta-yāmaṃ gata-rasaṃ**), bad-smelling or rotten food (**pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat**), leftovers from others, and impure foods (**ucchiṣṭam api ca amedhyaṃ**) are dear to the tamasic person (**bhojanaṃ tāmasa-priyam**).

## SVCT

- Yāta yāmam means food which has remained three hours (yāmam) after cooking, or in other words, that which has become cold after cooking.
- Gata-rasam means food from which the natural taste is missing, or has been extracted, or such items as the skin and seed of the ripe mango.
- Puti means bad smelling.
- Paryuṣitam means over-ripe.
- Ucchiṣṭam refers to the leftovers other than that from the guru or other similar persons.

## SVCT

- Amedyam means inedible items such as kalañja.
- From reviewing the list of foods, one should conclude that those interested in their own welfare should partake of sattvic foods.
- The Vaiṣṇavas however reject any food not offered to the Lord, even if it is sattvic food.
- Food offered to the Lord is dear to the devotees who are beyond the guṇas. This is understood from the Bhāgavatam.

# Section – III

## Sacrifices in the Three Modes (11-13)



## Section-III Sacrifices in the Three Modes (11-13)

|| 17.11 ||

aphalākāṅkṣibhir yajño  
vidhi-dṛṣṭo ya ijjate  
yaṣṭavyam eveti manaḥ  
samādhāya sa sātṭvikaḥ

That sacrifice which is performed according to scripture (**vidhi-dṛṣṭo ya ijjate yajñah**), without desire for material results (**aphalākāṅkṣibhir**), with the mentality that it should be performed because of scriptural injunction (**yaṣṭavyam eva iti manaḥ samādhāya**), is sattvic (**sa sātṭvikaḥ**).

## SVCT

- With this verse the Lord begins to speak of the three types of sacrifice.
- That is sattvic sacrifice which is performed according to the rules, with no desire for results.
- What would be the impetus for sacrifice if there were no desire for results?
- The mind is fixed in performing the sacrifice with the idea that it should be done because the scriptures prescribe it thus (yaṣṭavyam eva iti).

## Srila Prabhupada

- The general tendency is to offer sacrifice with some purpose in mind, but here it is stated that sacrifice should be performed without any such desire.
- It should be done as a matter of duty. Take, for example, the performance of rituals in temples or in churches.
- Generally they are performed with the purpose of material benefit, but that is not in the mode of goodness.
- One should go to a temple or church as a matter of duty, offer respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and offer flowers and eatables without any purpose of obtaining material benefit.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Everyone thinks that there is no use in going to the temple just to worship God.
- But worship for economic benefit is not recommended in the scriptural injunctions.
- One should go simply to offer respect to the Deity.
- That will place one in the mode of goodness.
- It is the duty of every civilized man to obey the injunctions of the scriptures and offer respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

## Section-III Sacrifices in the Three Modes (11-13)

|| 17.12 ||

abhisandhāya tu phalam  
dambhārtham api caiva yat  
ijyate bharata-śreṣṭha  
tam yajñam viddhi rājasam

Know that (**viddhi**) the sacrifice performed with intention of enjoying the result (**phalam abhisandhāya ijyate yajñam**), or for ostentation (**dambha artham api ca eva yat**), is rajasic (**tam rājasam**), O best of Bharata's lineage (**bharata-śreṣṭha**).

## Baladeva

- Know that sacrifice performed with the intention of gaining svarga or other results, or for purposes of showing ones greatness (dambha artham) is sacrifice in the mode of passion.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Sometimes sacrifices and rituals are performed for elevation to the heavenly kingdom or for some material benefits in this world.
- Such sacrifices or ritualistic performances are considered to be in the mode of passion.

## Section-III Sacrifices in the Three Modes (11-13)

|| 17.13 ||

vidhi-hīnam asṛṣṭānnaṁ  
mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam  
śraddhā-virahitaṁ yajñaṁ  
tāmasaṁ paricakṣate

They say that the sacrifice (**yajñaṁ**) which is contrary to scripture (**vidhi-hīnam**), with no food given in charity (**asṛṣṭānnaṁ**), without proper mantras (**mantra-hīnam**), in which the priests are not paid (**adakṣiṇam**), and which is performed without faith (**śraddhā-virahitaṁ**), is tamasic (**tāmasaṁ paricakṣate**).

