

"Path of Perfection" by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Introduction

When we see a book with a title like *The Path of Perfection*, we may react with a bit of common skepticism: "Oh, another book claiming to give all the answers. One more do-it-yourself enlightenment scheme." And certainly it seems that such skepticism is justified nowadays. Our natural desire for ultimate meaning, happiness, enlightenment, liberation, and salvation has become the most exploited commodity of the twentieth century, creating what one contemporary theologian termed a disastrous "seduction of the spirit." This seduction is, indeed, the most tragic kind of exploitation. And the unfortunate consequence of this exploitation is a kind of deadening cynicism that discourages our search for self-fulfillment and a means to attain it.

The contemporary, thoughtful reader, weary of the many speculative, simplistic books cluttering the bookstore shelves, offering instant formulas for psychological or spiritual salvation, will find *The Path of Perfection* a welcome relief. Herein one will find a clear, intriguing explanation of the philosophy and practice of mankind's oldest system of spiritual development--yoga.

Now, the word yoga may conjure up an image of some skinny fakir contorted like a human pretzel, or perhaps a room full of corpulent matrons in black leotards struggling to stand on their heads in hope of improving their health, losing weight, or increasing their sexual powers. This is not what we mean by yoga. Here we are referring to an ancient philosophy and meditational system that has been practiced by millions throughout the ages. What has, in modern times, been reduced to

a commercially exploited technique of bodily agility and pseudomeditation was once a comprehensive and easily applied form of self-realization.

The path of perfection consists of a historic series of talks--elaborations on a previously published commentary--by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977) on India's greatest spiritual classic, the Bhagavad-gita. In these absorbing talks, Srila Prabhupada explores deeply the philosophy of yoga as explained in the Sixth and Eighth Chapters of the Gita, showing clearly how these timeless teachings apply to twentieth century mankind. Srila Prabhupada's talks probe questions concerning the nature of consciousness, techniques of meditation, karma, death, reincarnation, and even spiritual ecstasy.

The Bhagavad-gita, described by one contemporary psychologist as "a remarkable psychotherapeutic session," appears to us in the form of an extraordinary dialogue between Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His warrior disciple Arjuna. Perplexed and confused about his identity and purpose, Arjuna turns to Krsna, who reveals "the path of perfection" to His able student. The essence of Lord Krsna's teachings is that one must become a yogi, that is, one whose life is centered on the practice of yoga. And what is yoga? The Sanskrit word yoga literally means "union," and refers to the union, in love, between the individual consciousness and the Supreme Consciousness, the self and the Superself, the soul and God. Yoga is, indeed, "the path of perfection," because it aims toward this most exalted human attainment.

In the Bhagavad-gita, we discover four basic varieties of yoga described. Karma-yoga refers to the process whereby one performs his work for God, without the selfish desire for personal gain. Jnana-yoga is the process of elevation to spiritual consciousness through the cultivation of philosophical knowledge. The astanga-yoga system, of which the modern "hatha-yoga" is a watered-down version, is a mechanical, meditative practice meant to control the mind and senses and focus one's concentration on the Supreme. These three yoga systems culminate in bhakti-yoga, the yoga of selfless, ecstatic, devotional love of God, Krsna. Lord Krsna Himself states in the last verse of Chapter Six, "Of all yogis, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all."

In *The Path of Perfection*, Srila Prabhupada offers a brilliant summary of the methods of bhakti-yoga, revealing the universal applicability of this simple but all-inclusive form of yoga. He shows how even those who are entangled in the complexity and chaos of modern materialistic life can begin an uncomplicated practice which purifies the mind and puts one in touch with the Supreme Consciousness.

This, perhaps, was Srila Prabhupada's greatest contribution to our age. Srila Prabhupada was an acknowledged master scholar of India's ancient spiritual culture and of its linguistic foundation, the Sanskrit language. But he was not merely a textual scholar or a philosopher or theologian engaged in the manufacture of interesting philosophical or theological notions. He was a true spiritual genius who succeeded in bringing to life the essence of India's universal spiritual wisdom in a form which is easy for twentieth century man to understand and practice. This was the unique genius which inspired the late prime minister of India, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, to declare openly that the writings of

Srila Prabhupada "are a significant contribution to the salvation of mankind." The transforming quality of Srila Prabhupada's writings was also appreciated by sociologist Elwin H. Powell, who commented on Srila Prabhupada's best-selling edition of the Bhagavad-gita: "This transcendental mysticism from the East is now taking root in the 'countercultures' of the West and providing for many a way out of the wilderness of a disintegrating civilization.... If truth is what works, there must be a kind of truth in the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, since those who follow its teachings display a joyous serenity usually missing in the bleak and strident lives of contemporary people."

--The Publishers

Chapter One

Yoga as Action

In the Sixth and Eighth Chapters of Bhagavad-gita, Lord Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, explains that the eightfold yoga system is a means to control the mind and senses. This method, however, is very difficult for people to perform, especially in this age of Kali, an age characterized by ignorance and chaos.

Although this eightfold yoga system is particularly recommended in the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, the Lord emphasizes that the process of karma-yoga, action in Krsna consciousness, is superior. In this world, everyone acts to maintain his family, and everyone is working with a view to some self-interest, or personal sense gratification, be it concentrated or extended. But to act perfectly is to act in Krsna consciousness, and this means acting detached from the fruits of labor.

It is our duty to act in Krsna consciousness because we are constitutionally parts and parcels of the Supreme. The parts of the body work for the satisfaction of the entire body, not for the individual parts. The goal is the satisfaction of the complete whole. Similarly, the living entity should act for the satisfaction of the supreme whole, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and not for his own personal satisfaction. One who can do this is the perfect sannyasi and the perfect yogi. In the first verse of the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, the chapter dealing with sankhya-yoga, Bhagavan Sri Krsna states,

anasritah karma-phalam
karyam karma karoti yah
sa sannyasi ca yogi ca
na niragnir na cakriyah

"One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and who works as he is obligated is in the renounced order of life, and he is the true mystic, not he who lights no fire and performs no work."

Sometimes sannyasis (renunciates) incorrectly think that they have become liberated from all material engagements and therefore no longer

have to perform agni-hotra yajnas, or fire sacrifices. This is a mistake. Certain yajnas (sacrifices) have to be performed by everyone for purification. Since sannyasis are not traditionally required to perform yajnas, they sometimes think that they can attain liberation by ceasing to perform the ritualistic yajnas, but actually, unless one comes to the platform of Krsna consciousness, there is no question of liberation. Those sannyasis who cease to perform yajnas are in fact acting out of self-interest, because their goal is to become one with the impersonal Brahman. That is the ultimate goal of the impersonalists (Mayavadis), who have one major goal or demand: to become one with the supreme impersonal Being. The devotees have no such demands. They are simply satisfied in serving Krsna for the satisfaction of Krsna. They do not want anything in return. That is the characteristic of pure devotion.

It was Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu who expressed this devotional attitude so succinctly:

na dhanam najanam na sundarim
kavitam va jagadisa kamaye
mama janmani janmanisvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi

"O Almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor to enjoy beautiful women. Nor do I want any number of followers. What I want is only the causeless mercy of Your devotional service in my life, birth after birth." (Siksastaka 4) In essence, this is the bhakti-yoga system. There are many examples of the pure devotional attitude. Once Lord Nrsimhadeva told Prahlada Maharaja, "My dear boy, you have suffered so much for Me. Whatever you want, ask for it." Being a pure devotee, Prahlada Maharaja refused to ask for anything. He said, "My dear Master, I am not carrying out mercantile business with You. I will not accept any remuneration for my service." This is the pure devotional attitude.

Yogis and jnanis are demanding to become one with the Supreme because they have such bitter experience suffering the material pangs. They want to become one with the Lord because they are suffering in separation. A pure devotee, however, does not experience this. Although separate from the Lord, he fully enjoys the service of the Lord in separation. The desire to become one with the impersonal Brahman, or to merge with God, is certainly greater than any material desire, but this is not without self-interest. Similarly, the mystic yogi who practices the yoga system with half-open eyes, ceasing all material activities, desires some satisfaction for his personal self. Such yogis are desirous of material power, and that is their conception of the perfection of yoga. Actually, this is not the perfection of yoga, but a materialistic process.

If one practices the regulative principles of yoga, he can attain eight kinds of perfection. He can become lighter than a cotton swab. He can become heavier than a great stone. He can immediately get whatever he likes. Sometimes he can even create a planet. Although rare, such powerful yogis actually exist. Visvamisra Yogi wanted to beget a man from a palm tree. He was thinking, "Why should a man have to live so many months within the womb of his mother? Why can't he be produced just like a fruit?" Thinking like this, Visvamisra Yogi produced men like coconuts. Sometimes yogis are so powerful, they can perform such acts,

but these are all material powers. Ultimately such yogis are vanquished, because they cannot retain these material powers indefinitely. Bhakta-yogis are not interested in such powers.

The bhakti-yogi, acting in Krsna consciousness, works for the satisfaction of the whole without self-interest. A Krsna conscious person does not desire self-satisfaction. Rather, his criterion of success is the satisfaction of Krsna; therefore he is considered the perfect sannyasi and the perfect yogi.

A pure devotee does not even want salvation. The salvationists want to be saved from rebirth, and the voidists also want to put an end to all material life. Caitanya Mahaprabhu, however, requested only devotional service to Lord Krsna, birth after birth; in other words, Caitanya Mahaprabhu was prepared to endure material miseries in one body after another. What, then, was Caitanya Mahaprabhu's desire? He wanted to engage in God's service, and nothing more, for that is the real perfection of yoga.

Whether in the spiritual sky or the material sky, the individual spirit soul is constitutionally the same. It is said that he is one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair. This means that our position is that of a small particle. But spirit can expand. Just as we develop a material body in the material world, we develop a spiritual body in the spiritual world. In the material world, expansion takes place in contact with matter. In the spiritual world, this expansion is spiritual.

Actually, the first lesson of Bhagavad-gita is, "I am spirit soul. I am different from this body." I am a living force, but this material body is not a living force. It is dull matter, and it is activated only because spiritual force is present. In the spiritual world, everything is living force; there is no dead matter. There, the body is totally spiritual. One may compare the spirit soul with oil and the body with water. When oil is in water, there is a distinction, and that distinction always remains. In the spiritual sky, there is no question of oil being placed in water. There everything is spirit.

The impersonalists do not want to develop a body. They simply want to remain spiritual particles, and that is their idea of happiness. But we bhakti-yogis (Vaisnavas) want to serve Krsna, and therefore we require hands, legs, and all the other bodily parts. Indeed, we are given these bodies in order to serve Krsna. Just as we develop a material body in our mother's womb, we can similarly develop a spiritual body in the spiritual world.

The spiritual body is developed through the practice of Krsna consciousness. This material body is spiritualized by this bhakti-yoga process. If you place an iron within fire, the iron becomes so hot that it also becomes fiery. When the iron is red hot, it acquires all the qualities of fire. If you touch something with that iron, that iron will act as fire. Similarly, although this body is material, it can become spiritualized through Krsna consciousness and act as spirit. Although copper is just a metal, as soon as it comes in contact with electricity, it becomes electrified, and if you touch it, you will receive an electric shock.

As soon as your body is spiritualized, material activity ceases. Material activity means acting for sense gratification. As you become spiritualized, material demands dwindle until they become nil. How is this possible? In order for an iron to act as fire, it must remain constantly in contact with fire. In order for the material body to

become spiritualized, one must remain constantly in Krsna consciousness. When this material body is fully engaged in spiritual activities, it becomes spiritual.

According to the Vedic system, the body of a high personality, a sannyasi, is not burned but buried, because a sannyasi's body is considered spiritual, having ceased to engage in material activities. If everyone in this world engages fully in Krsna consciousness and ceases to work for sense gratification, this entire world will immediately become spiritual. Therefore it is necessary to learn how to work for the satisfaction of Krsna. This requires a little time to understand. If something is used for Krsna's satisfaction, it is spiritual. Since we are using microphones, typewriters, etc., in order to talk and write about Krsna, they become spiritualized. What is the difference between prasada and ordinary food? Some people may say, "What is this prasada? We are eating the same food. Why do you call it prasada?" It is prasada because it has been offered for Krsna's satisfaction and has thus become spiritualized.

In a higher sense, there is no matter at all. Everything is spiritual. Because Krsna is spiritual and matter is one of the energies of Krsna, matter is also spiritual. Krsna is totally spiritual, and spirit comes from spirit. However, because the living entities are misusing this energy--that is, using it for something other than Krsna's purposes--it becomes materialized, and so we call it matter. The purpose of this Krsna consciousness movement is to respiritualize this energy. It is our purpose to respiritualize the whole world, socially and politically. Of course, this may not be possible, but it is our ideal. At least if we individually take up this respiritualization process, our lives become perfect.

In Bhagavad-gita (9.22) Krsna says that He provides for His devotees by giving them what they lack and preserving what they have. People are very fond of saying that God helps those who help themselves, but they do not understand that helping yourself means putting yourself under Krsna's protection. If one thinks, "Oh, I can help myself. I can protect myself," one is thinking foolishly. As long as my finger is attached to my body, it is useful, and I may spend thousands of dollars to preserve it. But if this finger is cut off, it is useless and is thrown away. Similarly, we are part and parcel of Krsna, and helping ourselves means putting ourselves in our proper position as His parts and parcels. Otherwise we are only fit to be cast away. The finger can help itself only when situated properly on the hand and working on behalf of the entire body. If the finger thinks, "I will separate myself from this body and simply help myself," that finger will be cast away and will die. As soon as we think, "I shall live independently of Krsna," that is our spiritual death, and as soon as we engage in Krsna's service, as His part and parcel, that is our spiritual life. Therefore, helping oneself means knowing one's actual position and working accordingly. It is not possible to help oneself without knowing one's position.

Service means activity, for when we serve someone, we are acting. When we serve Krsna, we are preaching Krsna consciousness, or cooking, or cleansing the temple, or distributing books about Krsna, or writing about Him, or shopping for foodstuff to offer Him. There are so many ways to serve. Helping Krsna means acting for Him, not sitting down in one place and artificially meditating. Krsna consciousness means

activity. Whatever assets we have should be utilized for Krsna. That is the process of bhakti-yoga. Krsna has given us a mind, and we must utilize this mind to think of Krsna. We have been given these hands, and we must use them to wash the temple or cook for Krsna. We have been given these legs, and we should use them to go to the temple of Krsna. We have been given a nose, and we should use it to smell the flowers that have been offered to Krsna. Through the process of bhakti-yoga, we engage all these senses in the service of Krsna, and in this way the senses are spiritualized.

In Bhagavad-gita, Arjuna was refusing to act, and Krsna was inspiring him to engage in activity. The entire Bhagavad-gita is an inspiration to work, to engage in Krsna consciousness, to act on Krsna's behalf. Krsna never tells Arjuna, "My dear friend Arjuna, don't concern yourself with this war. Just sit down and meditate upon Me." This is not the message of Bhagavad-gita. We are not to refrain from all activity, but only from those activities that impede our consciousness of Krsna. Meditation means stopping all nonsensical activity. Those who are advanced in Krsna consciousness are constantly working for Krsna.

