

Canto Eleven – Chapter Twenty

Pure Devotional Service
Surpasses Knowledge and
Detachment

Inferior and Superior Processes

Section – I

Qualifications for Karma,
Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.1 ||

śrī-uddhava uvāca
vidhiś ca pratiṣedhaś ca
nigamo hīśvarasya te
avekṣate 'raviṇḍākṣa
guṇaṁ doṣaṁ ca karmaṇām

Uddhava said: O lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa (**araviṇḍākṣa**)! You are the Supreme Lord (**īśvarasya**), and thus the Vedic literatures (**nigamah**), consisting of positive and negative injunctions (**vidhiś ca pratiṣedhaś ca**), constitute your order (**te**). Such literatures focus upon the good and bad qualities of work (**karmaṇām guṇaṁ doṣaṁ ca avekṣate**).

In the Twentieth Chapter jñāna, karma and bhakti are well defined, and the qualifications of each are described, with good and bad points.

At the end of the last chapter Kṛṣṇa said that one should overcome seeing good and bad.

Though Uddhava understood the Lord's meaning, he desires to hear from the Lord's mouth an explanation with various examples.

Thus in five verses, he opposes Kṛṣṇa's statement.

Your orders, the Vedas, consist of orders and prohibitions.

The orders concern good qualities of action which should be done.

The prohibitions concern bad actions which are forbidden.

By following orders one performs good acts of piety and goes to Svarga.

By performing prohibited acts one performs bad actions of sin and goes to hell.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.2 ||

**varṇāśrama-vikalpaṁ ca
pratilomānulomajam
dravya-deśa-vayaḥ-kālān
svargaṁ narakam eva ca**

Differences in varṇa and āśrama (**varṇāśrama-vikalpaṁ ca**) give rise to bad or good, such as pratiloma and anuloma marriages (**pratiloma anulomajam**). There is consideration of good and bad objects, places, ages and times (**dravya-deśa-vayaḥ-kālān**). Svarga is considered good and hell is considered bad (**svargaṁ narakam eva ca**).

The differences of varṇa and āśrama indicate the good and bad qualities.

Pratiloma means a person such as suta or vaidehaka, born from women of superior varṇa and man of inferior varṇa.

Anuloma means a person such as ambastha or karaṇa born from a man of superior varṇa and woman of lower varṇa.

There are also superior or inferior considerations for objects.

Svarga is considered good and hell is considered bad.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.3 ||

guṇa-doṣa-bhidā-dr̥ṣṭim
antareṇa vacas tava
niḥśreyasaṁ katham̐ nṛṇām̐
niṣedha-vidhi-lakṣaṇam

Without seeing in terms of good and bad (**guṇa-doṣa-bhidā-dr̥ṣṭim antareṇa**) in the Vedas, which are your words (**vacas tava**), composed of orders and prohibitions (**niṣedha-vidhi-lakṣaṇam**), how can man achieve liberation (**niḥśreyasaṁ katham̐ nṛṇām̐**)?

“Then what are you inferring?”

Without your words, the Vedas, indicating prohibition and order, seeing in terms of good and bad, (this is prescribed and thus good and that is forbidden and therefore bad), how can the Vedas produce liberation for humans?

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.4 ||

pitṛ-deva-manuṣyānām
vedaś cakṣus taveśvara
śreyas tv anupalabdhe 'rthe
sādhya-sādhanayor api

O Lord (**īśvara**)! Your Vedas are the best cause of knowledge (**tava vedah śreyas cakṣuh**) for Pitṛs, devatās and humans (**pitṛ-deva-manuṣyānām**).

The Vedas are the means and goal (**sādhya-sādhanayor api**) of liberation and Svarga (**anupalabdhe arthe**).

The Vedas are not only the cause of liberation for humans but for devatās and Pitṛs as well.

Your Vedas are the best source of knowledge (śreyaḥ cakṣuḥ).

Why?

For liberation and Svarga, the Vedas are the goal and the means.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.5 ||

guṇa-doṣa-bhidā-dṛṣṭir
nigamāt te na hi svataḥ
nigamenāpavādaś ca
bhidāyā iti ha bhramah

The distinction observed between piety and sin (**guṇa-doṣa-bhidā-dṛṣṭih**) comes from your own Vedic knowledge (**te nigamāt**) and does not arise by itself (**na hi svataḥ**). By rejecting the Vedas with their injunctions and prohibitions as you seem to be doing now (**nigamena apavādaś ca**), such distinction between piety and sin will be nullified. I will be bewildered (**bhidāyā iti ha bhramah**).

Either way there are difficulties.

From the Vedas which are your order composed of rules and prohibitions, arises observation of good and bad.

(But then I disregard your order.)

By rejecting your own orders, the Vedas, the vision of good and bad will be impaired.

I have become confused, since I have not been able to discern your intentions.

Therefore remove this confusion.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.6 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

yogās trayo mayā proktā

nṛṇām śreyo-vidhitsayā

jñānam karma ca bhaktiś ca

nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutrācit

The Supreme Lord said: Because I desire that human beings may achieve perfection (**nṛṇām śreyo-vidhitsayā**), I have presented three methods (**yogās trayo mayā proktā**)—the path of jñāna, the path of karma and the path of bhakti (**jñānam karma ca bhaktiś ca**). Besides these three, there no other means of elevation (**na anyah upāyah asti kutrācit**).