## Baladeva

- Sacrifice without food distribution (asṛṣṭa annam), in which the mantras are lacking in pitch or syllables, and which is without faith since there is animosity towards the priest (śraddhā virahitam), is known as sacrifice in the mode of ignorance.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Faith in the mode of darkness or ignorance is actually faithlessness.
- Sometimes people worship some demigod just to make money and then spend the money for recreation, ignoring the scriptural injunctions. Such ceremonial shows of religiosity are not accepted as genuine. They are all in the mode of darkness; they produce a demoniac mentality and do not benefit human society.



# Section – IV

## *Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)*

## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.14 ||

deva-dvija-guru-prājña-  
pūjanam śaucam ārjavam  
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca  
śārīram tapa ucyate

Sattvic austerity of the body consists (**śārīram tapa ucyate**) of worship of devas, brāhmaṇas, guru and the wise (**deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjanam**), as well as purity, sincerity (**śaucam ārjavam**), celibacy and non-violence (**brahmacaryam ahimsā ca**).

## Srila Prabhupada

- The Supreme Godhead here explains the different kinds of austerity and penance.
- First He explains the austerities and penances practiced by the body.
- One should offer, or learn to offer, respect to God or to the demigods, the perfect, qualified brāhmaṇas and the spiritual master and superiors like father, mother or any person who is conversant with Vedic knowledge.
- These should be given proper respect.
- One should practice cleansing oneself externally and internally, and he should learn to become simple in behavior.

## Srila Prabhupada

- He should not do anything which is not sanctioned by the scriptural injunctions.
- He should not indulge in sex outside of married life, for sex is sanctioned in the scripture only in marriage, not otherwise. This is called celibacy.
- These are penances and austerities as far as the body is concerned.

## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.15 ||

anudvega-karam vākyam  
satyam priya-hitam ca yat  
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva  
vāñ-mayam tapa ucyate

Speech which does not disturb others (**anudvega-karam vākyam**), which is true, agreeable and beneficial (**satyam priya-hitam ca yat**), and as well, the recitation of the Vedas (**svādhyāya abhyasanam caiva**), is sattvic austerity of speech (**vāñ-mayam tapa ucyate**).

## Baladeva

- The speech does not cause fear at all in anyone (anudvega karam).
- It is authoritative (satyam). It is pleasing to the hearer (priya), and at last beneficial for the hearer (hitam).
- Speech with these four qualities and as well recitation (abhyāsanam) of the Vedas (svādhyāya) is the austerity to be achieved by speech (vāñ mayam).

## Srila Prabhupada

- One should not speak in such a way as to agitate the minds of others.
- Of course, when a teacher speaks, he can speak the truth for the instruction of his students, but such a teacher should not speak to those who are not his students if he will agitate their minds.
- This is penance as far as talking is concerned.
- Besides that, one should not talk nonsense.
- The process of speaking in spiritual circles is to say something upheld by the scriptures. One should at once quote from scriptural authority to back up what he is saying.

## Srila Prabhupada

- At the same time, such talk should be very pleasurable to the ear.
- By such discussions, one may derive the highest benefit and elevate human society.
- There is a limitless stock of Vedic literature, and one should study this.
- This is called penance of speech.



## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.16 ||

**manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ  
maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ  
bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity etat  
tapo mānasam ucyate**

Sattvic austerity of the mind consists (**etat tapo mānasam ucyate**) of tranquility, gentleness (**manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ**), silence, control of the mind (**maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ**), and purity of the heart (**bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity**).

Austerity of the mind consists (**etat tapo mānasam ucyate**) of purity, gentleness (**manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ**), contemplation of ātmā, withdrawal from sense objects (**maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ**), and purity of the heart (**bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity**).

## Baladeva

- The mind should be pure, without agitation from remembrance of sense objects (manaḥ prasādaḥ).
- It should be without cruelty, desiring everyone's happiness (saumyatvam).
- It should be contemplating the ātmā (maunam).
- The mind should withdraw from sense objects (ātma vinigrahaḥ).
- It should be free from deceit in dealings with others (bhāva samśuddhiḥ).
- These are the austerities to be achieved by the mind.