A mother tells only her bad child to sit down and do nothing. If a child can do nothing but disturb his mother, the mother says, "My dear child, just sit down here and keep quiet." But if the child can work nicely, the mother says, "My dear child, will you please help me do this? Will you go over there and do that?" Sitting still in one place is just for those who do not know how to work sensibly. As long as the child sits in one place, he does not raise havoc. Sitting still means negating nonsense; it is not positive activity. In negation, there is no life. Positive activities constitute life, and positive activity is the message of Bhagavad-gita. Spiritual life is not "Don't do this." Spiritual life is "Do this!" In order to act properly, there are certain things that one must know not to do; therefore certain activities are forbidden. The whole Bhagavad-gita, however, is "do." Krsna says, "Fight for Me." At the beginning of Bhagavad-gita, when Arjuna told Krsna, "I will not fight," Sri Krsna said,

kutas tva kasmalam idam
visame samupasthitam
anarya justam asvargyam
akirti-karam ariuna

"My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the progressive values of life. They lead not to higher planets, but to infamy." (Bg. 2.2) Krsna directly tells Arjuna that he is speaking like a non-Aryan--that is, like one who does not know the spiritual values of life. So Krsna consciousness does not mean sitting down idly.

Krsna Himself does not sit down idly. All His pastimes are filled with activity. When we go to the spiritual world, we will see that Krsna is always engaged in dancing, eating, and enjoying. He does not sit down to meditate. Is there any account of the gopis meditating? Did Caitanya Mahaprabhu sit down to meditate? No, He was always dancing and chanting Hare Krsna. The spirit soul is naturally active. How can we sit down silently and do nothing? It is not possible. Therefore, after Sri Krsna outlined the sankhya-yoga system in the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, Arjuna frankly said,

yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah
samyena madhusudana
etasyaham na pasyami
cancalatvat sthitim sthiram

"O Madhusudana [Krsna], the system of yoga which You have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady." (Bg. 6.33) Although Arjuna was highly elevated and was Krsna's intimate friend, he immediately refused to take up this sankhya-yoga system. In essence, he said, "It is not possible for me." How could it have been possible? Arjuna was a warrior, a householder, and he wanted a kingdom. What time did he have for meditation? He flatly refused to practice this type of meditational yoga, saying that the mind is as difficult to control as the wind (Bg.6.34). That is a fact. It is not possible to control the mind artificially; therefore we must engage the mind in Krsna consciousness. Then it is controlled. If Arjuna found this process more difficult than controlling the wind, then what of us? After all, Arjuna was not an ordinary man. He was personally talking with the Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna, and he proclaimed the mind to be like a great wind. How can we control the wind? We can control the mind only by fixing it on Krsna's lotus feet. That is the perfection of meditation.

No one really wants to sit down and meditate. Why should we? We're meant for positive activity, for recreation, for pleasure. In Krsna consciousness, our recreation is dancing and chanting, and when we get tired, we take prasada. Is dancing difficult? Is chanting difficult? We don't charge anything to dance in the temple. If you go to a ballroom, you have to pay to enter, but we do not charge. It is natural to enjoy music and dancing and palatable foods. These are our recreations, and this is our method of meditation. So this yoga system is not at all laborious. It is simply recreation, susukham. It is stated in the Ninth Chapter of Bhaga vad-gita (9.2) that this yoga is susukham--very happy. "It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed." It is natural, automatic, and spontaneous. It is our real life in the spiritual world.

In Vaikuntha, the spiritual world, there is no anxiety. Vaikuntha means "freedom from anxiety," and in Vaikuntha the liberated souls are always dancing, chanting, and taking prasada. There are no factories, hard work, or technical institutions. There is no need for these artificial things. In Vedanta-sutra it is stated, anandamayo 'bhyasat: God is anandamaya, full of bliss and pleasure. Since we are part and parcel of God, we also possess these same qualities. So the goal of our yoga process is to join with the supreme anandamaya, Sri Krsna, to join His dance party. Then we will be actually happy.

On this earth we are trying to be happy artificially and are therefore frustrated. Once we are situated in Krsna consciousness, we will revive our original position and become simply joyful. Since our actual nature is anandamaya, blissful, we are always searching for happiness. In the cities we are inundated with advertisements. Restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and dance halls are always announcing, "Come on, here is ananda. Here is pleasure." That is because everyone is searching for ananda, pleasure. Our society for Krsna consciousness is also announcing, "Here is ananda," but our standard of pleasure is very different. In any case, the goal--pleasure--is the same.

Most people are hunting for pleasure on the gross material platform. The more advanced search for pleasure in speculation, philosophy, poetry, or art. The bhakti-yogi, however, searches for pleasure on the transcendental platform, and that is his only business. Why are people working so hard all day? They are thinking, "Tonight I shall enjoy. Tonight I will associate with this girl or with my wife." Thus people are going to so much trouble to acquire a little pleasure. Pleasure is the ultimate goal, but unfortunately, under illusion, people do not know where real pleasure is to be found. Real pleasure exists eternally in the transcendental form of Krsna.

Perhaps you have seen pictures of Krsna, and if so, you have noticed that Krsna is always jolly. If you join His society, you will also become jolly. Have you ever seen pictures of Krsna working with a machine? Have you ever seen pictures of Krsna smoking? No, He is by nature full of pleasure, and if you unfold yourself in that way, you will also find pleasure. Pleasure cannot be found artificially.

ananda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibha vitabhis
tabhir ya eva nija-rupataya kalabhih
goloka eva nivasaty akhilatma-bhuto
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, residing in His own realm, Goloka, with Radha, resembling His own spiritual figure, the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty-four artistic activities, in the company of Her confidantes (sakhis), embodiments of the extensions of Her bodily form, permeated and vitalized by His ever-blissful spiritual rasa." (Brahma-samhita 5.37)

The word rasa means "taste," or "mellow." We enjoy sweets or candy because of their taste. Everyone is trying to enjoy some taste, and we want to enjoy sex because there is some taste there. That is called adi taste. Material tastes are different because they are tasted and quickly finished. Material tastes last only a few minutes. You may take a piece of candy, taste it, and say, "Oh, that is very nice," but you have to taste another in order to continue the enjoyment. Material taste is not unlimited, but real taste is without end. Spiritual taste cannot be forgotten; it goes on increasing. Anandambudhi-varadhanam. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "This taste is always increasing." Spiritual taste is like the ocean in the sense that it is very great. The Pacific Ocean is always tossing, but it is not increasing. By God's order, the ocean does not extend beyond its limit, and if it extends, there is havoc. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that there is another ocean, an ocean of transcendental bliss, an ocean that is always increasing. Anandam budhi-varadhanam pratipadam purnamrtasvadanam/ sarvatmasnapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam. By chanting Hare Krsna, our pleasure potency increases more and more.

One who has realized Sri Krsna is always living in Vrndavana, Vaikuntha. Although a devotee may seem to be living in some place far from Vrndavana, he is always living in Vrndavana, because he knows that Krsna is present everywhere, even within the atom. The Supreme Lord is bigger than the biggest and smaller than the smallest. Once we are fully realized and established in Krsna consciousness, we never lose sight of Krsna, and our bliss is always increasing. This is the true yoga system, bhakti-yoga, as expounded by Lord Sri Krsna Himself in Bhagavad-gita.

Chapter Two

Mastering the Mind and Senses

yam sannyasam iti prahur
yogam tam viddhi pandava
na hy asannyasta-sankalpo
yogi bhavati kascana

"What is called renunciation is the same as yoga, or linking oneself with the Supreme, for no one can become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification." (Bg. 6.2)

This is the real purpose of the practice of yoga. The word yoga means "to join." Although we are naturally part and parcel of the Supreme, in our conditioned state we are now separated. Because of our separation, we are reluctant to understand God and to speak of our relationship with Him and are even inclined to think of such discussion as a waste of time. In a church or in a Krsna consciousness temple, we speak of God, but people in general are not very interested. They think it is a waste of time, a kind of recreation in the name of spiritual advancement, and they believe that this time could be better used to earn money or enjoy themselves in a nightclub or restaurant.

Therefore, it is due to sense enjoyment that we are not attracted to God, and therefore it is said that those who are addicted to sense enjoyment cannot become yogis--that is, they are not eligible to participate in the yoga system. One cannot advance in any yoga system if he partakes in sense gratification and then sits down to try to meditate. This is just a colossal hoax. Such contradictory activity has no meaning. First of all, yoga means controlling the senses--yama-niyama. There are eight stages of yoga--yama, niyama, asana, dhyana, dharana, pranayama, pratyahara, and samadhi.

In this Sixth Chapter, in which the Lord speaks of the sankhya-yoga system, He states from the very beginning that one cannot become a yogi unless one renounces the desire for sense gratification. Therefore, if one indulges his senses, he cannot be accepted as a yogi. Yoga demands strict celibacy. In the yoga system, there is no sex life. If one indulges in sex, he cannot be a yogi. Many so-called yogis come from India to America and say, "Yes, you can do whatever you like. You can have as much sex as you like. Just meditate. I will give you some mantra, and you will give me some money." This is all nonsense. According to the authoritative statements of Sri Krsna, one cannot become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification. This is explicitly stated as the first condition for yoga practice.

aruruksor muner yogam
karma karanam ucyate
yogarudhasya tasyaiva
samah karanam ucyate

"For one who is a neophyte in the eightfold yoga system, work is said to be the means; and for one who has already attained to yoga, cessation of all material activities is said to be the means." (Bg. 6.3) According to this verse, there are those who are attempting to reach the perfectional stage and those who have already attained that stage. As long as one is not situated on the perfectional platform, he must engage in so many works. In the West, there are many yoga societies attempting to practice the asana system, and therefore they practice sitting in different postures. That may help, but it is only a process by which one can attain the real platform. The real yoga system, in its perfectional stage, is far different from these bodily gymnastics.

It is important to understand, however, that from the beginning, a Krsna conscious person is situated on the platform of meditation because he is always thinking of Krsna. Being constantly engaged in the service of Krsna, he is considered to have ceased all material activities.

yada hi nendriyarthesu
na karmasv anusajjate
sarva-sankalpa-san nyasi
yogarudhas tadocyate

"A person is said to have attained to yoga when, having renounced all material desires, he neither acts for sense gratification nor engages in fruitive activities." (Bg. 6.4)

This is actually the perfectional stage of yoga, and one who has attained this stage is said to have attained to yoga. This is to say that he has connected, joined, or linked himself with the supreme whole. If a part is disconnected from a machine, it serves no function, but as soon as it is properly attached to the machine, it works properly and carries out its different functions. That is the meaning of yoga--joining with the supreme whole, serving in conjunction with the total machine. Presently we are disconnected, and our material fruitive activities are simply a waste of time. One who engages in such activity is described in Bhagavad-gita as a mudha--that is, a rascal. Although one may earn thousands of dollars daily and be an important businessman, he is described in Bhagavad-gita as a mudha, rascal, because he is just wasting his time in eating, sleeping, defending, and mating.

People do not stop to consider that they are actually working very hard for nothing. One who earns millions of dollars cannot really eat much more than a man who makes ten dollars. A man who earns millions of dollars cannot mate with millions of women. That is not within his power. His mating power is the same as one who earns ten dollars, just as his power of eating is the same. This is to say that our power of enjoyment is limited. One should therefore think, "My enjoyment is the same as that of the man who is earning ten dollars daily. So why am I working so hard to earn millions of dollars? Why am I wasting my energy? I should engage my time and energy in understanding God. That is the purpose of life." If one has no economic problems, he has sufficient time to understand Krsna consciousness. If he wastes this precious time, he is called a mudha, a rascal or an ass.

According to the preceding verse, a person is said to have attained yoga when he has renounced all material desires. Once we are situated perfectly in yoga, we are satisfied. We no longer experience material desires. We no longer act for sense gratification or engage in fruitive

activity. When we speak of "fruitive activity," we refer to activities carried out for the purpose of sense gratification. That is, we are earning money in order to gratify our senses. If one is virtuous, he engages in pious activities--he donates money to charities, opens hospitals, schools, etc. Although these are certainly virtuous activities, they are ultimately meant for sense gratification. How is this? If I donate to an educational institution, for instance, I will receive good educational facilities and will become highly educated in my next life. Being thus educated, I will attain a good position and will acquire a good amount of money. Then how will I utilize this money? For sense gratification. Thus these virtuous and fruitive activities form a kind of cycle.

We often hear the expression "a better standard of life," but what does this mean? It is said that the standard of life in America is superior to that in India, but in both countries there is eating, sleeping, defending, and mating. Of course, in America the quality of food may be better, but the eating process is there. A superior standard of life does not mean superior spiritual realization. It just means better eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. This is called fruitive activity, and it is based on sense gratification.

Yoga has nothing to do with sense gratification or fruitive activity. Yoga means connecting with the Supreme. Dhruva Maharaja underwent severe austerities in order to see God, and when he finally saw God, he said, svamin krtartho 'smi varam na yace.: "My dear Lord, I am now fully satisfied. I am not asking for anything more. I do not want any further benediction from You." Why didn't Dhruva Maharaja ask for benedictions? What is a "benediction"? Generally, benediction means receiving a great kingdom, a beautiful wife, palatable food, and so forth, but when one is actually connected with God, he does not want such "benedictions." He is fully satisfied. Svamin krtartho 'smi varam na yace.

Actually, Dhruva Maharaja initially searched for God in order to attain his father's kingdom. Dhruva Maharaja's mother was rejected by his father, and his stepmother resented his sitting on his father's lap. Indeed, she forbade him to sit on his father's lap because Dhruva Maharaja was not born in her womb. Although only five years old, Dhruva Maharaja was a ksatriya, and he took this as a great insult. Going to his own mother, he said, "Mother, my stepmother has insulted me by forbidding me to sit on my father's lap." Dhruva Maharaja then started to cry, and his mother said, "My dear boy, what can I do? Your father loves your stepmother more than he loves me. I can do nothing." Dhruva Maharaja then said, "But I want my father's kingdom. Tell me how I can get it." "My dear boy," his mother said, "if Krsna, God, blesses you, you can get it." "Where is God?" Dhruva Maharaja asked. "Oh, it is said that God is in the forest," his mother said. "Great sages go to the forest to search for God."

Hearing this, Dhruva Maharaja went directly to the forest and began to perform severe penances. Finally he saw God, and when he saw Him, he no longer desired his father's kingdom. Instead, he said, "My dear Lord, I was searching for some pebbles, but instead I have found valuable jewels. I no longer care for my father's kingdom. Now I am fully satisfied." When one is actually connected with God, he is totally satisfied. His satisfaction is infinitely greater than so-called

enjoyment in this material world. That is the satisfaction resulting from God realization, and that is the perfection of yoga.