There will be injunctions and prohibitions based on seeing good and bad according to **different qualifications and different situations.**

The Lord speaks to reveal this.

The methods (yogāḥ) of jñāna, karma and bhakti are explained by me through the brahma-kāṇḍā, karma-kāṇḍa and devatā-kāṇḍas.

With a desire to give humans mokṣa, artha, dharma, kāma, and prema, all by my mercy, I have explained these methods.

There are no other means of elevation except these three.

Austerity and yoga are actually included in jñāna and bhakti to some degree, so are not considered separately.

Karma is for the karmīs and jñāna is for the jñānīs.

They are not qualified for pure bhakti.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.7 ||

nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogo
nyāsinām iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām
karma-yogas tu kāminām

Jñāna-yoga is recommended for those who are unattached to material life (**nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogah**) and thus reject material activities (**nyāsinām iha karmasu**). Karma-yoga is recommended (**karma-yogas tu**) for those who are not disgusted with material life (**teṣu anirviṇṇa-cittānām**) and have great attachment to pleasures (**kāminām**).

Who is qualified for what?

Two verses answer.

Jñāna is for persons who are unattached to house and family and therefore renounce material actions of household life.

Karma is for those who are not detached from material action because they are extremely attached to enjoying their body, house, and wife.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.8 ||

yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau
jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto
bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ

If by unexpected association with devotees (**yadṛcchayā**) one develops faith in my topics (**mat-kathādau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān**), that person (**asya**), being neither very disgusted with nor attached to material life (**na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto**), is qualified for bhakti and will achieve perfection (**bhakti-yogah siddhi-daḥ**).

By taking into account the explanation in the First Canto, the meaning of the first phrase is “the person who has developed faith in my topics by unexpected association with great devotees.”

Faith in the Lord’s topics is the qualification for bhakti-yoga.

That has already been stated in śraddhāmṛta-kathāyām me (SB11.19.20) and śraddhālur me kathāḥ śṛṇvan (SB 11.11.23).

The context is different in the present verse however.

By using the singular number (one person), it is indicated that such a person who has developed that faith is very rare, compared to jñānīs and karmīs.

This person is not overly attached to body, house and family.

He is also not disgusted with the world, for that is the qualification for jñāna.

Being overly attached to body and house qualifies a person for karma-yoga.

If he does not have such attachment, he becomes qualified for bhakti.

The qualification for the three processes should be considered.

The cause of disgust with or detachment from the world is purification of the antaḥ-karaṇa caused by niṣkāma-karma.

The cause of excessive attachment is beginningless ignorance.

The cause of being devoid of excessive attachment is unexpected association with great devotees.

These causes should be considered.

However, there are some special persons who become qualified.

Even if a person is involved with sense enjoyment, by unexpected association with devotees he becomes qualified.

ko nu rājann indriyavān mukunda-caraṇāmbujam
na bhajet sarvato-mṛtyur upāsyam amarottamaiḥ

O King (**rājann**)! Who among the conditioned souls with senses (**kah nu indriyavān**), confronted by death at every step of life (**sarvato-mṛtyur**), would not render service (**na bhajet**) to the lotus feet of Mukunda (**mukunda-caraṇāmbujam**), who is worshipable even for the greatest devatās (**amarottamaiḥ upāsyam**)? SB 11.2.2

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.9 ||

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

As long as one does not become detached from daily and periodic duties (**na nirvidyeta yāvatā**) or has not awakened his faith (**śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**) in hearing topics about me (**mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā**), one must perform one's prescribed duties of varṇāśrama (**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta**).

It is natural that the overly attached jīva is qualified for karma.

When will he become qualified for jñāna and bhakti?

He should perform his daily and periodic duties (karmāṇi) as long as he has not purified his heart by karmas and has not become detached.

Thus, (when he comes detached) he becomes qualified for jñāna.

This was stated in verse 7.

Or he should continue his karmas until faith in topics of the Lord arises by sudden mercy of devotees.

Before that faith, he was qualified only for karma.

When faith appears, as explained in the previous verse, he becomes qualified only for bhakti, and is no longer qualified for karma.

This faith should be exclusive.

The person has firm faith that he will reach perfection by hearing about the Lord, not by karma or jñāna.

This arises only by association with pure devotees.

It is said:

**śruti-smṛtī mamaivājñe yas te ullāṅghya vartate
ājñā-cchedī mama dveṣī mad-bhaktō 'pi na vaiṣṇavaḥ**

The śruti and smṛti literatures are to be understood as my injunctions, and one who violates such codes is to be understood as violating my will and thus opposing me. Although such a person may claim to be my devotee, he is not actually a Vaiṣṇava.

Thus, the devotee does not disobey the Lord's order.

Rather when he develops faith, he will never disobey the orders of the Lord.

Some persons say that even if he does not obtain the mercy of great devotees and consequently does not develop that faith, on seeing the excellence of other devotees (not great devotees), he gives up karma and takes up worship of the Lord, following his orders.