## Srila Prabhupada

- To make the mind austere is to detach it from sense gratification.
- It should be so trained that it can be always thinking of doing good for others.
- The best training for the mind is gravity in thought.
- One should not deviate from Kṛṣṇa consciousness and must always avoid sense gratification.
- To purify one's nature is to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.
- Satisfaction of the mind can be obtained only by taking the mind away from thoughts of sense enjoyment.

## Srila Prabhupada

- The more we think of sense enjoyment, the more the mind becomes dissatisfied.
- In the present age we unnecessarily engage the mind in so many different ways for sense gratification, and so there is no possibility of the mind's becoming satisfied.
- The best course is to divert the mind to the Vedic literature, which is full of satisfying stories, as in the Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata.
- One can take advantage of this knowledge and thus become purified.

# Srila Prabhupada

- The mind should be devoid of duplicity, and one should think of the welfare of all.
- Silence means that one is always thinking of self-realization.
- The person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness observes perfect silence in this sense.
- Control of the mind means detaching the mind from sense enjoyment.
- One should be straightforward in his dealings and thereby purify his existence.
- All these qualities together constitute austerity in mental activities.

## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.17 ||

śraddhayā parayā taptam  
tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ  
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ  
sāttvikam paricakṣate

When these three types of austerity (**tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ**) are undertaken with full faith (**śraddhayā parayā taptam**), without longing for results (**aphalākāṅkṣibhir**), with concentrated mind (**yuktaiḥ**), they are said to be sāttvika (**sāttvikam paricakṣate**).

## Baladeva

- The austerities according to the three modes are now described in three verses.
- Austerity of three types (body, words and mind) performed (taptam) by men without desire for results, with concentrated consciousness (yuktaiḥ), with full faith, is said to be in the mode of goodness.

## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.18 ||

satkāra-māna-pūjārtham  
tapo dambhena caiva yat  
kriyate tad iha proktam  
rājasam calam adhruvam

Austerity (**tapah**) undertaken (**kriyate**) with the aim of getting verbal praise, bodily respect, and offerings from others (**yat satkāra-māna-pūjārtham**), and for show alone (**dambhena ca eva**), is said to be rajasic (**iha rājasam proktam**). It is temporary and uncertain (**calam adhruvam**).



## SVCT

- The austerity performed with ostentation, for the purpose of verbal respect by others who will say he is a great man, for the purpose of gaining bodily respect from others by having them stand up when he approaches, and for the purpose of gaining mental respect from others which will manifest in the future as gifts of money and other things, is rajasic austerity.
- Its results are very temporary (calam) if they appear at all, and it is uncertain (adhruvam) that they will appear.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Sometimes penance and austerity are executed to attract people and receive honor, respect and worship from others.
- Persons in the mode of passion arrange to be worshiped by subordinates and let them wash their feet and offer riches.
- Such arrangements artificially made by the performance of penances are considered to be in the mode of passion.
- The results are temporary; they can be continued for some time, but they are not permanent.

## Section-IV Austerity in the Three Modes (14-19)

|| 17.19 ||

mūḍha-grāheṇātmano yat  
pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ  
parasyotsādanārtham vā  
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam

Austerity performed out of blind attachment (**mūḍha-grāheṇa kriyate yat tapaḥ**), inflicting pain on oneself (**ātmano pīḍayā**), or for the purpose of harming or destroying others (**parasya utsādana artham vā**), is tamasic austerity (**tat tāmasam tapaḥ udāhṛtam**).

## Baladeva

- Muda grahena means the austerity is performed with stubborn attachment to material enjoyment because of no discernment.
- Austerity performed in that way, and with pain for the body and senses (ātmanaḥ), or with the intention of harming or destroying others (parasya utsādana artham), is austerity in the mode of ignorance.

## Srila Prabhupada

- There are instances of foolish penance undertaken by demons like Hiraṇyakaśipu, who performed austere penances to become immortal and kill the demigods.
- He prayed to Brahmā for such things, but ultimately he was killed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- To undergo penances for something which is impossible is certainly in the mode of ignorance.