When a person is fully engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, he is pleased in himself, and thus he is no longer engaged in sense gratification or in fruitive activities. Otherwise, one must be engaged in sense gratification, since one cannot live without engagement. It is impossible to cease all activity. As stated before, it is our nature as living entities to act. It is said, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." If we have no Krsna conscious engagement, we will engage in sense gratification or fruitive activity. If a child is not trained or educated, he becomes spoiled. If one does not practice the yoga system, if he does not attempt to control his senses by the yoga process, he will engage his senses in their own gratification. When one is gratifying his senses, there is no question of practicing yoga.

Without Krsna consciousness, one must be always seeking self-centered or extended selfish activities. But a Krsna conscious person can do everything for the satisfaction of Krsna and thereby be perfectly detached from sense gratification. One who has not realized Krsna must mechanically try to escape material desires before being elevated to the top rung of the yoga ladder.

One may compare the yoga system to a stepladder. One yogi may be situated on the fifth step, another yogi may be on the fiftieth step and yet another on the five-hundredth step. The purpose, of course, is to reach the top. Although the entire ladder may be called the yoga system, one who is on the fifth step is not equal to one who is higher up. In Bhagavad-gita, Sri Krsna delineates a number of yoga systems--karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, dhyana-yoga, and bhakti-yoga. All of these systems are connected with God, Krsna, just as the entire ladder is connected to the topmost floor. This is not to say that everyone practicing the yoga system is situated on the topmost floor; only he who is in full Krsna consciousness is so situated. Others are situated on different steps of the yogic ladder.

uddhared atmanatmanam
natmanam a vasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur
atmaiva ripur atmanah

"A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well." (Bg. 6.5) The word atma denotes body, mind, and soul--depending on different circumstances. In the yoga system, the mind and the conditioned soul are especially important. Since the mind is the central point of yoga practice, atma refers here to the mind. The purpose of the yoga system is to control the mind and to draw it away from attachment to sense objects. It is stressed herein that the mind must be so trained that it can deliver the conditioned soul from the mire of nescience.

In the astanga-yoga system, these eightfold yogas--dhyana, dharana, etc.--are meant to control the mind. Sri Krsna explicitly states that a man must utilize his mind to elevate himself. Unless one can control the mind, there is no question of elevation. The body is like a chariot, and the mind is the driver. If you tell your driver, "Please take me to the Krsna temple," the driver will take you there, but if you tell him, "Please take me to that liquor house," you will go there. It is the

driver's business to take you wherever you like. If you can control the driver, he will take you where you should go, but if not, he will ultimately take you wherever he likes. If you have no control over your driver, your driver is your enemy, but if he acts according to your orders, he is your friend.

The yoga system is meant to control the mind in such a way that the mind will act as your friend. Sometimes the mind acts as a friend and sometimes as an enemy. Because we are part and parcel of the Supreme, who has infinite independence, we have minute, or finite, independence. It is the mind that is controlling that independence, and therefore he may either take us to the Krsna temple or to some nightclub.

It is the purpose of this Krsna consciousness movement to fix the mind on Krsna. When the mind is so fixed, he cannot do anything but act as our friend. He has no scope to act any other way. As soon as Krsna is seated in the mind, there is light, just as when the sun is in the sky, darkness is vanquished. Krsna is just like the sun, and when He is present, there is no scope for darkness. If we keep Krsna on our mind, the darkness of maya will never be able to enter. Keeping the mind fixed on Krsna is the perfection of yoga. If the mind is strongly fixed on the Supreme, it will not allow any nonsense to enter, and there will be no falldown. If the mind is strong, the driver is strong, and we may go wherever we may desire. The entire yoga system is meant to make the mind strong, to make it incapable of deviating from the Supreme.

Sa vai manah krsna-padaravindayoh. One should fix his mind on Krsna, just as Ambarisa Maharaja did when he had a fight with a great astanga-yogi named Durvasa Muni. Since Ambarisa Maharaja was a householder, he was a pounds-shillings man. This means that he had to take into account pounds, shillings, and sixpence, or dollars and cents. Apart from being a householder, Maharaja Ambarisa was also a great king and devotee. Durvasa Muni was a great yogi who happened to be very envious of Maharaja Ambarisa. Durvasa Muni was thinking, "I am a great yogi, and I can travel in space. This man is an ordinary king, and he does not possess such yogic powers. Still, people pay him more honor. Why is this? I will teach him a good lesson." Durvasa Muni then proceeded to pick a quarrel with Maharaja Ambarisa, but because the king was always thinking of Krsna, he managed to defeat this great yogi. Durvasa Muni was consequently directed by Narayana to take shelter at the feet of Maharaja Ambarisa. Durvasa Muni was such a perfect yogi that within a year he could travel throughout the material universe and also penetrate the spiritual universe. Indeed, he went directly to the abode of God, Vaikuntha, and saw the Personality of Godhead Himself. Yet Durvasa Muni was so weak that he had to return to earth and fall at the feet of Maharaja Ambarisa. Maharaja Ambarisa was an ordinary king, but his one great qualification was that he was always thinking of Krsna. Thus his mind was always controlled, and he was situated at the highest perfectional level of yoga. We also can very easily control the mind by keeping it fixed on the lotus feet of Krsna within. Simply by thinking of Krsna, we become victorious conquerors, topmost yogis.

Yoga indriya-samyamah. The yoga system is meant to control the senses, and since the mind is above the senses, if we can control the mind, our senses are automatically controlled. The tongue may want to eat something improper, but if the mind is strong, it can say, "No. You cannot eat this. You can only eat krsna-prasada." In this way the tongue, as well as all the other senses, can be controlled by the mind.

Indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param manah. The material body consists of the senses, and consequently the body's activities are sensual activities. However, above the senses is the mind, and above the mind is the intelligence, and above the intelligence is the spirit soul. If one is on the spiritual platform, his intelligence, mind, and senses are all spiritualized. The purpose of this Krsna consciousness process is to actualize the spiritualization of senses, mind, and intelligence. The spirit soul is superior to all, but because he is sleeping, he has given power of attorney to the fickle mind. However, when the soul is awakened, he is once again master, and the servile mind cannot act improperly. Once we are awakened in Krsna consciousness, the intelligence, mind, and senses cannot act nonsensically. They must act in accordance with the dictations of the spirit soul. That is spiritualization and purification. Hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate. We must serve the master of the senses with the senses. The Supreme Lord is called Hrsikesa, which means that He is the original controller of the senses, just as a king is the original controller of all the activities of a state, and the citizens are secondary controllers.

Bhakti means acting spiritually in accordance with the desires of Hrsikesa. How can we act? Since we must act with our senses, we must spiritualize our senses in order to act properly. As stated before, sitting in silent meditation means stopping undesirable activity, but acting in Krsna consciousness is transcendental. The cessation of nonsensical action is not in itself perfection. We must act perfectly. Unless we train our senses to act in accordance with Hrsikesa, the master of the senses, our senses will again engage in undesirable activities, and we will fall down. Therefore we must engage the senses in action for Krsna and in this way remain firmly fixed in Krsna consciousness.

In material existence one is subjected to the influence of the mind and the senses. In fact, the pure soul is entangled in the material world because of the mind's ego, which desires to lord it over material nature. Therefore the mind should be trained so that it will not be attracted by the glitter of material nature, and in this way the conditioned soul may be saved. One should not degrade oneself by attraction to sense objects. The more one is attracted by sense objects, the more one becomes entangled in material existence. The best way to disentangle oneself is to always engage the mind in Krsna consciousness. The word hi in verse 5, Chapter Six (Bhagavad-gita), is used to emphasize this point--namely, that one must do this. It is also said,

mana eva manusyanam
karanam bandha-moksayoh
bandhaya visayasangi
muktyai nirvisayam manah

"For man, mind is the cause of bondage and mind is the cause of liberation. Mind absorbed in sense objects is the cause of bondage, and mind detached from the sense objects is the cause of liberation." (Visnu Purana 6.7.28) The mind which is always engaged in Krsna consciousness is the cause of supreme liberation. When the mind is thus engaged in Krsna consciousness, there is no chance of its being engaged in maya

consciousness. In Krsna consciousness, we remain in the sunlight, and there is no chance of our being obscured by darkness.

Because we have freedom, or liberty, we can stay within a dark room or go out into the broad daylight. That is our choice. Darkness can be eradicated by light, but light cannot be covered by darkness. If we are in a dark room and someone brings in a lamp, the darkness is vanquished. But we cannot take darkness into the sunlight. It is not possible. The darkness will simply fade away. Krsna surya-sama maya haya andhakara. Krsna is like sunlight, and maya is like darkness. So how can darkness exist in sunlight? If we always keep ourselves in the sunlight, darkness will fail to act upon us. This is the whole philosophy of Krsna consciousness: always engage in Krsna conscious activities, and maya will be dissipated, just as darkness is dissipated when there is light. This is stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.7.4):

bhakti-yogena manasi
samyak pranihite 'male
apasyat purusam purnam
mayam ca tad-apasrayam

"When the sage Vyasadeva, under the instruction of his spiritual master, Narada, fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service (bhakti-yoga) without any tinge of materialism, Vyasadeva saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead, along with His external energy, which was under full control."

The word manasi refers to the mind. When one is enlightened in bhakti-yoga, the mind becomes completely freed from all contamination (samyak pranihite 'male). When Vyasa saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he saw maya in the background (mayam ca tad-apasrayam). Whenever there is light, there is also the possibility of darkness being present. That is, darkness is the other side of light, or darkness is under the shelter of light, just as if I hold my hand up to the light, the top part of my hand will be in light, and the bottom part will be shaded. In other words, one side is light and the other darkness. When Vyasadeva saw Krsna, the Supreme Lord, he also saw maya, darkness, under His shelter.

And what is this maya? This is explained in the next verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.7.5):

yaya sammohito jiva
atmanam tri-gunatmakam
paro 'pi manute 'nartham
tat-krtam cabhipadyate

"Due to the external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries." Thus the illusory energy has temporarily covered the conditioned souls. And who are these conditioned souls? Although finite, the conditioned spirit souls are as full of light as Krsna. The problem is that the conditioned soul identifies himself with this material world. This is called illusion, false identification with matter. Although the individual spirit soul is transcendental, he engages in improper activities under the dictation of maya, and this brings about

his conditioning or false identification. This is very elaborately explained in the Seventh Chapter, First Canto, of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

In conclusion, our actual position is that of spiritual sparks, full of light. Now we are temporarily covered by this illusory energy, maya, which is dictating to us. Acting under the influence of maya, we are becoming more and more entangled in the material energy. The yoga system is meant to disentangle us, and the perfection of yoga is Krsna consciousness. Thus Krsna consciousness is the most effective means by which we can disentangle ourselves from the influence of the material energy.

Chapter Three

Learning How to See God

bandhur atmatmanas tasya
yenatmaivatmana jitah
anatmanas tu satrutve
vartetatmaiva satruvat

"For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his very mind will be the greatest enemy." (Bg. 6.6)

The purpose of the yoga system is to make the mind into a friend instead of an enemy. In material contact, the mind is in a kind of drunken condition. As stated in Caitanya-caritamrta (Madhya-lila 20.117),

krsna bhuli' sei jiva--anadi-bahirmukha
ataeva maya tare deya samsara-duhkha

"Forgetting Krsna, the living entity has been attracted by the Lord's external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy (maya) gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence." The living entity is constitutionally spirit soul, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. As soon as the mind is contaminated, the living entity, because he has a little independence, rebels. In this state, the mind dictates, "Why should I serve Krsna? I am God." Thus one labors under a false impression, and his life is spoiled. We try to conquer many things--even empires--but if we fail to conquer the mind, we are failures even if we manage to conquer an empire. Even though emperors, we will have within us our greatest enemy--our own mind.

jitatmanah prasantasya
paramatma samah itah
sitosna-sukha-duhkhesu
tatha manapamanayoh

"For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same." (Bg. 6.7)

Actually, every living entity is intended to abide by the dictation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone's heart as Paramatma. When the mind is misled by the external illusory energy, one becomes entangled in material activities. Therefore, as soon as one's mind is controlled through one of the yoga systems, one is to be considered as having already reached the destination. One has to abide by superior dictation. When the mind is fixed on the superior nature, he has no alternative but to follow the dictation of the Supreme. The mind must admit some superior dictation and follow it. When the mind is controlled, one automatically follows the dictation of the Paramatma, or Supersoul. Because this transcendental position is at once achieved by one who is in Krsna consciousness, the devotee of the Lord is unaffected by the dualities of material existence--distress and happiness, cold and heat, etc. This state is called samadhi, or absorption in the Supreme.

jnana-vijnana-trptatma
kuta-stho vijitendriyah
yukta ity ucyate yogi
sama-lostrasma-kancanah

"A person is said to be established in self-realization and is called a yogi [or mystic] when he is fully satisfied by virtue of acquired knowledge and realization. Such a person is situated in transcendence and is self-controlled. He sees everything--whether it be pebbles, stones, or gold--as the same." (Bg. 6.8)

Book knowledge without realization of the Supreme Truth is useless. This is stated as follows:

atah sri-krsna-namadi
na bhaved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hijih vadau
svayam eva sphuraty adah

"No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, quality, and pastimes of Sri Krsna through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality, and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him." (Padma Purana)

There are men in the modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance, and to reclaim all these conditioned souls, there are eighteen Puranas. Six Puranas are meant for those in the mode of goodness, six for those in the mode of passion, and six for those in the mode of ignorance. The Padma Purana is written for those in the mode of goodness. Because there are many different types of men, there are many different Vedic rituals. In the Vedic literatures there are descriptions of rituals and ceremonies in which a goat may be sacrificed in the presence of the goddess Kali. This is described in the Markandeya Purana, but this Purana is meant for the instruction of those in the mode of ignorance.

It is very difficult for one to give up his attachments all at once. If one is addicted to meat-eating and is suddenly told that he must not eat meat, he cannot do so. If one is attached to drinking liquor and is suddenly told that liquor is no good, he cannot accept this advice. Therefore, in the Puranas we find certain instructions that say in essence, "All right, if you want to eat meat, just worship the

goddess Kali and sacrifice a goat for her. Only then can you eat meat. You cannot eat meat just by purchasing it from the butcher shop. No, there must be sacrifice or restriction." In order to sacrifice a goat to the goddess Kali, one must make arrangements for a certain date and utilize certain paraphernalia. That type of puja, or worship, is allowed on the night of the dark moon, which means once a month. There are also certain mantras to be chanted when the goat is sacrificed. The goat is told, "Your life is being sacrificed before the goddess Kali; you will therefore be immediately promoted to the human form." Generally, in order to attain the human form, a living entity has to pass through many species of life on the evolutionary scale, but if a goat is sacrificed to the goddess Kali, he is immediately promoted to the human form. The mantra also says, "You have the right to kill this man who is sacrificing you." The word mamsa indicates that in his next birth, the goat will eat the flesh of the man who is presently sacrificing him. This in itself should bring the goat-eater to his senses. He should consider, "Why am I eating this flesh? Why am I doing this? I'll have to repay with my own flesh in another life." The whole idea is to discourage one from eating meat.