Others say that since śruti and smṛti recommend bhakti, not varṇāśrama, a person, understanding this, takes to bhakti, (even if he does not meet the greatest devotees), for the Lord says:

**ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ**

A person who, understanding good and bad aspects of dharma as taught by me, gives up all his duties and simply worships me is the best of all. SB 11.11.32

Devotees may think that, since they are devotees following purely, it is not necessary to follow injunctions and prohibitions in śruti and smṛti, such as vows like Ekādaśī and forbidden acts like putting coconut water in a bell metal vessel, or putting yogurt or milk in a copper vessel, or eating the Lord's offerings before offering to the Lord.

However, understanding that the śruti and smṛti are the Lord's order, they should follow those instructions.

Some pure devotees in the Eastern provinces, because of the pressure from karmīs with which they have close contact, may perform karmas.

But this is not actually performance of karma, because it is done without faith in those acts. The Lord says:

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

O son of Pṛthā, whatever is offered in the fire, whatever is given in charity, whatever is undertaken as austerity, but which is done without faith, is called asat since it bears no result now or in the next life. BG 17.28

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.10 ||

sva-dharma-stho yajan yajñair
anāśīḥ-kāma uddhava
na yāti svarga-narakau
yady anyan na samācaret

O Uddhava (**uddhava**)! A person who is situated in his prescribed duty (**sva-dharma-sthah**), properly worshiping by Vedic sacrifices (**yajan yajñair**) but not desiring the results (**anāśīḥ-kāma**) will not go to the heavenly planets (**na yāti svarga**); similarly, by not performing forbidden activities (**yady anyan na samācaret**) he will not go to hell (**na yāti narakau**).

It is possible that those who are overly attached to material karmas take up niṣkāma-karma.

Performing their duties without desiring results, they do not go to Svarga.

By avoiding prohibited acts, not breaking rules of ones svadharma, one does not go to hell.

Qualifications for Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (1-11)

|| 11.20.11 ||

asmiṅ loke vartamānaḥ
sva-dharma-stho 'naghaḥ śuciḥ
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti
mad-bhaktim vā yadṛcchayā

One who is situated in his prescribed duty (**sva-dharma-sthaḥ**), free from sinful activities and cleansed of material contamination (**anaghaḥ śuciḥ**), in this very life (**asmiṅ loke vartamānaḥ**) obtains transcendental knowledge (**jñānam viśuddham āpnoti**) or, by fortune, bhakti to me (**mad-bhaktim vā yadṛcchayā**).

What does this performer of karma attain?

Situated on this planet, performing his duties, sinless because of performing niṣkāma-karma, pure in heart, because of no sin, he attains jñāna and liberation.

If he unexpectedly attains the association with persons practicing pure bhakti, he attains pure bhakti to me.

Then he attains prema.

If he attains association with karma-miśra-bhaktas or jñāna-miśra-bhaktas, by that type of bhakti he attains śānti-rati.

Section – II

Opportunity in Human
form of Life (12-17)

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.12 ||

svargiṇo 'py etam icchanti
lokaṁ nirayaṇas tathā
sādhakaṁ jñāna-bhaktibhyām
ubhayaṁ tad-asādhakam

The residents of both heaven and hell (**svargiṇah apy nirayaṇas tathā**) desire human birth (**etam icchanti**) on the earth planet (**lokaṁ**) because human life facilitates jñāna and bhakti (**sādhakaṁ jñāna-bhaktibhyām**), whereas neither heavenly nor hellish bodies provide such opportunities (**ubhayaṁ tad-asādhakam**).

Kṛṣṇa praises the human body for attaining liberation and prema in six verses.

Human life produces jñāna and bhakti.

Heavenly or hellish bodies do not produce these.

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.13 ||

na narah svar-gatiṁ kāṅkṣen
nāraḁīm vā vicakṣaṇaḁ
nemaṁ lokaṁ ca kāṅkṣeta
dehāveśāt pramādyati

A human being who is wise (**vicakṣaṇaḁ naraḁ**) should never desire (**na kāṅkṣen**) Svarga or hell (**svaṛ-gatiṁ nāraḁīm vā**). A human being should also never desire continuous residence on the earth (**na imaṁ lokaṁ ca kāṅkṣeta**), for by such absorption in the material body (**dehāveśāt**) one forgets about jñāna and bhakti (**pramādyati**).

Having attained the excellent human form, one should not desire lower forms in Svarga or hell by piety or sinful acts.

One should not desire to remain on earth comfortably by avoiding sin, because one forgets about jñāna and bhakti by attachment to the body.

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.14 ||

etad vidvān purā mṛtyor
abhavāya ghaṭeta saḥ
apramatta idaṁ jñātvā
martyam apy artha-siddhi-dam

A wise person (**etad vidvān**), knowing that the human body, though temporary (**martyam apy**), allows attainment of perfection (**artha-siddhi-dam**), should act for freedom from saṁsāra (**saḥ abhavāya ghaṭeta**) before death (**purā mṛtyor**). Knowing the use of the human body (**idaṁ jñātvā**), he should not be lazy (**apramatta**).