# Section – V

## Charity in the Three Modes (20-22)

## Section-V Charity in the Three Modes (20-22)

|| 17.20 ||

dātavyam iti yad dānam  
dīyate 'nupakāriṇe  
deśe kāle ca pātre ca  
tad dānam sātṭvikam smṛtam

That charity performed with the conviction that it should be given (**dātavyam iti yad dānam**), and given to a proper person (**pātre ca dīyate**) who cannot repay (**anupakāriṇe**), at the proper place and time (**deśe kāle ca**), is known as sattvic charity (**tad dānam sātṭvikam smṛtam**).

## Baladeva

- Three types of charity are described.
- That charity which is given with conviction that it should be given (dātavyam) to a recipient (pātre) such as brāhmaṇa who can protect the giver with his knowledge and austerity, is charity in the mode of goodness.
- [Note: Scripture (Garuḍa Purāṇa) says that only a person who can protect the giver by learning and austerity should accept gifts.]
- Anupakāriṇe means to give to a person without expecting repayment or reimbursement. Proper place means at a holy place and proper time means auspicious times such as the time when the sun moves into a new zodiac sign.



## Srila Prabhupada

- In the Vedic literature, charity given to a person engaged in spiritual activities is recommended.
- There is no recommendation for giving charity indiscriminately.
- Spiritual perfection is always a consideration.
- Therefore charity is recommended to be given at a place of pilgrimage and at lunar or solar eclipses or at the end of the month or to a qualified brāhmaṇa or a Vaiṣṇava (devotee) or in temples.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Such charities should be given without any consideration of return.
- Charity to the poor is sometimes given out of compassion, but if a poor man is not worth giving charity to, then there is no spiritual advancement.
- In other words, indiscriminate charity is not recommended in the Vedic literature.

## Section-V Charity in the Three Modes (20-22)

|| 17.21 ||

yat tu pratyupakārārtham  
phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ  
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam  
tad dānam rājasam smṛtam

That gift given with expectation of reciprocation (**yat tu pratyupakārārtham dīyate**), or with desire for results in next life (**phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ**), or given unwillingly (**parikliṣṭam**), is said to be rajasika (**tad dānam rājasam smṛtam**).

## Baladeva

- The gift which is given with the aim of future attainment of svarga (phalam vā), or with the aim of some gift in return in the present life (praty upakārārtham), is charity in the mode of passion.
- Giving reluctantly (parikliṣṭam) means that one laments that one has to spend an amount that later will put one into difficulty, or that one gives only because of the order of guru.

# Srila Prabhupada

- Charity is sometimes performed for elevation to the heavenly kingdom and sometimes with great trouble and with repentance afterwards: "Why have I spent so much in this way?"
- Charity is also sometimes given under some obligation, at the request of a superior.
- These kinds of charity are said to be given in the mode of passion.
- There are many charitable foundations which offer their gifts to institutions where sense gratification goes on.
- Such charities are not recommended in the Vedic scripture. Only charity in the mode of goodness is recommended.

## Section-V Charity in the Three Modes (20-22)

|| 17.22 ||

adeśa-kāle yad dānam  
apātrebhyaś ca dīyate  
asat-kṛtam avajñātaṁ  
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam

Charity given with disregard of etiquette and with discourtesy (**asat-kṛtam avajñātaṁ dīyate yad dānam**), to an undeserving person (**apātrebhyaś ca**) at the wrong place and time (**adeśa-kāle**), is said to be tamasic charity (**tat tāmasam udāhṛtam**).

## Baladeva

- Charity given at an unclean place (adeśa), at an inauspicious time (akāle), to undeserving people, such as actors, and, even if time and place are proper, given with lack of proper respect (asat kṛtam) to the recipient (such as not washing the feet), and with disregard (avajñātam), in the form of using low forms of address in speaking to the person, is charity in the mode of ignorance.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Contributions for indulgence in intoxication and gambling are not encouraged here. That sort of contribution is in the mode of ignorance.
- Such charity is not beneficial; rather, sinful persons are encouraged.
- Similarly, if a person gives charity to a suitable person but without respect and without attention, that sort of charity is also said to be in the mode of darkness.