Thus, because there are different types of men, there are eighteen Puranas to guide them. The Vedic literatures are meant to redeem all men, not just a few. It is not that those who are meat-eaters or drunkards are rejected. A doctor accepts all patients, and he prescribes different medicines according to the disease. It is not that he gives the same medicine for all diseases or that he treats just one disease. No, he offers a specific type of medicine to whomever comes, and the patient receives gradual treatment. However, the sattvic Puranas like the Padma Purana are meant for those in the mode of goodness, for those who immediately are capable of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In Brahma-samhita it is stated, isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha: "The supreme controller is Krsna, who has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body." This is the Vedic pronouncement, and we thus accept Sri Krsna as the Supreme Lord. Those who are in the modes of passion and ignorance attempt to imagine the form of God, and when they are confused, they say, "Oh, there is no personal God. God is impersonal, or void." This is just the result of frustration. Actually, God has His form. And why not? According to the Vedanta-sutra, janmady asya yatah: "The Supreme Absolute Truth is He from whom everything emanates." It is easy to see that we have different types of bodies, different types of forms. We must consider where these forms are coming from. Where have these forms originated? We have to use a little common sense. If God is not a person, how can His sons be persons? If your father is just a void, if he is not a person, how can you be a person? If your father has no form, how can you have form? This is not very difficult; it is just a common sense question. Unfortunately, because people are frustrated, they try to imagine some form, or they conclude that because this material form is temporary and troublesome, God must be formless. Indeed, because all forms in this material world must perish, God, of necessity, must be formless.

Brahma-samhita specifically states that this conception is a mistake. Isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. God has form, but His form is sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. Sat means "eternal," cit means "knowledge," and ananda means "pleasure." God has form, but His form is

eternal and is full of knowledge and pleasure. We cannot compare His form to our form. Our form is neither eternal, full of pleasure, nor full of knowledge; therefore God's form is different.

As soon as we speak of form, we think that form must be like ours, and we therefore conclude that the eternal, all-knowing, and all-blissful God must be without form. This is not knowledge but the result of imperfect speculation. According to Padma Purana, atah sri-krsna-namadi na bha ved grahyam indriyaih: "One cannot understand the form, name, quality, or paraphernalia of God with one's material senses." Since our senses are imperfect, we cannot speculate on Him who is supremely perfect. That is not possible.

Then how is it possible to understand Him? Sevnmukhe hi jihvadau. By training and purifying our senses, we may come to understand and see God. Presently we are attempting to understand God with impure, imperfect senses. It is like someone with cataracts trying to see. Just because one has cataracts, he should not conclude that there is nothing to be seen. Similarly, we cannot presently conceive of God's form, but once our cataracts are removed, we can see. According to Brahma-samhita, premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santah sadaiva hrdayesu vilokayanti: "The devotees whose eyes are anointed with the ointment of love of God can see God within their hearts twenty-four hours a day." Purification of the senses is what is required; then we can understand the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of God. Then we'll be able to see God everywhere and in everything.

These matters are discussed thoroughly in the Vedic literatures. For instance, it is said that although God has no hands or legs, He can accept whatever we offer (apani-pado javano grhita). It is also stated that although God has neither eyes nor ears, He can see and hear everything. These are apparent contradictions, but they are meant to teach us an important lesson. When we speak of seeing, we think of material vision. Due to our material conception, we think that the eyes of God must be like ours. Therefore, in order to remove these material conceptions, the Vedic literatures say that God has no hands, legs, eyes, ears, etc. God has eyes, but His vision is infinite. He can see in darkness, and He can see everywhere at once; therefore He has different eyes. Similarly, God has ears and can hear. He may be in His kingdom, millions and millions of miles away, but He can hear us whispering, because He is sitting within. We cannot avoid God's seeing, hearing, or touching.

patram puspam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam
asnami prayatatmanah

"If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, I will accept it." (Bg. 9.26) If God does not have senses, how can He accept and eat the offerings that are presented to Him? According to ritual, we are offering Krsna food daily, and we can see that the taste of this food is immediately changed. This is a practical example. God eats, but because He is full, He does not eat like us. If I offer you a plate of food, you will eat it, and it will be finished. God is not hungry, but He eats, and at the same time, He leaves the food as it is, and thus it is transformed into prasada, His mercy. Purnasya purnam

adaya purnam evavasisyate. God is full, yet He accepts all the food that we offer. Still, the food remains as it is. He can eat with His eyes. As stated in Brahma-samhita, angani yasya sakalendriya-vrttimanti: "Every sense of the Lord's body has all the potencies of the other senses." Although we can see with our eyes, we cannot eat with our eyes. The senses of God, however, being infinite, are different. Simply by looking at the food that is offered to Him, He eats it.

This may not be understood at the present moment; therefore the Padma Purana states that when one becomes spiritually saturated by rendering transcendental service to the Lord, the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord are revealed. We cannot understand God by our own endeavor, but out of mercy God reveals Himself to us. If it is night, and you want to see the sun, you will have to wait for the sun to appear in the morning. You cannot go outside with a big torch and say, "Come on, I will show you the sunlight." In the morning, when the sun rises of its own will, we can see it. Because our senses are imperfect, we cannot see God by our own endeavor. We have to purify our senses and wait for the time when God will be pleased to reveal Himself to us. That is the process. We cannot challenge God. We cannot say, "O my dear God, my dear Krsna. Please come. I want to see You." No, God is not our order supplier. He is not our servant. When He is pleased, we will see Him; therefore this Krsna consciousness is a process by which we can please God so that He will reveal Himself to us.

Because people cannot see God, they readily accept anyone who says, "I am God." Because people have no conception of God, they are eager to accept any rascal who comes along and proclaims himself to be God. People are fond of saying, "I am searching after the truth," but in order to search for the truth, we must know what the truth is. Otherwise, how can we search it out? If we want to purchase gold, we must at least theoretically know what gold is, otherwise we will be cheated. Consequently, having no conception of the truth or of God, people are being cheated by so many rascals who say, "I am God." In a society of rascals, one rascal accepts another rascal as God, and this is all the result of rascaldom. But all this has nothing to do with God. One has to qualify himself to see and understand God, and that process of qualification is called Krsna consciousness. Sevnmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah: by engaging ourselves in God's service, we become qualified to see God. Otherwise it is not possible. We may be great scientists or scholars, but our mundane scholarship will not help us see God.

This Bhagavad-gita is the science of Krsna consciousness, and in order to understand Krsna, we must be fortunate enough to associate with a person who is in pure Krsna consciousness. We cannot understand Bhagavad-gita simply by acquiring an M.A., Ph. D., or whatever. Bhagavad-gita is a transcendental science, and it requires different senses in order to be understood. Our senses must be purified by the rendering of service, not by the acquiring of academic degrees. There are many Ph. D.'s, many scholars, who cannot understand Krsna. Therefore Krsna appears in the material world. Although He is unborn (ajo 'pi sann avyayatma), He comes to reveal Himself to us.

Thus Krsna is realized by the grace of Krsna or by the grace of a Krsna conscious person who has realized Krsna by the grace of Krsna. We cannot understand Him through academic knowledge. We can only understand Krsna by acquiring the grace of Krsna. Once we acquire His grace, we can

see Him, talk with Him--do whatever we desire. It is not that Krsna is a void. He is a person, the Supreme Person, and we can have a relationship with Him. That is the Vedic injunction. Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam: "We are all eternal persons, and God is the supreme eternal person." We are all eternal, and God is the supreme eternal. Presently, because we are engaged within these bodies, we are experiencing birth and death, but actually we are beyond birth and death. We are eternal spirit souls, but according to our work and desires, we are transmigrating from one body to another. It is explained in the Second Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (2.20),

najayate mriyate va kadacin
nayam bhutva bha vita va na bhuyah
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano
na hanyate hanyamane sarire

"For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain."

Just as God is eternal, we are also eternal, and when we establish our eternal relationship with the supreme, complete eternal, we realize our eternality. Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam. God is the supreme living entity among all living entities, the supreme eternal among all eternals. By Krsna consciousness, by purification of the senses, this knowledge will be realized, and we will come to see God.

A Krsna conscious person has realized knowledge, by the grace of Krsna, because he is satisfied with pure devotional service. By realized knowledge, one becomes perfect. By transcendental knowledge one can remain steady in his convictions, but by mere academic knowledge one can be easily deluded and confused by apparent contradictions. It is the realized soul who is actually self-controlled, because he is surrendered to Krsna. He is transcendental because he has nothing to do with mundane scholarship. For him, mundane scholarship and mental speculation, which may be as good as gold to others, are of no greater value than pebbles or stones.

Even if one is illiterate, he can realize God simply by engaging himself in submissive, transcendental loving service. God is not subjected to any material condition. He is supreme spirit, and the process of realizing Him is also beyond material considerations. Therefore, one may be a very learned scholar and still not be able to understand God. One should not think that because he is very poor he cannot realize God; nor should one think that he can realize God just because he is very rich. God may be understood by an uneducated person and misunderstood by one with great education. The understanding of God, like God Himself, is unconditional (apratihata).

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.2.6) it is stated,

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

"The supreme occupation (dharma) for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord.

Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." Cultivation of love of God: that is the definition of first-class religion. Just as there are three gunas, or three qualities, in the material world, there are various religions, each situated in one of the three modes. We are not, however, concerned with analyzing these religious conceptions. For us, the purpose of religion is to understand God and to learn how to love God. That is the real purpose of any first-class religious system. If a religion does not teach love of God, it is useless. One may follow his religious principles very carefully, but if one does not possess love of God, his religion is null and void. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.2.6) real religion must be ahaituki and apratihata: without selfish motivation and without impediment. By practicing such a religion, we will become happy in all respects.

Sa vai pumsam paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhoksaie. Another name for God is adhoksaja, which means "one who cannot be seen by materialistic attempts." That is to say that God conquers all our attempts to see Him materially. The word aksaja refers to experimental knowledge, and adhah means "unreachable." So God cannot be reached through experimental knowledge. We have to learn to contact Him in a different way: through submissive hearing and the rendering of transcendental loving service.

True religion teaches causeless love of God. It does not say, "I love God because He supplies me nice objects for my sense gratification." That is not love. God is great, God is our eternal father, and it is our duty to love Him. There is no question of barter or exchange. We should not think, "Oh, God gives me my daily bread; therefore I love God." God gives daily bread even to the cats and dogs. Since He is the father of everyone, He is supplying everyone food. So loving God for daily bread is not love. Love is without reason. Even if God does not supply us our daily bread, we should love Him. That is true love. As Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va: "I know no one but Krsna as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly by His embrace or makes me broken-hearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally." That is the sentiment of one who is established in pure love of God. When we attain that stage of love of God, we will find that everything is full of pleasure; God is full of pleasure, and we also are full of pleasure.

suhrn-mitravy-udasina-
madhyastha-dvesya-bandhusu
sadhusv api ca papesu
sama-buddhir viisyate

"A person is said to be still further advanced when he regards all--the honest well-wisher, friends and enemies, the envious, the pious, the sinner, and those who are indifferent and impartial--with an equal mind." (Bg.6.9) This is a sign of real spiritual advancement. In this material world we are considering people friends and enemies on the bodily platform--that is, on the basis of sense gratification. If one gratifies our senses, he is our friend, and if he doesn't, he is our enemy. However, once we have realized God, or the Absolute Truth, there are no such material considerations.

In this material world, all conditioned souls are under illusion. A doctor treats all patients, and although a patient may be delirious and insult the doctor, the doctor does not refuse to treat him. He still administers the medicine that is required. As Lord Jesus Christ said, we should hate the sin, not the sinner. That is a very nice statement, because the sinner is under illusion. He is mad. If we hate him, how can we deliver him? Therefore, those who are advanced devotees, who are really servants of God, do not hate anyone. When Lord Jesus Christ was being crucified, he said, "My God, forgive them. They know not what they do." This is the proper attitude of an advanced devotee. He understands that the conditioned souls cannot be hated, because they have become mad due to their materialistic way of thinking. In this Krsna consciousness movement, there is no question of hating anyone. Everyone is welcomed to come and chant Hare Krsna, take krsna-prasada, listen to the philosophy of Bhagavad-gita, and try to rectify material, conditioned life. This is the essential program of Krsna consciousness. Therefore, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu said,

yare dekha, tare kaha `krsna'-upadesa
amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei desa

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Krsna as they are given in Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land." (Cc. Madhya 7.128)

yogi yunjita satatam
atmanam rahasi sthitah
ekakiyata-cittatma
nirasir aparigraha

"A transcendentalist should always try to concentrate his mind on the Supreme Self; he should live alone in a secluded place and should always carefully control his mind. He should be free from desires and feelings of possessiveness." (Bg. 6.10)

In this chapter, in which the Lord is teaching the principles of the yoga system, He here points out that a transcendentalist should always try to concentrate his mind on the Supreme Self. "The Supreme Self" refers to Krsna, the Supreme Lord. As explained before (nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam), God is the supreme eternal, the supreme living entity, the Supreme Self. The purpose of the entire yoga system is to concentrate the mind on this Supreme Self. We are not the Supreme Self. That should be understood. The Supreme Self is God. This is dvaita-vada--duality. Duality means that God is different from me. He is supreme, and I am subordinate. He is great, and I am small. He is infinite, and I am infinitesimal. This is the relationship between ourselves and God as we should understand it. Because we are infinitesimal, we should concentrate our mind on the infinite Supreme Self. In order to do this, we should live alone, and "living alone" means that we should not live with those who are not Krsna conscious. Ideally, this means that one should live in a secluded place, like a forest or a jungle, but in this age such a secluded place is very difficult to find. Therefore "secluded place" refers to that place where God consciousness is taught.

The transcendentalist should also carefully control his mind, and this means fixing the mind on the Supreme Self, or Krsna. As explained before, Krsna is just like the sun, and if the mind is fixed on Him, there is no question of darkness. If Krsna is always on our minds, maya, or illusion, can never enter. This is the process of concentration.