Knowing the human body is useful, one should act for attaining freedom from saṁsāra before death.

Knowing that his body gives perfection, he should not be lazy.

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.15 ||

chidyamānam yamair etaiḥ
kṛta-nīḍam vanaspatim
khagaḥ sva-ketam utsṛjya
kṣemaṁ yāti hy alampaṭaḥ

When a tree in which a bird's nest was constructed (**kṛta-nīḍam vanaspatim**) is cut down (**chidyamānam**) by men cruel as death (**yamair etaiḥ**), the bird (**khagaḥ**) gives up the tree (**sva-ketam utsṛjya**) without attachment (**alampaṭaḥ**) and achieves happiness in another place (**kṣemaṁ yāti**).

An example of giving up attachment to the body is given.

Giving up his nest built in a tree cut down by persons cruel like Yama, the unattached bird goes away.

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.16 ||

**aho-rātrais chidyamānaṃ
buddhvāyur bhaya-vepathuḥ
mukta-saṅgaḥ param buddhvā
nirīha upaśāmyati**

Knowing that (**buddhvā**) one's duration of life (**āyuh**) is being similarly cut down (**chidyamānaṃ**) by the passing of days and nights (**aho-rātraiḥ**), one should be shaken by fear (**bhaya-vepathuḥ**). In this way, giving up all material attachment and desire (**mukta-saṅgaḥ nirīha**), one understands the Supreme Lord (**param buddhvā**) and achieves perfect peace (**upaśāmyati**).

Understanding one's life is being cut by the days and nights,
one gives up material desires and attachment and attains
peace.

Opportunity in Human form of Life (12-17)

|| 11.20.17 ||

**nṛ-deham ādyam su-labham su-durlabham
plavam su-kalpam guru-karṇadhāram
mayānukūlena nabhasvateritam
pumān bhavābdhim na taret sa ātma-hā**

Having attained the human body (**nṛ-deham**), which is rarely attained (**su-durlabham**), but attained easily sometimes by good fortune (**ādyam su-labham**), and which is like a well-constructed boat (**plavam su-kalpam**), with the guru as the captain (**guru-karṇadhāram**), pushed by the favorable wind of serving me (**mayānukūlena nabhasvatā iritam**), a person who does not cross the ocean of material existence (**pumān bhavābdhim na taret**) is a killer of himself (**sa ātma-hā**).

The destitute man, finding a touchstone, throws it in the mud.

The human body is the source of all desirable fruits.

It is difficult to attain, since it is impossible to attain by millions of attempts.

But it is easily attained, since it is attained by good fortune.

Having attained the boat (verb is omitted), which is by great luck skillfully made, which has a captain when one surrenders to guru, pushed by the favorable wind, by me, when I am served, one can cross the ocean of material existence.

Some say this is the result for jñānīs, since the topic is jñāna.

It is not suitable for the pure devotees since their goal is not deliverance from material suffering.

But others say that though the pure devotees do not strive for this, they also achieve it.

Since it comes unsought, there is no fault for the devotees in attaining it.

Section – III

*Actions required for
performance for jnana (18-
26)*

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.18 ||

yadārambheṣu nirviṇṇo
viraktaḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
abhyāsenātmano yogī
dhārayed acaḷam manah

When a person becomes disgusted with material endeavors (**yadā ārambheṣu nirviṇṇo**), becomes detached from the results of prescribed duties (**viraktaḥ**), controls his senses (**saṁyatendriyaḥ**) by practice (**abhyāsenā**) and follows yamas and niyamas (**yogī**), he should concentrate to make his mind steady (**dhārayed acaḷam manah**).

Having praised the human body which allows practice of both jñāna and bhakti, Kṛṣṇa speaks of the actions necessary for persons qualified for jñāna.

Their initial state is described in nine and a half verses.

The person is disgusted with material household life, disturbed by seeing its suffering, and becomes detached from the results of karma attained by karmīs.

Engaged in the yamas and niyamas of yoga (yogī), he meditates so that his mind becomes immovable.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.19 ||

dhāryamāṇam mano yarhi
bhrāmyad āśv anavasthitam
atandrito 'nurodhena
mārgenātma-vaśam nayet

When the mind (**yarhi manah**) which attempts to concentrate (**dhāryamāṇam**) becomes doubly agitated and suddenly deviates (**āśv anavasthitam**), one should carefully (**atandritah**) bring the mind under control (**ātma-vaśam nayet**), giving some regard for its expectations (**anurodhena mārgena**).

When the mind concentrated with effort suddenly becomes doubly agitated from its initial position with great intensity, one should bring it under control by showing some slight regard for fulfilling its needs (anurodhena).

Double agitation takes place when one begins to concentrate on the strong urges of lust and other emotions.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.20 ||

mano-gatiṁ na visṛjeḥ
jita-prāṇo jitendriyaḥ
sattva-sampannayā buddhyā
mana ātma-vaśaṁ nayet

One should not disregard the actions of the mind (**mano-gatiṁ na visṛjet**). Conquering the life airs and the senses (**jita-prāṇo jitendriyaḥ**) by intelligence endowed with sattva (**sattva-sampannayā buddhyā**), one should bring the mind under control (**mana ātma-vaśaṁ nayet**).