# Section – VI

The Conclusion: Om Tat  
Sat (23-28)



## Section-VI The Conclusion: Om Tat Sat (23-28)

॥ 17.23-24 ॥

om̐ tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ  
brāhmaṇās tena vedās ca yajñās ca vihitāḥ purā

tasmād om̐ ity udāhṛtya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ  
pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satataṁ brahma-vādinām

The three words om̐ tat sat (om̐ tat sad iti nirdeśo) were revealed by the ancient sages (purā smṛtaḥ). Brahman in the form of these three sounds (brahmaṇas tena tri-vidhaḥ) created (vihitāḥ) the brāhmaṇas, the Vedas and sacrifice (brāhmaṇās vedās ca yajñās ca). Therefore (tasmād), sacrifices, austerities, charity and other works (yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ) of the present seekers of Brahman (brahma-vādinām) are always started with the uttering of om̐ (satataṁ om̐ ity udāhṛtya pravartante).

## SVCT

- The three types of austerity, sacrifice, charity, foods and faith have been described generally for all human beings.
- However, among the sattvic people there are also the seekers of Brahman.
- All of their sacrifices, charities, austerities and food indicate Brahman. That is explained in this verse.
- 
- The three words om tat sat, indicating Brahman, have been revealed by the sages (smṛtaḥ).
- Among those words, om is well known in all the śrutis as the name of Brahman.

## SVCT

- The word tat is well known to designate the cause of the universe, and is also known to signify the obliterator of what is not tat-- the material world.
- Sat is defined in the śrutis as that which exists before everything else (eternal): sad eva saumyam agre asīt. (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.4) Since the brāhmaṇas, sacrifices and the Vedas were created (vihitāḥ) in ancient times by Brahman itself (tena) in the form of these sounds om tat sat, the sacrifices, austerities, charity and other works of the present seekers of Brahman are started uttering (udāhr̥tya) the name of Brahman, om.

## Srila Prabhupada

- It has been explained that penance, sacrifice, charity and foods are divided into three categories: the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance.
- But whether first class, second class or third class, they are all conditioned, contaminated by the material modes of nature.
- When they are aimed at the Supreme—om tat sat, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal—they become means for spiritual elevation.
- In the scriptural injunctions such an objective is indicated.
- These three words, om tat sat, particularly indicate the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the Vedic hymns, the word om is always found.

## Srila Prabhupada

- One who acts without following the regulations of the scriptures will not attain the Absolute Truth.
- He will get some temporary result, but not the ultimate end of life.
- The conclusion is that the performance of charity, sacrifice and penance must be done in the mode of goodness.
- Performed in the mode of passion or ignorance, they are certainly inferior in quality.
- The three words om tat sat are uttered in conjunction with the holy name of the Supreme Lord, e.g., om tad viṣṇoḥ.
- Whenever a Vedic hymn or the holy name of the Supreme Lord is uttered, om is added.
- This is the indication of Vedic literature.

## Srila Prabhupada

- These three words are taken from Vedic hymns.
- Om ity etad brahmaṇo nediṣṭham nāma (Ṛg Veda) indicates the first goal. Then tat tvam asi (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7) indicates the second goal.
- And sad eva saumya (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1) indicates the third goal. Combined they become om tat sat.
- Formerly when Brahmā, the first created living entity, performed sacrifices, he indicated by these three words the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- Therefore the same principle has always been followed by disciplic succession. So this hymn has great significance.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Bhagavad-gītā recommends, therefore, that any work done should be done for om tat sat, or for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- When one performs penance, charity and sacrifice with these three words, he is acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a scientific execution of transcendental activities which enables one to return home, back to Godhead.
- There is no loss of energy in acting in such a transcendental way.

## Section-VI The Conclusion: Om Tat Sat (23-28)

|| 17.25 ||

tad ity anabhisandhāya  
phalam yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ  
dāna-kriyāś ca vividhāḥ  
kriyante mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ

Uttering tat (**tad ity**), persons aspiring for liberation (**mokṣa-kāṅkṣibhiḥ**) performed (**kriyante**) sacrifice, austerity and charity (**yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ dāna-kriyāś ca vividhāḥ**) without seeking results (**phalam anabhisandhāya**).



## Baladeva

- Sacrifice, austerity and charity were performed by those desiring liberation, along with the chanting of the name tat, without aspiration for material benefits.
- The word tat is very powerful because it produces a desire for liberation, by uttering it with absence of desire.