The transcendentalist should also be free from desires and feelings of possessiveness. People are materially diseased because they desire things and want to possess them. We desire that which we do not have, and we lament for that which we have lost. Brahma-bhuta prasanna-atma. One who is actually God conscious does not desire material possessions. He has only one desire--to serve Krsna. It is not possible to give up desire, but it is possible to purify our desires. It is the nature of the living entity to have some desire, but in the conditioned state, one's desire is contaminated. Conditioned, one thinks, "I desire to satisfy my senses by material possession." Purified desire is desire for Krsna, and if we desire Krsna, desires for material possessions will automatically vanish.

sucau dese pratisthapyā
sthiram asanam atmanah
naty-ucchritam nati-nicam
cailajina-kusottaram
tatraikagram manah krtva
yata-cittendriya-kriyah
upa visyasa ne yunjyad
yogam atma- viuddhaye

"To practice yoga, one should go to a secluded place and should lay kusa grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and a soft cloth. The seat should neither be too high nor too low and should be situated in a sacred place. The yogi should then sit on it very firmly and should practice yoga by controlling the mind and the senses, purifying the heart, and fixing the mind on one point." (Bg. 6.11-12) In these verses it is emphasized how and where one should sit. In the United States and other Western countries, there are many so-called yoga societies, but they do not practice yoga according to these prescriptions. "A sacred place" refers to a place of pilgrimage. In India, the yogis, the transcendentalists, or devotees, all leave home and reside in sacred places such as Prayaga, Mathura, Vrndavana, Hrsikesa, and Hardwar and in solitude practice yoga where the sacred rivers like the Yamuna and the Ganges flow. So how is this possible in this age? How many people are prepared to find such a sacred place? In order to earn one's livelihood, one has to live in a congested city. There is no question of finding a sacred place, but for the practice of yoga, that is the first prerequisite.

Therefore in this bhakti-yoga system, the temple is considered the sacred place. The temple is nirguna--transcendental. According to the Vedas, a city is in the mode of passion, and a forest is in the mode of goodness. The temple, however, is transcendental. If you live in a city or town, you live in a place where passion is predominant, and if you want to escape this, you may go to a forest, a place of goodness. God's temple, however, is above passion and goodness; therefore the temple of Krsna is the only secluded place for this age. In this age, it is not possible to retreat to a forest; nor is it useful to make a show of

practicing yoga in so-called yoga societies and at the same time engage in nonsense.

Therefore, in the Brhan-naradiya Purana it is said that in Kali-yuga, when people are generally short-lived slow in spiritual realization, and always disturbed by various anxieties, the best means of spiritual realization is chanting the holy names of the Lord.

harer nama harer nama
harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty eva nasty eva
nasty eva gatir anyatha

"In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way."

This is the solution, the grand gift of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In this age, other yoga practices are not feasible, but this practice is so simple and universal that even a child can take to it.

Chapter Four

Moderation in Yoga

In this Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, the system of sankhya-yoga, which is the meditational astanga-yoga system, is emphasized. Jnana-yoga emphasizes the philosophical process of analysis by which we determine what is Brahman and what is not Brahman. This process is known as the neti neti process, or "not this, not that." In the beginning of the Vedanta-sutra it is stated, janmady asya yatah.: "The Supreme Brahman, the Absolute Truth, is He from whom everything emanates." This is a hint, and from this we must try to understand the nature of the Supreme Brahman, from whom everything is emanating. The nature of that Absolute Truth is explained in detail in Srimad-Bhagavatam.

In the first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam it is stated,

om namo bhaga vate vasudevaya
janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah svarat
tene brahma hrda ya adi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah
tejo-vari-mrdam yatha vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mrta
dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi

"O my Lord, Sri Krsna, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Sri Krsna because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmaji, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by

the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Sri Krsna, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode. which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth."

Thus from the very beginning of Srimad-Bhagavatam the Absolute Truth is proclaimed to be cognizant. He is not dead or void. And what is the nature of His cognizance? Anvayad itaratas carthesu: "He is directly and indirectly cognizant of all manifestations." To a limited degree, each and every living entity is cognizant, but we are not completely cognizant. I may claim, "This is my head," but if someone asks me, "Do you know how many hairs are on your head?" I will not be able to reply. Of course, this kind of knowledge is not transcendental, but in Srimad-Bhagavatam it is stated that the Supreme Absolute Truth knows everything, directly and indirectly. I may know that I am eating, but I do not know the intricacies of the eating process--how my body is exactly assimilating food, how the blood is passing through my veins, etc. I am cognizant that my body is functioning, but I do not know how these processes are working perfectly and all at once. This is because my knowledge is limited.

By definition, God is He who knows everything. He knows what is going on in every corner of His creation; therefore, from the very beginning, Srimad-Bhagavatam explains that the Supreme Truth from whom everything is emanating is supremely cognizant (abhijnah). One may ask, "If the Absolute Truth is so powerful, wise, and cognizant, He must have attained this knowledge from some similar being." This is not the case. If He attains His knowledge from someone else, He is not God. Svarat. He is independent, and His knowledge is automatically there.

Srimad-Bhagavatam is the supreme combination of both the jnana- and bhakti-yoga systems, because it analyzes in detail the nature of that Supreme Being from whom everything is emanating. By the jnana-yoga system, one attempts to understand the nature of the Absolute Truth in a philosophical way. In the bhakti-yoga system, the target is the same. The methodology, however, is somewhat different. Whereas the jnani attempts to concentrate his mind philosophically on the Supreme, the bhakta simply engages himself in the service of the Supreme Lord, and the Lord reveals Himself. The jnana method is called the ascending process, and the bhakti method is called the descending process. If we are in the darkness of night, we may attempt to attain the sunlight by ascending in a powerful rocket. According to the descending process, however, we simply await the sunrise, and then we understand immediately.

Through the ascending process, we attempt to reach the Supreme through our own endeavor, through the process of induction. By induction, we may attempt to find out whether man is mortal by studying thousands of men, trying to see whether they are mortal or immortal. This, of course, will take a great deal of time. If, however, I accept from superior authority the fact that all men are mortal, my knowledge is complete and immediate. Thus it is stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.29), "My dear Lord, a person who has received a little favor from You can understand You very quickly. But those who are trying to understand You by the ascending process may go on speculating for millions of years and still never understand You."

By mental speculation, one is more likely to simply reach a point of frustration and confusion and conclude, "Oh, God is zero." But if God is zero, how are so many figures emanating from Him? As the Vedanta says (janmady asya yatah), "Everything is generating from the Supreme." Therefore the Supreme cannot be zero. We have to study how so many forms, so many infinite living entities, are being generated from the Supreme. This is also explained in the Vedanta-sutra, which is the study of ultimate knowledge. The word veda means "knowledge," and anta means "ultimate." Ultimate knowledge is knowledge of the Supreme Lord.

So how is it possible to understand the form of Krsna? If it is stated that God does not have eyes, limbs, and senses like ours, how are we to understand His transcendental senses, His transcendental form? This is not possible by mental speculation. We simply have to serve Him, and then He will reveal Himself to us. As Krsna Himself states in the Tenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (10.11),

tesam evanukampartham
aham ajnana-jam tamah
nasayamy atma-bhava-stho
jnana-dipena bhas vata

"Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance." Krsna is within us, and when we are sincerely searching for Him by the devotional process, He will reveal Himself.

Again, as stated in the Eighteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (18.55),

bhaktya mam abhijanati
yavan yas casmi tattvatah
tato mam tattvatojnatva
viate tad-anantaram

"One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God." Thus God has to be understood by this process of bhakti-yoga, which is the process of sravanam kirtanam visnoh--hearing and chanting about Visnu. This is the beginning of the bhakti-yoga process. If we but hear sincerely and submissively, we will understand. Krsna will reveal Himself. Sra vanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam pada-sevanam arcanam vandanam dasyam. There are nine different processes in the bhakti-yoga system. By vandanam, we offer prayers, and that is also bhakti. Sra vanam is hearing about Krsna from Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, and other sastras. Kirtanam is chanting about His glories, chanting the Hare Krsna mantra. This is the beginning of the bhakti-yoga process. Sravanam kirtanam visnoh. Everything is Visnu, and meditation is on Visnu. It is not possible to have bhakti without Visnu. Krsna is the original form of Visnu (krsnas tu bhagavan svayam: "Krsna is the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead"). If we but follow this bhakti-yoga process, we should be able to understand the Supreme, and all doubts should be removed.

The astanga-yoga process is outlined very specifically in the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (6.13-14):

samam kaya-siro-grivam-
dharayann acalam sthirah
sampreksya nasikagram svam
disas cana valokayan
prasantatma vigata-bhir
brahmacari-vrate sthitah
manah samyamy mac-citto
yukta asita mat-parah

"One should hold one's body, neck, and head erect in a straight line and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Thus, with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life." Yoga does not mean going to some class, paying some money, engaging in gymnastics, and then returning home to drink, smoke, and engage in sex. Such yoga is practiced by societies of the cheaters and the cheated. The authoritative yoga system is here outlined by the supreme authority, Sri Krsna Himself. Is there a better yogi than Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead? First of all, one has to go alone to a holy place and sit in a straight line, holding one's body, neck, and head erect, and stare steadily at the tip of the nose. Why is this? This is a method to help concentrate one's mind. That's all. The real purpose of yoga, however, is to keep oneself always aware that Lord Krsna is within.

One of the dangers of sitting in meditation and staring at the tip of one's nose is that one will fall asleep. I have seen many so-called meditators sitting like this and snoring. As soon as one closes his eyes, it is natural to feel sleepy; therefore it is recommended that the eyes are half closed. Thus it is said that one should look at the tip of his nose. With one's sight thus concentrated, the mind should be subdued and unagitated. In India, the yogi often goes to a jungle to practice such meditation in solitude. But in a jungle, the yogi may think, "Maybe some tiger or snake is coming. What is that noise?" In this way, his mind may be agitated; therefore it is especially stated that the yogi must be "devoid of fear." A deerskin is especially recommended as a yoga-asana, because it contains a chemical property that repels snakes; thus the yogi will not be disturbed by serpents. Whatever the case--serpents, tigers, or lions--one can be truly fearless only when he is established in Krsna consciousness. Due to perverted memory, the conditioned soul is naturally fearful. Fear is due to forgetting one's eternal relationship with Krsna. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.2.37): bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih. Krsna consciousness provides the only true basis for fearlessness; therefore perfect practice of yoga is not possible for one who is not Krsna conscious.

The yogi must also be "completely free from sex life." If one indulges in sex, he cannot concentrate; therefore brahmacarya, complete celibacy, is recommended to make the mind steady. By practicing celibacy, one cultivates determination. One modern example of such determination is that of Mahatma Gandhi, who was determined to resist the powerful British empire by means of nonviolence. At this time, India was dependent on the British, and the people had no weapons. The Britishers, being more powerful, easily cut down whatever violent

revolutions the people attempted. Therefore Gandhi resorted to nonviolence, noncooperation. "I shall not fight with the Britishers," he declared, "and even if they react with violence, I shall remain nonviolent. In this way the world will sympathize with us." Such a policy required a great amount of determination, and Gandhi's determination was very strong because he was a brahmacari. Although he had children and a wife, he renounced sex at the age of thirty-six. It was this sexual renunciation that enabled him to be so determined that he was able to lead his country and drive the British from India.

Thus, refraining from sex enables one to be very determined and powerful. It is not necessary to do anything else. This is a secret people are not aware of. If you want to do something with determination, you have to refrain from sex. Regardless of the process--be it hatha-yoga, bhakti-yoga, jnana-yoga, or whatever--sex indulgence is not allowed. Sex is allowed only for householders who want to beget good children and raise them in Krsna consciousness. Sex is not meant for sense enjoyment, although enjoyment is there by nature. Unless there is some enjoyment, why should one assume the responsibility of begetting children? That is the secret of nature's gift, but we should not take advantage of it. These are the secrets of life. By taking advantage and indulging in sex life, we are simply wasting our time. If one tells you that you can indulge in sex as much as you like and at the same time become a yogi, he is cheating you. If some so-called guru tells you to give him money in exchange for some mantra and that you can go on and engage in all kinds of nonsense, he is just cheating you. Because we want something sublime and yet want it cheaply, we put ourselves in a position to be cheated. This means that we actually want to be cheated. If we want something valuable, we must pay for it. We cannot expect to walk into a jewelry store and demand the most valuable jewel for a mere ten cents. No, we must pay a great deal. Similarly, if we want perfection in yoga, we have to pay by abstaining from sex. Perfection in yoga is not something childish, and Bhagavad-gita instructs us that if we try to make yoga into something childish, we will be cheated. There are many cheaters awaiting us, waiting to take our money, giving us nothing, and then leaving. But according to Sri Krsna's authoritative statement in Bhagavad-gita, one must be "completely free from sex life." Being free from sex, one should "meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life." This is real meditation.

Krsna does not recommend meditation on the void. He specifically states, "meditate upon Me." The visnu-murti is situated in one's heart, and meditation upon Him is the object of yoga. This is the sankhya-yoga system, as first practiced by Lord Kapiladeva, an incarnation of God. By sitting straight, staring steadily at the tip of one's nose, subduing one's mind, and abstaining from sex, one may be able to concentrate the mind on the visnu-murti situated within the heart. When we refer to the Visnu form, or visnu-murti, we refer to Sri Krsna.

In this Krsna consciousness movement we are meditating directly on Sri Krsna. This is a process of practical meditation. The members of this movement are concentrating their minds on Krsna, regardless of their particular occupation. One may be working in the garden and digging in the earth, but he is thinking, "I am cultivating beautiful roses to offer to Krsna." One may be cooking in the kitchen, but he is always thinking, "I am preparing palatable food to be offered to Krsna." Similarly, chanting and dancing in the temple are forms of meditating on

Krsna. Thus the boys and girls in this Society for Krsna consciousness are perfect yogis because they are meditating on Krsna twenty-four hours a day. We are teaching the perfect yoga system, not according to our personal whims but according to the authority of Bhagavad-gita-. Nothing is concocted or manufactured. The verses of Bhagavad-gita are there for all to see. The activities of the bhakti-yogis in this movement are so molded that the practitioners cannot help but think of Krsna at all times. "Meditate upon Me within the heart, and make Me the ultimate goal of life," Sri Krsna says. This is the perfect yoga system, and one who practices it prepares himself to be transferred to Krsnaloka.

yunjann evam sadatmanam
yogi niyata-manasa h
santim nirvana-paramam
mat-samstham adhigacchati

"Thus practicing control of the body, mind, and activities, the mystic transcendentalist attains to the kingdom of God [or the abode of Krsna] by cessation of material existence." (Bg. 6.15)

It is stated in Sanskrit in this verse, santim nirvana-paramam; that is, one attains peace through nirvana-paramam, or the cessation of material activities. Nirvana does not refer to void, but to putting an end to materialistic activities. Unless one puts an end to them, there is no question of peace. When Hiranyakasipu asked his five-year-old son Prahlada Maharaja, "My dear boy, what is the best thing you have thus far learned?" Prahlada immediately replied, tat sadhu manye 'sura-varya dehinam sada samudvigna-dhiyam asad-grahat: "My dear father, O greatest of the demons, materialistic people are always full of anxiety because they have accepted as real that which is nonpermanent." The word asad-grahat is important because it indicates that materialists are always hankering to capture or possess something that is nonpermanent. History affords us many examples. Mr. Kennedy was a very rich man who wanted to become President, and he spent a great deal of money to attain that elevated position. Yet although he had a nice wife, children, and the presidency, everything was finished within a second. In the material world, people are always trying to capture something that is nonpermanent. Unfortunately, people do not come to their senses and realize, "I am permanent. I am spirit soul. Why am I hankering after something that is nonpermanent?"