“Will one become like one was previously?”

One should not disregard the movements of the mind, but stop them.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.21 ||

**eṣa vai paramo yogo
manasaḥ saṅgrahaḥ smṛtaḥ
hṛdaya-jñatvam anvicchan
damyasyevārvato muhuḥ**

Giving regard to the mind (**eṣa vai manasaḥ saṅgrahaḥ**) is the highest process of controlling it (**paramo yogah smṛtaḥ**). One should carefully observe its movements (**muhuḥ anvicchan**), just as one first observes the mood (**hṛdaya-jñatvam anvicchan**) of the horse one desires to subdue before putting on the reins (**damyasya iva arvataḥ**).

The path of giving regard to the mind (verse 19) is praised, using an example.

Controlling the mind by this path of fulfilling its expectations is the highest method.

Like inspecting the inclinations of the mind (hṛdaya-jñātvam) of a horse (arvataḥ) what one desires to control, one inspects the inclinations of one's heart.

It is impossible to control the horse suddenly, simply by thinking that the horse should know one's intentions.

One should follow its movements carefully.

Similarly one should follow the movements of the mind.

Then one can put on the reins and direct the horse to go.

One should not give up.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.22 ||

sāṅkhyena sarva-bhāvānām
pratilomānulomataḥ
bhavāpyayāv anudhyāyen
mano yāvat prasīdati

Until the mind is peaceful (**mano yāvat prasīdati**), one should contemplate (**anudhyāyen**) the creation and destruction (**bhavāpyayāv**) of the material elements (**sarva-bhāvānām**) through evolution and devolution (**pratiloma anulomataḥ**) by analysis (**sāṅkhyena**).

After slightly controlling the mind, the method of complete control of the mind should be used.

This is explained in three verses.

By analysis of the elements from mahat-tattva to earth, one should meditate on the creation from prakṛti to earth, and destruction from earth to prakṛti.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.23 ||

nirviṅṅasya viraktasya
puruṣasyokta-vedinaḥ
manas tyajati daurātmyam
cintitasyānucintayā

When a person, considering what has been said (**puruṣasya ukta-vedinaḥ**), becomes disgusted with the world and detached from it (**nirviṅṅasya viraktasya**) by contemplating the subject with analysis (**cintitasya anucintayā**), his mind gives up its false identity with the body (**manas tyajati daurātmyam**).

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.24 ||

*yamādibhir yoga-pathair
ānvīkṣikyā ca vidyayā
mamārcopāsanābhir vā
nānyair yogyaṁ smaren manaḥ*

One should remember Paramātmā (**yogyaṁ smaren manaḥ**) by following yamas and niyamas in aṣṭāṅga-yoga (**yamādibhir yoga-pathair**), by analysis of elements (**ānvīkṣikyā**), by knowledge (**vidyayā**), by worship of my form (**mama arca upāsanābhir vā**), and not by any other methods (**nānyair**).

The mind should concentrate on Paramātmā (yogyam) by analysis of elements (ānvīkṣikyā).

The word vā indicates one could follow any of these methods, by one's choice, according to Śrīdhara Svāmī.

The word vā means ca according to some.

By these methods and no others one should remember Paramātmā.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.25 ||

yadi kuryāt pramādena
yogī karma vigarhitam
yogenaiva dahed amho
nānyat tatra kadācana

If, because of inattention (**yadi pramādena**), a jñānī accidentally commits an abominable activity (**yogī kuryāt karma vigarhitam**), then by the very practice of jñāna (**yogena eva**), he should burn to ashes the sinful reaction (**dahed amho**), without employing any other procedure (**nānyat tatra kadācana**).

“If the person disgusted with karma is not qualified for karma-yoga, if he commits sin by fate how will he destroy that sin without resorting to the atonement through karma-yoga?”

If this jñānī commits a sin, he destroys the sin by practice of jñāna (yogena) alone.

According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, this also indicates chanting the name of the Lord for the devotee.

It is said:

**kecit kevalayā bhaktyā vāsudeva-parāyaṇāḥ
aghaṁ dhunvanti kārtsnyena nīhāram iva bhāskarāḥ**

Some persons, who surrender to Kṛṣṇa, completely destroy sins by pure bhakti, just as the sun destroys fog. SB 6.1.15

**sva-pāda-mūlam bhajataḥ priyasya
tyaktānya-bhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ
vikarma yac cotpatitaṁ kathaṅcid
dhunoti sarvaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ**

One who has thus given up all other engagements and has taken full shelter at the lotus feet of Supreme Lord is very dear to the Lord. If such a surrendered soul accidentally commits some sinful activity, the Supreme Lord, having great powers, seated within everyone's heart, immediately takes away the reaction to such sin. SB 11.5.42

Others explain that the word yogī here indicates either the jñāna-yogī or bhakti-yogī.

Thus yogena will indicate either jñāna or bhakti.