## Srila Prabhupada

- To be elevated to the spiritual position, one should not act for any material gain.
- Acts should be performed for the ultimate gain of being transferred to the spiritual kingdom, back to home, back to Godhead.

## Section-VI The Conclusion: Om Tat Sat (23-28)

|| 17.26 ||

sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca  
sad ity etat prayujyate  
praśaste karmaṇi tathā  
sad-śabdaḥ pārtha yujyate

The word sat is used in relation to (**sad ity etat prayujyate**) brahman and also in relation to the seekers of brahman (**sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve ca**). Thus the word sat is used (**sad-śabdaḥ yujyate**) in performing all auspicious activities (**praśaste karmaṇi**).

## Baladeva

- The Supreme Lord indicated by the word sat exists in all other excellent things.
- Therefore the word sat is used during the performance of all auspicious activities. This is expressed in two verses.
- The word sat is used to indicate brahman (brahma bhāve) and the knower of brahman (sādhu bhāve), such as in the phrase sad eva saumya (this is brhaman) and satām prasaṅgāt (from association with the knowers of brahman).
- Therefore the word sat is suitable to use on auspicious actions such as upanayana and marriage.
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## Section-VI The Conclusion: Om Tat Sat (23-28)

|| 17.27 ||

yajñe tapasi dāne ca  
sthitiḥ sad iti cocyate  
karma caiva tad-arthīyaṃ  
sad ity evābhidhīyate

Being the goal of sacrifice, austerity and charity, sat is situated in those works (**yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ**), which are called sat (**sad iti ca ucyate**). Any work dedicated to Brahman (**tad-arthīyaṃ karma ca eva**) is called sat (**sad ity evābhidhīyate**).

What is permanent in sacrifice, austerity and charity (**yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ**), is called sat (**sad iti ca ucyate**). Any work dedicated to the Lord (**tad-arthīyaṃ karma ca eva**) is called sat (**sad ity evābhidhīyate**).

## Baladeva

- What is permanent (sthitih) in sacrifice, austerity and charity in terms of their objective being permanent, is indicated by sat.
- Acts for the purpose of the Lord (tad arthīyam) who is indicated by these three names, such as building or cleaning His temple, are called sat.
- 
- One must remember these three names.
- This should be considered an injunction, though the grammatical form does not indicate it.

## Baladeva

- The statement made was om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas tri-vidhaḥ smṛtaḥ: these three names of the Lord were remembered.
- This is similar to statements such as vaṣaṭ-kartuḥ prathamam bhakṣyaḥ: the food belongs to the priest uttering vaṣaṭ.
- These statements must be regarded as injunctions or orders, however, because of the rule of uniqueness (apūrva) laid down by Jaimini, in Jaimini Sūtra 3.5.21.
- [If a statement is unique in its context, even if it is not in the form of an injunction, it should be understood as an injunction. The present statement “The wise remembered the three names of Viṣṇu.” can then imply the following injunction: “We must remember the three names of Viṣṇū.”]

## Baladeva

- Another reason for understanding the statement as an injunction is that uttering the names during sacrifice, charity and other actions, is necessary to remove all obstacles to attaining the final result.

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- The smṛti says:

**pramādāt kurvatām karma pracyavetādhvareṣu yat  
smaraṇād eva tad viṣṇoḥ sampūrṇam syād iti śrutiḥ**

• Whatever mistakes are committed in sacrifice out of inattention will be rectified by remembrance of Viṣṇu. This is the statement of the śruti. Garuḍa Purāṇa 1.230.13

## Srila Prabhupada

- The words praśaste karmaṇi, or "prescribed duties," indicate that there are many activities prescribed in the Vedic literature which are purificatory processes, beginning from the time of conception up to the end of one's life.
- Such purificatory processes are adopted for the ultimate liberation of the living entity.
- In all such activities it is recommended that one vibrate om tat sat. The words sad-bhāve and sādhu-bhāve indicate the transcendental situation.
- Acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called sattva, and one who is fully conscious of the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called a sādhu.