We are always busy acquiring comforts for this body without considering that today, tomorrow, or in a hundred years this body will be finished. As far as the real "I" is concerned, "I am spirit soul. I have no birth. I have no death. What, then, is my proper function?" When we act on the material platform, we are engaged in bodily functions; therefore Prahlada Maharaja says that people are anxious because all their activities are targeted to capturing and possessing something nonpermanent. All living entities--men, beasts, birds, or whatever--are always full of anxiety, and this is the material disease. If we are always full of anxiety, how can we attain peace? People may live in a very nice house, but out front they place signs saying, "Beware of Dog," or "No Trespassers." This means that although they are living comfortably, they are anxious that someone will come and molest them. Sitting in an office and earning a very good salary, a man is always thinking, "Oh, I hope I don't lose this position." The American nation

is very rich, but because of this, it has to maintain a great defense force. So who is free from anxiety? The conclusion is that if we want peace without anxiety, we have to come to Krsna consciousness. There is no alternative.

In order to attain peace, we must meditate on Krsna, and by meditating on Krsna, we can control the body. The first part of the body to control is the tongue, and the next part is the genital. When these are controlled, everything is controlled. The tongue is controlled by chanting and eating krsna-prasada. As soon as the tongue is controlled, the stomach is controlled, and next the genitals are controlled. Actually, controlling the body and mind is a very simple process. When the mind is fixed on Krsna and has no other engagement, it is automatically controlled. Activities should always be centered on working for Krsna--gardening, typing, cooking, cleaning, whatever. By engaging the body, mind, and activities in the service of Krsna, one attains the supreme nirvana, which abides in Krsna. Everything is in Krsna; therefore we cannot find peace outside Krsna conscious activities.

The ultimate goal of yoga is thus clearly explained. Yoga is not meant for attaining any kind of material facility; it is to enable the cessation of all material existence. As long as we require some material facilities, we will get them. But these facilities will not solve the problems of life. I have traveled throughout the world, and it is my opinion that American boys and girls have the best material facilities, but does this mean that they have attained peace? Can anyone say, "Yes, I am completely peaceful"? If this is so, why are American youngsters so frustrated and confused?

As long as we practice yoga in order to attain some material facility, there will be no question of peace. Yoga should only be practiced in order to understand Krsna. Yoga is meant for the reestablishment of our lost relationship with Krsna. Generally, one joins a yoga society in order to improve his health, to reduce fat. People in rich nations eat more, become fat, and then pay exorbitant prices to so-called yoga instructors in order to reduce. People try to reduce by all these artificial gymnastics; they do not understand that if they just eat vegetables or fruits and grains, they will never get fat. People get fat because they eat voraciously, because they eat meat. People who eat voraciously suffer from diabetes, overweight, heart attacks, etc., and those who eat insufficiently suffer from tuberculosis. Therefore moderation is required, and moderation in eating means that we eat only what is needed to keep body and soul together. If we eat more than we need or less, we will become diseased. All this is explained in the following verses:

naty-asnatas tu yogo 'sti
na caikantam anasnatah
na cati-svapna-silasya
jagrato naiva carjuna

"There is no possibility of one's becoming a yogi, O Arjuna, if one eats too much, or eats too little, sleeps too much, or does not sleep enough." (Bg. 6.16)

yuktahara-viharasya

yukta-ces/asya karmasu
yukta-s vapna vabodhasya
yogo bhavati dukkha-ha

"He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working, and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system." (Bg. 6.17) It is not that we are to starve ourselves. The body must be kept fit for any practice; therefore eating is required, and according to our program, we eat only krsna-prasada. If you can comfortably eat ten pounds of food a day, then eat it, but if you try to eat ten pounds out of greed or avarice, you will suffer.

So in the practice of Krsna consciousness, all these activities are present, but they are spiritualized. The cessation of material existence does not mean entering into "the void," which is only a myth. There is no void anywhere within the creation of the Lord. I am not void but spirit soul. If I were void, how would my bodily development take place? Where is this "void"? If we sow a seed in the ground, it grows into a plant or large tree. The father injects a seed into the womb of the mother, the body grows like a tree. Where is there void? In the Fourteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (14.4), Sri Krsna states,

sarva-yonisu kaunteya
murtayah sambha vanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir
aham bija-pradah pita

"It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father." The seed is originally given by Krsna, placed in the womb of material nature, and thus many living entities are generated. How can one argue against this process? If the seed of existence is void, how has this body developed?

Nirvana actually means not accepting another material body. It's not that we attempt to make this body void. Nirvana means making the miserable, material, conditional body void--that is, converting the material body into a spiritual body. This means entering into the kingdom of God, which is described in the Fifteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (15.6):

na tad bhasayate suryo
sa sasanko na pavakah
yad gatva na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama

"That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world."

So there is no void anywhere within the Lord's creation. All the planets in the spiritual sky are self-illumined, like the sun. The kingdom of God is everywhere, but the spiritual sky and the planets thereof are all param dhama, or superior abodes. As stated, sunlight, moonlight, or electricity are not required in the param-dhama. We cannot find such an abode within this universe. We may travel as far as possible within our spaceships, but we will not find any place where there is no sunlight. The sunlight is so extensive that it pervades the

universe. Therefore, that abode in which there is no sunlight, moonlight, or electricity is beyond this material sky. Beyond this material nature is a spiritual nature. Actually, we know nothing of this material nature; we do not even know how it was originally formed. So how can we know anything about the spiritual nature beyond? We have to learn from Krsna, who lives there; otherwise we remain in ignorance.

In this Bhagavad-gita, information of the spiritual sky is given. How can we know anything about that which we cannot reach? Our senses are so imperfect, how can we attain knowledge? We just have to hear and accept. How will we ever know who our father is unless we accept the word of our mother? Our mother says, "Here is your father," and we have to accept this. We cannot determine our father by making inquiries here and there or by attempting to experiment. This knowledge is beyond our means. Similarly, if we want to learn about the spiritual sky, God's kingdom, we have to hear from the authority, mother Vedas. The Vedas are called veda-mata, or mother Vedas, because the knowledge imparted therein is like that knowledge received from the mother. We have to believe in order to acquire knowledge. There is no possibility of acquiring this transcendental knowledge by experimenting with our imperfect senses.

A consummate yogi, who is perfect in understanding Lord Krsna, as is clearly stated herein (santim nirvana-paramam mat-samstham adhigacchati) by the Lord Himself, can attain real peace and ultimately reach the supreme abode of the Lord. This abode is known as Krsnaloka, or Goloka Vrndavana. In the Brahma-samhita it is clearly stated (goloka eva nivasaty akhilatma-bhutah) that the Lord, although residing always in His abode called Goloka, is the all-pervading Brahman and the localized Paramatma as well, by dint of His superior spiritual energies. No one can reach the spiritual sky or enter into the eternal abode of the Lord (Vaikuntha, Goloka Vrndavana) without properly understanding Krsna and His plenary expansion Visnu. And according to Brahma-samhita, it is necessary to learn from our authorized mother, veda-mata. Brahma-samhita states that the Supreme Lord is living not only in His abode, Goloka Vrndavana, but everywhere: goloka eva nivasaty akhilatma-bhutah. He is like the sun, which is millions of miles away and yet is still present within this room.

In conclusion, the person who works in Krsna consciousness is the perfect yogi, because his mind is always absorbed in Krsna's activities. Sa vai manah krsna-padaravindayoh. In the Vedas we also learn, tam eva viditvati mrtyum eti: "One can overcome the path of birth and death only by understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna." Thus perfection of yoga is the attainment of freedom from material existence and not some magical jugglery or gymnastic feat to befool innocent people.

In this system of yoga, moderation is required; therefore it is stated that we should not eat too much or too little, sleep too much or too little, or work too much or too little. All these activities are there because we have to execute the yoga system with this material body. In other words, we have to make the best use of a bad bargain. The material body is a bad bargain in the sense that it is the source of all miseries. The spirit soul does not experience misery, and the normal condition of the living entity is his healthy, spiritual life. Misery and disease occur due to material contamination, disease, infection. So in a sense, material existence is a diseased condition of the soul. And

what is that disease? The answer is not a great mystery. The disease is this body. This body is actually not meant for me. It may be "my" body, but it is a symptom of my diseased condition. In any case, I should identify with this body no more than I should identify with my clothes. In this world, we are all differently dressed. We are dressed as red men, brown men, white men, black men, yellow men, etc., or as Indians, Americans, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc. All these designations are not symptomatic of our actual position but of our diseased condition. The yoga system is meant to cure this disease by connecting us again with the Supreme.

We are meant to be connected with the Supreme just as our hand is meant to be connected to our body. We are part and parcel of the Supreme, just as the hand is part and parcel of the body. When the hand is severed from the body, it is valueless, but when it is joined to the body, it is invaluable. Similarly, in this material condition, we are disconnected from God. Actually, the word disconnected is not precise, because the connection is always there. God is always supplying all our necessities. Since nothing can exist without Krsna, we cannot be disconnected from Him. Rather, it is better to say that we have forgotten that we are connected to Krsna. Because of this forgetfulness, we have entered the criminal department of the universe. The government still takes care of its criminals, but they are legally disconnected from the civilian state. Our disconnection is a result of our engaging in so many nonsensical activities instead of utilizing our senses in the performance of our Krsna conscious duties.

Instead of thinking, "I am the eternal servant of God, or Krsna," we are thinking, "I am the servant of my society, my country, my husband, my wife, my dog, or whatever." This is called forgetfulness. How has this come about? All these misconceptions have arisen due to this body. Because I was born in America, I am thinking that I am an American. Each society teaches its citizens to think in this way. Because I am thinking that I am an American, the American government can tell me, "Come and fight. Give your life for your country." This is all due to the bodily conception; therefore an intelligent person should know that he is suffering miseries due to his body and that he should not act in such a way that he will continue to be imprisoned within a material body birth after birth. According to Padma Purana, there are 8,400,000 species of life, and all are but different forms of contamination--whether one has an American body, an Indian body, a dog's body, a hog's body, or whatever. Therefore the first instruction in yoga is, "I am not this body."

Attaining liberation from the contamination of the material body is the first teaching of Bhagavad-gita. In the Second Chapter, after Arjuna told Sri Krsna, "I shall not fight," the Lord said, "While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead." (Bg. 2.11) In other words, Arjuna was thinking on the bodily platform. He wanted to leave the battlefield because he did not want to fight with his relatives. All his conceptions were within the bodily atmosphere; therefore after Arjuna accepted Sri Krsna as his spiritual master, the Lord immediately chastised him, just as a master chastises his disciple in order to teach him. Essentially, Sri Krsna told Arjuna, "You are talking very wisely, as if you know so many things, but actually you are speaking nonsense, because you are speaking from the bodily position."

Similarly, people throughout the world are posing themselves as highly advanced in education, science, philosophy, politics, etc., but their position is on the bodily platform.

A vulture may rise very high in the sky--seven or eight miles--and it is wonderful to see him fly in this way. He also has powerful eyes, for he can spot a carcass from a great distance. Yet what is the object of all these great qualifications? A dead body, a rotting carcass. His perfection is just to discover a dead piece of meat and eat it. That's all. Similarly, we may have a very high education, but what is our objective? Sense enjoyment, the enjoyment of this material body. We may rise very high with our spaceships, but what is the purpose? Sense gratification, that's all. This means that all the striving and all this high education are merely on the animal platform.

Therefore we should first of all know that our miserable material condition is due to this body. At the same time, we should know that this body is not permanent. Although I identify with my body, family, society, country, and so many other things, how long will these objects exist? They are not permanent. Asat is a word meaning that they will cease to exist. Asann api klesada asa dehah.: "The body is simply troublesome and impermanent."

Many people come to us saying, "Svamiji, my position is so troublesome," but as soon as we suggest the medicine, they will not accept it. This means that people want to manufacture their own medicine. Why do we go to a physician if we want to treat ourselves? People want to accept only what they think is palatable.

Although we are suggesting that this body is useless and is a form of contamination, we are not recommending that it be abused. We may use a car to carry us to work, but this does not mean that we should not take care of the car. We should take care of the car for it to carry us to and fro, but we should not become so attached to it that we are polishing it every day. We must utilize this material body in order to execute Krsna consciousness, and to this end we should keep it fit and healthy, but we should not become too attached to it. That is called yukta-vairagya. The body should not be neglected. We should bathe regularly, eat regularly, sleep regularly in order to keep mind and body healthy. Some people say that the body should be renounced and that we should take some drugs and abandon ourselves to intoxication, but this is not a yoga process. Krsna has given us nice food--fruits, grains, vegetables, and milk--and we can prepare hundreds and thousands of nice preparations and offer them to the Lord. Our process is to eat krsna-prasada and to satisfy the tongue in that way. But we should not be greedy and eat dozens of samosas, sweetballs, and rasagullas. No. We should eat and sleep just enough to keep the body fit, and no more. It is stated,

yuktahara-viharasya
yukta-cestasya karmasu
yukta-svapna vabodhasya
yogo bhavati dukkha-ha

"He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working, and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system." (Bg. 6.17)

Although we should minimize our eating and sleeping, we should not attempt this too rapidly, at the risk of becoming sick. Because people are accustomed to eating voraciously, there are prescriptions for fasting. We can reduce our sleeping and eating, but we should remain in good health for spiritual purposes. We should not attempt to reduce eating and sleeping too rapidly or artificially; when we advance we will naturally not feel pain due to the reduction of these natural bodily processes. In this respect, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami offers a good example. Although a very rich man's son, Raghunatha dasa left his home to join Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Because he was the only son, Raghunatha dasa was very beloved by his father. Understanding that his son had gone to Jagannatha Puri to join Lord Caitanya, the father sent four servants with money to attend him. At first, Raghunatha accepted the money, thinking, "Oh, since my father has sent all this money, I will accept it and invite all the sannyasis to feast."

After some time, however, the feasts came to an end. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu then inquired from His secretary, Svarupa Damodara, "Nowadays I don't receive any invitations from Raghunatha. What has happened?"

"That is because Raghunatha has stopped accepting his father's money."

"Oh, that's very nice," Caitanya Mahaprabhu said.

"Raghunatha was thinking, 'Although I have renounced everything, I am still enjoying my father's money. This is hypocritical.' Therefore he has told the servants to go home and has refused the money."

"So how is he living?" Caitanya Mahaprabhu inquired.

"Oh, he's standing on the steps of the Jagannatha temple, and when the priests pass him on their way home, they offer him some prasada. In this way, he is satisfied."

"This is very nice," Caitanya Mahaprabhu commented.

Regularly going to the Jagannatha temple, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu would see Raghunatha standing on the steps. After a few days, however, He no longer saw him there. Therefore the Lord commented to His secretary, "I no longer see Raghunatha standing on the temple steps."