Actions required for performance for jnana (18-26)

|| 11.20.26 ||

sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
karmaṇām jāty-aśuddhānām
anena niyamaḥ kṛtaḥ
guṇa-doṣa-vidhānena
saṅgānām tyājanecchayā

When the jñānī or devotee remains situated according to his qualification (**sve sve adhikāre yā niṣṭhā**) it is praised as a good quality (**sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ**). With a desire to give up material enjoyment (**saṅgānām tyājana icchayā**), there should be restriction on karma for the practitioners of karma (**anena niyamaḥ kṛtaḥ**) who are innately impure (**karmaṇām jāty-aśuddhānām**), by following the rules and avoiding the prohibitions (**guṇa-doṣa-vidhānena**).

“Why do you say there is no other method? What is the fault if one uses another method?”

Sve sve indicates the jñānī and the bhakta.

The meaning is this.

If the jñānī did not destroy sin by jñāna and the devotee did not destroy sin by bhakti, they would have to perform penances or atonements to destroy the sin.

Because there are plenty of scriptural statements that jñāna and bhakti destroy sin, if sin is destroyed, why should they perform penances with a different qualification (karma-yoga)?

If they were to perform atonements, it would mean that they have two faults: giving up their dharma and practicing another's dharma.

There should be no inclination for sin in the jñānī or the devotee, but if by fate it occurs, sin is destroyed by those processes themselves, since jñāna and bhakti are purifying by their very nature.

Thus the Vedas generally say that the jñānī and devotee do not fall within the qualifications of injunction and prohibition, good quality and bad quality.

However, of the two, when the devotee commits sin, it is everywhere said that one should not see it as a fault, or think that he is subject to material guṇas, since it is explained that he is beyond the guṇas.

Because the jñānī is in sattva-guṇa, his control of the mind and senses are seen as good qualities and the lack of control are seen as bad qualities:

yas tv asaṁyata-ṣaḍ-vargaḥ pracandendriya-sārathih
jñāna-vairāgya-rahitas tri-daṇḍam upajīvati
surān ātmānam ātma-sthaṁ nihnute mām ca dharma-hā
avipakva-kaṣāyo 'smād amuṣmāc ca vihīyate

One who has not controlled the six forms of illusion (lust, anger, greed, excitement, false pride and intoxication), whose intelligence, the leader of the senses, is extremely attached to material things, who is bereft of knowledge and detachment, who adopts the sannyāsa order of life to make a living, who deceives the devatās, ātmā and Paramātmā, thus ruining all religious principles, and who is still infected by material contamination, is deviated and lost both in this life and the next. SB 11.18.40

Therefore it is not a fault to find good and bad among the jñānīs.

Karmīs by their nature are subject to good and bad.

The Vedas repeatedly enjoin that there should be a restriction (niyamah) on the natural inclination of engaging in sin for karmīs attached to their houses and bodies by applying the injunctions and prohibitions, for the purpose of giving up attachment to material enjoyment.

The meaning is this.

Man's inclination to sin is present and cannot be completely stopped immediately.

This destruction is accomplished by restricting the natural inclination by injunctions and prohibitions: do this, do not do that.

It will be explained later how the Vedas do not encourage enjoyment.

**utpattyaiva hi kāmeṣu prāṇeṣu sva-janeṣu ca
āsakta-manaso martyā ātmano 'nārtha-hetuṣu**

Simply by material birth, human beings become attached within their minds to personal sense gratification, long duration of life, sense activities, bodily strength, sexual potency and friends and family. Their minds are thus absorbed in that which defeats their actual self-interest. SB 11.21.24

**natān aviduṣaḥ svārtham bhrāmyato vṛjinādhvani
katham yuñjyāt punas teṣu tāms tamo viśato budhaḥ**

Those ignorant of their real self-interest are wandering on the path of material existence, gradually heading toward darkness. Why would the Vedas further encourage them in sense gratification if they, although foolish, submissively pay heed to Vedic injunctions? SB 11.21.25

Section – IV

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.27-28 ||

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ

tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhānur dr̥ḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan

Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories (**jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu**), being disgusted with all prescribed activities (varṇāśrama) (**nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu**), knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery (**veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān**), but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment (**parityāge apy anīśvaraḥ**), My devotee should remain happy (**tato prītaḥ**) and worship Me (**mām bhajeta**) with great faith and conviction (**śraddhānur dr̥ḍha-niścayaḥ**). Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment (**juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān**), My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result (**duḥkha udarkāmś**), and he sincerely repents such activities (**ca garhayan**).

Classic Symptoms of Vaidhi Sadhaka

- **jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu** – Has awakened faith in the process of bhakti
- **nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu** – Disgusted with all prescribed duties
- **veda duḥkhātmakam kāmān** – Understands that sense gratification leads to misery
- **parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ** – Still unable to give up sense gratification
- **juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan** – Unable to give up sense gratification, he sincerely repents for engaging in such acts

Kṛṣṇa's instructions to such Sadhakas

- **tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhālur dr̥ṭha-niścayaḥ** - Remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction

In two verses Kṛṣṇa speaks of the initial state of a person qualified for bhakti.

He is disgusted with the results of karma ruling Vedic ritual and ordinary life, disturbed by seeing the unhappiness it causes.

This repeats what was said earlier: he is not overly attached to karma (verse 8).

He knows that desires which give rise to attachment to wife and sons are filled with suffering.