## Srila Prabhupada

- In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25) it is said that the transcendental subject matter becomes clear in the association of the devotees.
- The words used are satām prasaṅgāt. Without good association, one cannot achieve transcendental knowledge.
- When initiating a person or offering the sacred thread, one vibrates the words om tat sat. Similarly, in all kinds of performance of yajña the object is the Supreme, om tat sat.
- The word tad-arthīyam further means offering service to anything which represents the Supreme, including such service as cooking and helping in the Lord's temple, or any other kind of work for broadcasting the glories of the Lord.
- These supreme words om tat sat are thus used in many ways to perfect all activities and make everything complete.

## Section-VI The Conclusion: Om Tat Sat (23-28)

|| 17.28 ||

aśraddhayā hutam dattam  
tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat  
asad ity ucyate pārtha  
na ca tat pretya no iha

O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**), whatever is offered in the fire (**hutam**), whatever is given in charity (**dattam**), whatever else is undertaken (**kṛtam ca yat**), but which is done without faith (**aśraddhayā**), is called asat (**asad ity ucyate**) since it bears no result now or in the next life (**na ca tat pretya no iha**).

## SVCT

- “I have heard about sat actions (those indicating Brahman). What about asat actions?”
- Whatever oblation is offered, whatever charity is given, whatever austerity is undertaken, whatever other actions is performed, is asat if performed without faith.
- If there is no faith, whatever oblations are offered are actually not offered, whatever charity is given is actually not give, whether austerity is performed is actually not given, and whatever is done is actually not done. [Note: Sattvika faith is understood here.]
- Everything is asat, since one obtains no results in the next world (pretya) or in this world (iha).

## SVCT

- This chapter describes how sattvic actions of various types, performed with faith, lead to liberation.
- Thus the commentaries on the seventeenth chapter of the Gītā have been completed for the pleasure of the devotees' hearts, by the mercy of the ācāryas.

## Baladeva

- Therefore all acts should be done with sattvika faith. [Note: Sattvika svabhāva does not necessarily imply following scriptures, as explained in verse 4. However it is easier and most likely for those with sattva faith, worshipping devas and following sattvika eating, sacrifice and charity, to adopt the scriptural injunctions and dedicate the acts to Viṣṇu with om tat sat. One follower of Rāmānuja mentions that there must be obedience to scripture and faith as well. Faith without scripture and scripture without faith are both unproductive.]
- Without that, all acts are useless. Such acts are criticized in this verse.

## Baladeva

- Whatever sacrifice (hutam), charity (dattam), or austerity, or anything else, such as praises or respect, is performed without faith (in scripture), it is all asat, useless. Why?
- Ca indicates the reason. It is all useless since, being done without faith, it does not give results in the next life (pretya), because the prescribed acts were not perfectly executed, nor does it even give fame in this life (iha), because such faithless acts are condemned by the saintly.
- Rejecting faith arising from ones impressions, one who takes shelter of faith arising from scripture will be qualified for the highest goal.
- This is the ordinance of the seventeenth chapter.

## Srila Prabhupada

- Anything done without the transcendental objective—whether it be sacrifice, charity or penance—is useless.
- Therefore in this verse it is declared that such activities are abominable.
- Everything should be done for the Supreme in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Without such faith, and without the proper guidance, there can never be any fruit.

## Srila Prabhupada

- In all the Vedic scriptures, faith in the Supreme is advised.
- In the pursuit of all Vedic instructions, the ultimate goal is the understanding of Kṛṣṇa.
- No one can obtain success without following this principle.
- Therefore, the best course is to work from the very beginning in Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master.
- That is the way to make everything successful.



## Srila Prabhupada

- In the conditional state, people are attracted to worshiping demigods, ghosts, or Yakṣas like Kuvera.
- The mode of goodness is better than the modes of passion and ignorance, but one who takes directly to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is transcendental to all three modes of material nature.
- Although there is a process of gradual elevation, if one, by the association of pure devotees, takes directly to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is the best way.
- And that is recommended in this chapter.

## Srila Prabhupada

- To achieve success in this way, one must first find the proper spiritual master and receive training under his direction.
- Then one can achieve faith in the Supreme.
- When that faith matures, in course of time, it is called love of God.
- This love is the ultimate goal of the living entities.
- One should therefore take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness directly.
- That is the message of this Seventeenth Chapter.