"He has given that up," Svarupa Damodara explained. "He was thinking, 'Oh, I am standing here just like a prostitute, waiting for someone to come and give me food. No. I don't like this at all.'"

"That is very nice," Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "but how is he eating?"

"Every day he is collecting some rejected rice from the kitchen and is eating that."

To encourage Raghunatha, Caitanya Mahaprabhu one day visited him. "Raghunatha," the Lord said, "I hear that you are eating very palatable food. Why are you not inviting Me?"

Raghunatha did not reply, but the Lord quickly found the place where he kept the rice, and the Lord immediately took some and began to eat it.

"Dear Lord," Raghunatha implored, "please do not eat this. It is not fit for You."

"Oh, no? Why do you say it's not fit for Me? It's Lord Jagannatha's prasada!"

Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu enacted this pastime just to discourage Raghunatha from thinking, "I am eating this miserable, rejected rice." Through the Lord's encouragement, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami reduced his daily quantity of food until he was finally eating only one pat of

butter every other day. And every day he was also bowing down hundreds of times and constantly chanting the holy names. Sankhya-purvaka-nama-gana-natibhih kala vasani-krtau.

Although this is an excellent example of minimizing all material necessities, we should not try to imitate it. It is not possible for an ordinary man to imitate Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, who was one of the six Gosvamis, a highly elevated associate of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Each one of the six Gosvamis displayed a unique example of how one can advance in Krsna consciousness, but it is not our duty to imitate them. We should just try to follow, as far as possible, in their footsteps. If we immediately try to become like Raghunatha dasa Gosvami by imitating him, we are sure to fail, and whatever progress we have made will be defeated. Therefore the Lord says (Bg. 6.16) that there is no possibility of one's becoming a yogi if one eats too much or too little.

The same moderation applies to sleep. Presently I may be sleeping ten hours a day, but if I can keep myself fit by sleeping five hours, why sleep ten? As far as the body is concerned, there are four demands--eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. The problem with modern civilization is that it is trying to increase these demands, but they should be decreased instead. Eat what we need, and sleep when we need, and our health will be excellent. There is no question of artificial imitation.

And what is the result obtained by one who is temperate in his habits?

yada viniyatam cittam
atmany evavatisthate
nisprhah sarva-kamebhyo
yukta ity ucyate tada

"When the yogi, by practice of yoga, disciplines his mental activities and becomes situated in Transcendence--devoid of all material desires--he is said to have attained yoga." (Bg. 6.18)

The perfection of yoga means keeping the mind in a state of equilibrium. Materially speaking, this is impossible. After reading a mundane novel once, you will not want to read it again, but you can read Bhagavad-gita four times a day and still not tire of it. You may chant someone's name a half an hour, or sing a mundane song three or four times, but before long this becomes tiresome. Hare Krsna, however, can be chanted day and night, and one will never tire of it. Therefore it is only through transcendental vibration that the mind can be kept in a state of equilibrium. When one's mental activities are thus stabilized, one is said to have attained yoga.

The perfectional stage of yoga was exhibited by King Ambarisa, who utilized all his senses in the service of the Lord. As stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (9.4.18-20),

sa vai manah krsna-padara vindayor
vacamsi vaikuntha-gunanu varnane
karau harer mandira-marjanadisu
srutim cakaracyuta-sat-kathodaye
mukunda-lingalaya-darsane drsrau
tad-bhrtya-gatra-sparse 'nga-sa ngamam

ghranam ca tat-pada-saroja-saurabhe
srimat-tulasya rasanam tad-arpite
padau hareh ksetra-padanusarpane
siro hrsikesa-padabhivandane
kamam ca dasye na tu kama-kamyaya
yathottamasloka-janasraya ratih

"King Ambarisa first of all engaged his mind on the lotus feet of Lord Krsna; then, one after another, he engaged his words in describing the transcendental qualities of the Lord, his hands in mopping the temple of the Lord, his ears in hearing of the activities of the Lord, his eyes in seeing the transcendental forms of the Lord, his body in touching the bodies of the devotees, his sense of smell in smelling the scents of the lotus flowers offered to the Lord, his tongue in tasting the tulasi leaf offered at the temple of the Lord, his head in offering obeisances unto the Lord, and his desires in executing the mission of the Lord. All these transcendental activities are quite befitting a pure devotee."

This, then, is the perfection of yoga devoid of all material desire. If all our desires are for Krsna, there is no scope for material desire. All material desire is automatically finished. We don't have to try to concentrate artificially. All perfection is there in Krsna consciousness because it is on the spiritual platform. Being on the spiritual platform, this supreme yoga is eternal, blissful, and full of knowledge. Therefore there are no misgivings or material impediments.

Chapter Five

Determination and Steadiness in Yoga

yatha dipo nivata-stho
nengate sopama smrta
yogino yata-cittasya
yunjato yogam atmanah

"As a lamp in a windless place does not waver, so the transcendentalist, whose mind is controlled, remains always steady in his meditation on the transcendent Self." (Bg. 6.19)

If the mind is absorbed in Krsna consciousness, it will remain as steady as the flame of a candle that is in a room where there is no wind. Therefore it is said that a truly Krsna conscious person always absorbed in transcendence, in constant undisturbed meditation on his worshipable Lord, is as steady as a lamp or candle in a windless place. Just as the flame is not agitated, the mind is not agitated, and that steadiness is the perfection of yoga.

The state of one thus steadily situated in meditation on the transcendent Self, or the Supreme Lord, is described by Sri Krsna in the following verses of Bhagavad-gita (6.20-23):

yatroparamate cittam
niruddham yoga-sevaya

yatra caivatmanatmanam
pasyann atmani tusyati
sukham atyantikam yat tad
buddhi-grahyam atindriyam
vetti yatra na caivayam
sthitas calati tattvatah
yam labdhva caparam Iabham
manyate nadhikam tatah
yasmin sthito na dukkhena
gurunapi vicalyate
tam vidyad dukkha-samyoga-
vivyogam yoga-samjnitam

"The stage of perfection is called trance, or samadhi, when one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This is characterized by one's ability to see the Self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact."

Samadhi does not mean making oneself void or merging into the void. That is impossible. Kleso 'dhikataras tesam avyaktasakta-cetasam. Some yogis say that one has to put an end to all activities and make himself motionless, but how is this possible? By nature, the living entity is a moving, acting spirit. "Motionless" means putting an end to material motion and being fixed in Krsna consciousness. In such a state, one is no longer disturbed by material propensities. As one becomes materially motionless, one's motions in Krsna consciousness increase. As one becomes active in Krsna consciousness, one becomes automatically motionless in respect to material activities.

I have often used the example of a restless child. Since it is impossible to make such a child motionless, it is necessary to give him some playthings or some pictures to look at. In this way, he will be engaged, or motionless in the sense that he will not be committing some mischief. But if one really wants to make him motionless, one must give him some engagement in Krsna consciousness. Then there will be no scope for mischievous activities, due to realization in Krsna consciousness. To be engaged in Krsna consciousness, one should first realize, "I am Krsna's. I am not this matter. I am not of this nation or of this society. I do not belong to this rascal or that rascal. I am simply Krsna's." This is motionless; this is full knowledge, realizing our actual position as part and parcel of Krsna. As stated in the Fifteenth Chapter (Bg. 15.7), mamaivamsojiva-loke: "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal, fragmental parts." As soon as we understand this, we immediately cease our material activities, and this is what is meant by being motionless. In this state, one sees the Self by the pure mind and relishes and rejoices in the Self. "Pure mind" means understanding, "I belong to Krsna." At the present moment, the mind is contaminated because we are thinking, "I belong to this; I belong to that." The mind is pure when it understands, "I belong to Krsna."

Rejoicing in the Self means rejoicing with Krsna. Krsna is the Supersoul, or the Superself. I am the individual soul, or the individual self. The Superself and the self enjoy together. Enjoyment cannot be alone; there must be two. What experience do we have of solitary enjoyment? Solitary enjoyment is not possible. Enjoyment means two: Krsna, who is the Supersoul, and the individual soul.

If one is convinced that "I am part and parcel of Krsna," one is not disturbed even in the midst of the greatest difficulties, because one knows that Krsna will give protection. That is surrender. To attain this position, one must try his best, use his intelligence, and believe in Krsna. Balasya neha saranam pitarau nrsimha (SB. 7.9.19). If Krsna does not protect us, nothing can save us. If Krsna neglects us, there is no remedy, and whatever measures we take to try to protect ourselves will be ultimately defeated. There may be many expert physicians treating a diseased man, but that is no guarantee that he will live. If Krsna so wills, a person will die despite the best physicians and medicines. On the other hand, if Krsna is protecting us, we will survive even without medical treatment. When one is fully surrendered to Krsna, he becomes happy, knowing that regardless of the situation, Krsna will protect him. He is just like a child who is fully surrendered to his parents, confident that they are there to protect him. As stated by Yamunacarya in his Stotra-ratna (43), kadaham aikantika-nitya-kinkarah praharsayisyami sanatha jivitam: "O Lord, when shall I engage as Your permanent, eternal servant and always feel joyful to have such a perfect master?" If we know that there is someone very powerful who is our patron and savior, aren't we happy? But if we try to act on our own and at our own risk, how can we be happy? Happiness means being in Krsna consciousness and being convinced that "Krsna will give me protection," and being true to Krsna. It is not possible to be happy otherwise.

Of course, Krsna is giving all living entities protection, even in their rebellious condition (eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman). Without Krsna's protection, we cannot live for a second. When we admit and recognize Krsna's kindness, we become happy. Krsna is protecting us at every moment, but we do not realize this, because we have taken life at our own risk. Krsna gives us a certain amount of freedom, saying, "All right, do whatever you like. As far as possible, I will give you protection." However, when the living entity is fully surrendered to Krsna, Krsna takes total charge and gives special protection. If a child grows up and doesn't care for his father and acts freely, what can his father do? He can only say, "Do whatever you like." But when a son puts himself fully under his father's protection, he receives more care. As Krsna states in the Ninth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (9.29),

samo 'ham sarva-bhutesu
na me dvesyo 'sti na priyah
ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya-
mayi te tesu capy aham

"I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him."

How can Krsna be envious of anyone? Everyone is Krsna's son. Similarly, how can Krsna be an enemy toward anyone? Since all living entities are Krsna's sons, He is everyone's friend. Unfortunately, we

are not taking advantage of His friendship, and that is our disease. Once we recognize Krsna as our eternal father and friend, we can understand that He is always protecting us, and in this way we can be happy.

sa niscayena yoktavyo
yogo 'nirvinna-cetasa
sankalpa-prabha van kamams
tyaktva sarvan asesatah
manasaivendriya-gramam
viniyamy samantatah

"One should engage oneself in the practice of yoga with undeviating determination and faith. One should abandon, without exception, all material desires born of false ego and thus control all the senses on all sides by the mind." (Bg. 6.24)

As stated before, this determination can be attained only by one who does not indulge in sex. Celibacy makes one's determination strong; therefore, from the very beginning Krsna states that the yogi does not engage in sex. If one indulges in sex, one's determination will be flickering. Therefore sex life should be controlled according to the rules and regulations governing the grhastha-asrama, or sex should be given up altogether. Actually, it should be given up altogether, but if this is not possible, it should be controlled. Then determination will come because, after all, determination is a bodily affair. Determination means continuing to practice Krsna consciousness with patience and perseverance. If one does not immediately attain the desired results, one should not think, "Oh, what is this Krsna consciousness? I will give it up." No, we must have determination and faith in Krsna's words.

In this regard, there is a mundane example. When a young girl gets married, she immediately hankers for a child. She thinks, "Now I am married. I must have a child immediately." But how is this possible? The girl must have patience, become a faithful wife, serve her husband, and let her love grow. Eventually, because she is married, it is certain that she will have a child. Similarly, when we are in Krsna consciousness, our perfection is guaranteed, but we must have patience and determination. We should think, "I must execute my duties and should not be impatient." Impatience is due to loss of determination, and loss of determination is due to excessive sex.

The yogi should be determined and should patiently prosecute Krsna consciousness without deviation. One should be sure of success at the end and pursue this course with great perseverance, not becoming discouraged if there is any delay in the attainment of success. Success is sure for the rigid practitioner. Regarding bhakti-yoga, Rupa Gosvami says,

utsahan nisayad dhairyat
tat-tat-karma-pra va rtanat
sanga-tyagat sato vrtteh
sadbhir bhaktih prasidhyati

"The process of bhakti-yoga can be executed successfully with full-hearted enthusiasm, perseverance, and determination by following the

prescribed duties in the association of devotees and by engaging completely in activities of goodness." (Upadesamrta 3)

As for determination, one should follow the example of the sparrow who lost her eggs in the waves of the ocean. A sparrow laid her eggs on the shore of the ocean, but the big ocean carried away the eggs on its waves. The sparrow became very upset and asked the ocean to return her eggs. The ocean did not even consider her appeal. So the sparrow decided to dry up the ocean. She began to pick out the water in her small beak, and everyone laughed at her for her impossible determination. The news of her activity spread, and when at last Garuda, the gigantic bird carrier of Lord Visnu, heard it, he became compassionate toward his small sister bird, and so he came to see her. Garuda was very pleased by the determination of the small sparrow, and he promised to help. Thus Garuda at once asked the ocean to return her eggs lest he himself take up the work of the sparrow. The ocean was frightened by this, and returned the eggs. Thus the sparrow became happy by the grace of Garuda.

Similarly, the practice of yoga, especially bhakti-yoga in Krsna consciousness, may appear to be a very difficult job. But if anyone follows the principles with great determination, the Lord will surely help, for God helps those who help themselves,

sanaih sanair uparamed
buddhya dhrti-grh itaya
atma-samstham manah krtva
na kincid api cintayet

"Gradually, step by step, with full conviction, one should become situated in trance by means of intelligence, and thus the mind should be fixed on the Self alone and should think of nothing else." (Bg. 6.25)

We are the self, and Krsna is also the Self. When there is sunlight, we can see the sun and ourselves also. However, when there is dense darkness, we sometimes cannot even see our own body. Although the body is there, the darkness is so dense that I cannot see myself. But when the sunshine is present, I can see myself as well as the sun. Similarly, seeing the self means first of all seeing the Supreme Self, Krsna. In the Katha Upanisad it is stated, nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam: "The Supreme Self is the chief eternal of all eternal, and He is the chief living being of all living beings." Krsna consciousness means fixing the mind on Krsna, and when the mind is thus fixed, it is fixed on the complete whole. If the stomach is cared for and supplied nutritious food, all the bodily limbs are nourished, and we are in good health. Similarly, if we water the root of a tree, all the branches, leaves, flowers, and twigs are automatically taken care of. By rendering service to Krsna, we automatically render the best service to all others.