But he is unable to give them up.

Having entered such a condition, he resolves “Let my attachment for family be destroyed or increase! Let there be millions of obstacles to my worship, or let the obstacles be destroyed! Let me go to hell if I have committed offenses by keeping those desires. But I will not give up bhakti. I will not accept karma or jñāna even if Brahmā personally comes and orders me.”

This is his determination.

He does not have inclination to unfavorable things to the same extent that he has firm determination for bhakti which he has just started.

He indulges in those desires which give rise to attachment to wife and children while criticizing them.

“Oh! These material enjoyments cause obstacles for me. They are unfavorable for attaining the feet of the Lord. Though I make an oath to give them up in name only, after a while I enjoy them again. I criticize them and enjoy them.”

In this way he enjoys.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.29 ||

proktena bhakti-yogena
bhajato māsakṛṇ muneh
kāṁā hṛdayyā naśyanti
sarve mayi hṛdi sthite

When an intelligent person (**muneh**) engages constantly in worshiping me (**bhajato māsakṛṇ**) through bhakti (**bhakti-yogena**), as previously described by me (**proktena**), all material desires within the heart are destroyed (**sarve kāṁā hṛdayyā naśyanti**), since I am situated in the heart (**mayi hṛdi sthite**).

“So does your devotee remain attacked by enjoyment in the material world?”

No. This is explained in two verses.

It has already been said śraddhāmṛta-kathāyām me śaśvan mad-anukīrtanam: he has firm faith in the blissful narration of my sweetest pastimes and constant chanting of my glories. (SB 11.19.20)

Worshipping me by this process of bhakti which I have described, my devotee destroys all the desires in his heart, since I am situated there.

If I am situated there, the sins cannot remain situated there, just as, if the sun shines, darkness cannot remain.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.30 ||

**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi
mayi dr̥ṣṭe 'khilātmani**

Ahaṅkāra is cut (**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthih**) and all doubts are destroyed (**chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ**). On seeing the Lord in the mind and with the eyes (**mayi dr̥ṣṭe akhilātmani**), all karmas are destroyed (**kṣīyante ca asya karmāṇi**).

After the devotee passes through the stages of niṣṭhā, ruci and āsakti, the ahaṅkāra(hṛdaya-granthiḥ) is destroyed.

This takes place on its own, not with the endeavor or desire of the devotee. It has been said:

jarayaty āśu yā kośam nigīṛṇam analo yathā

Bhakti quickly destroys the subtle body, just as the digestive fire consumes food.

SB 3.25.33

Thus there is no possibility of doubts.

All the karmas, even the prārabdha-karmas are destroyed.

**bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi-
nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam, etad eva
naiṣkarmyam**

Devotional service is the process of worshiping the Supreme Lord. It consists of fixing one's mind upon him by becoming disinterested in all material designations, both in this life and the next. Bhakti destroys all karmas. Gopāla-ṭapanī Upaniṣad I.15

The meaning of naiṣkarmyam is that bhakti causes destruction of all karma.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.31 ||

tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam
prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha

Therefore (**tasmād**), for a devotee engaged in bhakti (**mad-bhakti-yuktasya yoginah**), with mind fixed on me (**mad-ātmanah**), the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation (**jñānam ca vairāgyam**) is generally not beneficial for bhakti (**na prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha**).

Since the ahaṅkāra is destroyed by bhakti alone, which does not give regard to other causes, jñāna and vairāgya are not recommended for my devotee, either for nourishing bhakti or for destroying ahaṅkāra, since they do not exhibit any benefit for the devotee.

For a person whose mind is fixed in me (mad-ātmanaḥ), jñāna which differentiates self from body and vairāgya which renounces enjoyment are not beneficial since they belong to sattva-guṇa whereas bhakti is beyond the guṇas.

It is a fault to bring in jñāna and vairāgya when bhakti is present.

Just as attachment and hatred are functions of avidyā, jñāna and vairāgya are functions of vidyā.

Though jñāna and vairāgya naturally exist in bhakti, ahaṅkāra is destroyed by bhakti alone.

This will be explained in the Twenty-fifth Chapter (SB 11.25.24 or 11.2.5.32 for instance).

Moreover, jñāna in the form of realization of the Lord and vairāgya in the form of distaste for material enjoyment, which are beyond the guṇas, since they arise from bhakti, will naturally appear.

It is said:

**bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam**

Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things—these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, in the same way that pleasure, fullness of the stomach and relief from hunger are experienced simultaneously, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating. SB11.2.42

The word generally (prayaḥ) is used because at the first stage of śānta-bhakti sometimes jñāna and vairāgya are accepted without harm.

The śānta-bhakta engaged in austerities is described:

**bhaktir muktyaiva nirvighnety ātta-yukta-viraktatāḥ |
anujjhita-mumuksā ye bhajante te tu tāpasāḥ ||15||**

The practitioners of austerity in bhakti are those who worship the Lord while practicing yukta-vairāgya without giving up the desire for liberation, since obstacles to bhakti are destroyed by attaining liberation. BRS 3.1.15

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.32-33 ||

yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmaṇa śreyobhir itarair api

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma kathañcid yadi vāñchati

Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance (**yat karmabhir yat tapasā**), knowledge, detachment (**jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat**), mystic yoga, charity, religious duties (**yogena dāna dharmeṇa**) and all other means of perfecting life (**śreyobhir itarair api**) is easily achieved by My devotee (**sarvaṁ mad-bhaktah labhate 'ñjasā**) through loving service unto Me (**mad-bhakti-yogena**). If somehow or other My devotee desires (**kathañcid mad-bhaktah yadi vāñchati**) promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode (for service) (**svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma**), he easily achieves such benedictions (**sarvaṁ anjasā labhate**).

“If someone develops faith in your topics but has desires for Svarga or liberation, results of karma and jñāna, since he has not given up his taste for those things, what happens to him?”

This is answered in two verses.

Itaraiḥ means auspicious acts like vows and visiting holy places.

This mixed devotee can achieve sālōkya (mad-dhāma).

What is to be attained by other processes, my devotee easily attains by bhakti.

What are these things?

All things are attained, including Svarga, indicating all material happiness.

According to the purity of the heart one can attain liberation or sālōkya.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.34 ||

na kiñcit sādhave dhīrā
bhaktā hy ekāntino mama
vāñchanty api mayā dattam
kaivalyam apunar-bhavam

But intelligent devotees (**sādhave dhīrā bhaktā**), completely dedicated to me alone (**ekāntino mama**), do not desire (**na kiñcit vāñchanty**) liberation (**kaivalyam apunar-bhavam**) even if I offer it to them (**mayā dattam api**).

“Somehow or other” is here explained.

Those who are pure devotees do not desire these things.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.35 ||

nairapekṣyaṁ param prāhur
niḥśreyasam analpakam
tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir
nirapekṣasya me bhavet

It is said that (**prāhur**) the process which is without dependence on other processes or results (**nairapekṣyaṁ**) is the best process (**param**). It gives more quantity of auspiciousness than other processes (**analpakam niḥśreyasam**). Therefore (**tasmād**) a person who does not desire any rewards (**nirāśiṣah**) and does not depend on other processes (**nirapekṣasya**) develops bhakti for me (**me bhaktir bhavet**).

That which is without dependence on other sādhanas or other results is superior in type (param) and gives more quantity of auspiciousness than other processes (analpakam niḥśreyasam).

The person who has no other desires except me (nirāśiṣaḥ) and does not depend on other processes such as jñāna and vairāgya (nirapekṣasya) develops bhakti for me.

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.36 ||

na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām
guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ
sādhūnām sama-cittānām
buddheḥ param upeyuṣām

The fully dedicated devotees (**mayy ekānta-bhaktānām** **sādhūnām**) who see equally everywhere (**sama-cittānām**) and who have achieved (**upeyuṣām**) the Lord who is superior to prakṛti (**buddheḥ param**) do not have the guṇas which give rise to qualities of good and bad (**na guṇa-doṣa udbhavā guṇāḥ**).

I have said guṇa-doṣa-dṛśir doṣo guṇas tūbhaya-varjitaḥ: to see good and bad is itself a bad quality, and thus the best quality is to transcend seeing good and bad qualities. (SB 11.19.45)

This best quality resides in my devotees.

The guṇas of sattva, rajas and tamas from which arise good and bad qualities do not exist in these devotees.

They have spiritual qualities because they have achieved the Lord who is eternity knowledge and bliss, who is superior to prakṛti (buddheḥ), and who is thus without any material qualities.

All my senses are beyond the material guṇas.

The nature of the devotee is described later with the words nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ: a person has taken shelter of me is beyond the guṇas. (SB 11.25.26)

Another meaning is as follows.

The devotees have no qualities related to injunctions and prohibitions which give rise to concepts of good and bad.

They have no good qualities by performing pious acts and no bad qualities by performing forbidden acts.

Śiva describes how the devotees see equally (sama-cittānām):

**nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ**

Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of Nārāyaṇa never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same. SB 6.17.28

What to speak of seeing material faults in the perfect devotees who have attained the Lord by bhakti (upeyusām), one should not find fault even in the sādhakas who commit sins. The Lord has said:

**ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate |
teṣām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham |||**

I carry the burden of supply and maintenance of those who desire constant association with me, and who, thinking only of me, worship only me. BG 9.22

Glories of Bhakti and Bhakta (27-37)

|| 11.20.37 ||

evam etān mayā diṣṭān
anutiṣṭhanti me pathaḥ
kṣemaṁ vindanti mat-sthānam
yad brahma paramaṁ viduḥ

Persons who seriously follow (**anutiṣṭhanti**) these methods of achieving me (**me pathaḥ**), which I have personally taught (**evam etān mayā diṣṭān**), attain (**vindanti**) peace (**kṣemaṁ**), my abode Vaikuṅṭha (**mat-sthānam**), or liberation in Brahman (**yad brahma paramaṁ viduḥ**).

Kṛṣṇa summarizes the best paths.

Those who follow my instructions obtain results according to the yoga they choose.

The followers of niṣkāma-karma obtain peace.

The devotees obtain Vaikuṅṭha.

The jñānīs attain Brahman.