As stated before, a Krsna conscious person does not sit down idly. He knows that Krsna consciousness is such an important philosophy that it should be distributed. Therefore the members of this Krsna consciousness society are not just sitting in the temple but are going out on sankirtana parties, preaching and distributing this supreme philosophy. That is the mission of Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His disciples. Other yogis may be satisfied with their own elevation and sit in secluded places, practicing yoga. For them, yoga is nothing more than

their personal concern. A devotee, however, is not satisfied just in elevating his personal self.

vancha-kalpatarubhyas ca
krpa-sindhubhya eva ca
patitanam pa vanebhyo
vaisna vebhyo namo namah

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaisnava devotees of the Lord, who can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and who are full of compassion for the fallen souls." A devotee displays great compassion toward conditioned souls. The word krpa means "mercy," and sindhu means "ocean." A devotee is an ocean of mercy, and he naturally wants to distribute this mercy. Lord Jesus Christ, for instance, was God conscious, Krsna conscious, but he was not satisfied in keeping this knowledge within himself. Had he continued to live alone in God consciousness, he would not have met crucifixion. But no. Being a devotee and naturally compassionate, he also wanted to take care of others by making them God conscious. Although he was forbidden to preach God consciousness, he continued to do so at the risk of his own life. This is the nature of a devotee.

It is therefore stated in Bhagavad-gita (15.68-69) that the devotee who preaches is most dear to the Lord.

ya idam paramam guhyam
mad-bhaktas v abhidhasyati
bhaktim mayi param krtva
mam evaisyaty asamsayah

"For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me."

na ca tasman manusyesu
kascin me priya-krttamah
bhavita na ca me tasmad
anyah priyataro bhuvi

"There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear." Therefore the devotees go out to preach, and going forth, they sometimes meet opposing elements. Sometimes they are defeated, sometimes disappointed, sometimes able to convince, sometimes unable. It is not that every devotee is well equipped to preach. Just as there are different types of people, there are three classes of devotees. In the third class are those who have no faith. If they are engaged in devotional service officially, for some ulterior purpose, they cannot achieve the highest perfectional stage. Most probably they will slip, after some time. They may become engaged, but because they haven't complete conviction and faith, it is very difficult for them to continue in Krsna consciousness. We have practical experience in discharging our missionary activity that some people come and apply themselves to Krsna consciousness with some hidden motive, and as soon as they are economically a little well situated, they give up this process and take to their old ways again. It is only by faith that

one can advance in Krsna consciousness. As far as the development of faith is concerned, one who is well versed in the literatures of devotional service and has attained the stage of firm faith is called a first-class person in Krsna consciousness. And in the second class are those who are not very advanced in understanding the devotional scriptures but who automatically have firm faith that krsna-bhakti, or service to Krsna, is the best course and so in good faith have taken it up. Thus they are superior to the third class, who have neither perfect knowledge of the scriptures nor good faith but by association and simplicity are trying to follow. The third-class person in Krsna consciousness may fall down, but when one is in the second class or first class, he does not fall down. One in the first class will surely make progress and achieve the result at the end. As far as the third-class person in Krsna consciousness is concerned, although he has faith in the conviction that devotional service to Krsna is very good, he has no knowledge of Krsna through the scriptures like the Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita. Sometimes these third-class persons in Krsna consciousness have some tendency toward karma-yoga and jnana-yoga, and sometimes they are disturbed, but as soon as the infection of karma-yoga or jnana-yoga is vanquished, they become second-class or first-class persons in Krsna consciousness. Faith in Krsna is also divided into three stages and described in Srimad-Bhagavatam. First-class attachment, second-class attachment, and third-class attachment are also explained in Srimad-Bhagavatam, in the Eleventh Canto.

However one is situated, one should have the determination to go out and preach Krsna consciousness. That endeavor should at least be there, and one who so attempts to preach renders the best service to the Lord. Despite opposition, one should attempt to elevate people to the highest standard of self-realization. One who has actually seen the truth, who is in the trance of self-realization, cannot just sit idly. He must come out. Ramanujacarya, for instance, declared the Hare Krsna mantra publicly. He did not distribute it secretly for some fee. Recently, an Indian yogi came to America to give some "private mantra." But if a mantra has any power, why should it be private? If a mantra is powerful, why should it not be publicly declared so that everyone can take advantage of it? We are saying that this Hare Krsna maha-mantra can save everyone, and we are therefore distributing it publicly, free of charge. But in this age, people are so foolish that they are not prepared to accept it. Rather, they hanker after some secret mantra and therefore pay some "yogi" thirty-five dollars or whatever for some "private mantra." This is because people want to be cheated. But the devotees are preaching without charge, declaring in the streets, parks, and everywhere, "Here! Here is the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. Come on, take it!" But under the spell of maya, illusion, people are thinking, "Oh, this is not good." But if you charge something and bluff and cheat people, they will follow you.

In this regard, there is a Hindi verse stating that Kali-yuga is such an abominable age that if one speaks the truth, people will come and beat him. But if one cheats, bluffs, and lies, people will be bewildered, will like it, and will accept it. If I say, "I am God," people will say, "Oh, here is Svamiji. Here is God." In this age, people don't have sufficient brain power to inquire, "How have you become God? What are the symptoms of God? Do you have all these symptoms?" Because people do not make such inquiries, they are cheated. Therefore it is

necessary to be fixed in consciousness of the Self. Unless one knows and understands the real self and the Superself, one will be cheated. Real yoga means understanding this process of self-realization.

yato yato niscalati
manas cancelam asthiram
tatas tato niyamyaitad
atmany eva vasam nayet

"From whatever and wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the Self." (Bg. 6.26) This is the real yogic process. If you are trying to concentrate your mind on Krsna, and the mind is diverted--wandering to some cinema or wherever--you should withdraw the mind, thinking, "Not there, please. Here." This is yoga: not allowing the mind to wander from Krsna.

Very intense training is required to keep the mind fixed on Krsna while sitting in one place. That is very hard work indeed. If one is not so practiced and tries to imitate this process, he will surely be confused. Instead, we always have to engage ourselves in Krsna consciousness, dovetailing everything we do to Krsna. Our usual activities should be so molded that they are rendered for Krsna's sake. In this way the mind will remain fixed on Krsna. As stated before, we should not try to sit down and stare at the tip of our nose. At the present moment, attempts to engage in that type of yoga are artificial. Rather, the recommended method is chanting loudly and hearing Hare Krsna. Then, even if the mind is diverted, it will be forced to concentrate on the sound vibration "Krsna." It isn't necessary to withdraw the mind from everything; it will automatically be withdrawn, because it will be concentrated on the sound vibration. If we hear an automobile pass, our attention is automatically diverted. Similarly, if we constantly chant Hare Krsna, our mind will automatically be fixed on Krsna, although we are accustomed to think of so many other things.

The nature of the mind is flickering and unsteady. But a self-realized yogi has to control the mind; the mind should not control him. At the present moment, the mind is controlling us (go-dasa). The mind is telling us, "Please, why not look at that beautiful girl?" and so we look. It says, "Why not drink that nice liquor?" and we say, "Yes." It says, "Why not smoke this cigarette?" "Yes," we say. "Why not go to this restaurant for such palatable food? Why not do this? Why not do that?" In this way, the mind is dictating, and we are following. Material life means being controlled by the senses, or the mind, which is the center of all the senses. Being controlled by the mind means being controlled by the senses, because the senses are the mind's assistants. The master mind dictates, "Go see that," and the eyes, following the directions of the mind, look at the sense object. The mind tells us to go to a certain place, and the legs, under the mind's directions, carry us there. Thus, being under the direction of the mind means coming under the control of the senses. If we can control the mind, we will not be under the control of the senses. One who is under the control of the senses is known as go-dasa. The word go means "senses," and dasa means "servant." One who is master of the senses is called gosvami, because svami means "master." Therefore, one who has the title gosvami is one who has mastered the senses. As long as one is servant of the senses, he cannot be called a

gosvami or svami. Unless one masters the senses, his acceptance of the title svami or gosvami is just a form of cheating. It was Rupa Gosvami who thus defined the meaning of the word gosvami. Originally, Sanatana Gosvami and Rupa Gosvami were not gosvamis but were government ministers. It was only when they became disciples of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu that they became gosvamis. So gosvami is not a hereditary title but a qualification. One becomes so qualified under the directions of a bona fide spiritual master. Only when one has attained perfection in sense control can he be called a gosvami and become a spiritual master in his turn. Unless one can master the senses, he will simply be a bogus spiritual master.

This is explained by Rupa Gosvami in his Upadesamrta (1):

vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegam
jiva-vegam uda ropastha-vegam
etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah
sarvam apinam prthivim sa sisyat

"A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world." In this verse Rupa Gosvami mentions six "pushings" (vegam). This pushing is a kind of impetus. For instance, when nature calls, we have to go to the toilet, and we cannot check this urge. So this urge is called vegam, a kind of pushing. According to Rupa Gosvami, there are six vegams. Vaco vegam is the urge to talk unnecessarily. That is a kind of pushing of the tongue. Then there is krodha-vegam, the urge to become angry. When we are pushed to anger, we cannot check ourselves, and sometimes men become so angry that they commit murder. Similarly, the mind is pushing, dictating, "You must go there at once," and we immediately go where we are told. The word jihva-vegam refers to the tongue's being urged to taste palatable foods. Udara-vegam refers to the urges of the belly. Although the belly is full, it still wants more food, and that is a kind of pushing of the belly. And when we yield to the pushings of the tongue and the belly, the urges of the genitals become very strong, and sex is required. If one does not control his mind or his tongue, how can he control his genitals? In this way, there are so many pushings, so much so that the body is a kind of pushing machine. Rupa Gosvami therefore tells us that one can become a spiritual master only when he can control all these urges.

Etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat:
"One who can control the pushings and remain steady can make disciples all over the world." The word dhira means "steady, sober." Only one who is a dhira is qualified to make disciples. This all depends on one's training. Indeed, yoga means training the mind and the senses to be fixed on the Self. This is not possible by meditating only fifteen minutes a day and then going out and doing whatever the senses dictate. How can the problems of life be solved so cheaply? If we want something precious, we have to pay for it. By the grace of Lord Caitanya, this payment has been made very easy--just chant Hare Krsna. By our chanting, this system of control, this yoga system, becomes perfected. Iha haite sarva siddhi haibe tomara. Thus Lord Caitanya has blessed us. Simply by chanting Hare Krsna, we will achieve the perfection of self-realization. In this age of Kali-yuga, when people are so fallen, other processes

will not be successful. This is the only process, and it is easy, sublime, effective, and practical. By it, one can realize oneself.

According to Krsna in the Ninth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (9.2), this process is the most sublime.

raja-vidya raja-guhyam
pavitram idam uttamam
pratyaksa vagamam dharmyam
susukham kartum a vyayam

"This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed."

After eating, a man can understand that his hunger has been satisfied; similarly, by following the principles of Krsna consciousness, one can understand that he has advanced in self-realization.

"Path of Perfection" by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Chapter Six

Perception of the Supersoul

prasanta-manasam hy enam
yoginam sukham uttamam

upaiti santa-rajasm
brahma-bhutam akalmasam

"The yogi whose mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest happiness. By virtue of his identity with Brahman, he is liberated; his mind is peaceful, his passions are quieted, and he is freed from sin." (Bg. 6.27)

yunjann evam sadatmanam
yogi vigata-kalmasah
sukhena brahma-samsparasm
atyantam sukham asnute

"Steady in the Self, being freed from all material contamination, the yogi achieves the highest perfectional stage of happiness in touch with the Supreme Consciousness." (Bg. 6.28)

So here is the perfection: "The yogi whose mind is fixed on Me." Since Krsna is speaking, the "Me" refers to Krsna. If I am speaking and saying, "Give me a glass of water," I do not intend that the water be supplied to someone else. We must therefore clearly understand that, since Bhagavad-gita is being spoken by Sri Krsna, when He says "unto Me," He means unto Krsna. Unfortunately, there are many commentators who deviate from these clear instructions. I do not know why; their motives are no doubt nefarious.

sarva-bhuta-stham atmanam
sarva-bhutani catmani
iksate yoga-yuktatma
sarvatra sama-darsanah

"A true yogi observes Me in all beings, and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized man sees Me everywhere." (Bg. 6.29) Sarva-bhuta-stham atmanam: "A true yogi observes Me in all beings." How is this possible? Some people say that all beings are Krsna and that therefore there is no point in worshiping Krsna separately. Consequently, such people take to humanitarian activities, claiming that such work is better. They say, "Why should Krsna be worshiped? Krsna says that one should see Krsna in every being. Therefore let us serve daridra-narayana, the man in the street." Such misinterpreters do not know the proper techniques, which have to be learned under a bona fide spiritual master.

A true yogi, as explained before, is the devotee of Krsna, and the most advanced devotee goes forth to preach Krsna consciousness. Why? Because he sees Krsna in all beings. How is this? Because he sees that all beings are part and parcel of Krsna. He also understands that since these beings have forgotten Krsna, it is his duty to awaken them to Krsna consciousness. Sometimes missionaries go forth to educate primitive, uneducated people just because they see that they are human beings and so deserve to be educated in order to understand the value of life. This is due to the missionary's sympathy. The devotee is similarly motivated. He understands that everyone should know himself to be part and parcel of Krsna. The devotee understands that people are suffering due to their forgetfulness of Krsna.

Thus the devotee sees Krsna in everything. He is not under the illusion that everything has become Krsna. Rather, he sees every living being as the son of God. If I say that this boy is the son of Mr. Johnson, do I mean that this boy is Mr. Johnson himself? I may see Mr. Johnson in this boy because this boy is his son, but the distinction remains. If I see every living being as the son of Krsna, I see Krsna in every being. This should not be difficult to understand. It is neither an association nor a vision but a fact.

When a devotee sees a cat or a dog, he sees Krsna in him. He knows that a cat, for instance, is a living being, and that due to his past deeds he has received the body of a cat. This is due to his forgetfulness. The devotee helps the cat by giving it some krsna-prasada so that someday the cat will come to Krsna consciousness. This is seeing Krsna in the cat. The devotee does not think, "Oh, here is Krsna. Let me embrace this cat and serve this cat as God." Such thinking is nonsensical. If one sees a tiger, he does not say, "Oh, here is Krsna. Come one, please eat me." The devotee does not embrace all beings as Krsna but rather sympathizes with every living being because he sees all beings as part and parcel of Krsna. In this way, "the true yogi observes Me in all beings." This is real vision.

Whatever is done in Krsna consciousness, knowingly or unknowingly, will have its effect. Children who bow down or try to vibrate Krsna's names or clap during kirtana are actually accumulating so much in their bank account of Krsna consciousness. Fire will act, whether one is a child or an adult. If a child touches fire, the fire will burn. The fire does not say, "Oh, I will not burn him. He is a child and does not know." No, the fire will always act as fire. Similarly, Krsna is the supreme spirit, and if a child partakes in Krsna consciousness, he will be affected. Krsna will act, whether the child knows or does not know. Every living being should be given a chance to partake of Krsna consciousness because Krsna is there and will act. Therefore everyone is being invited to come and take prasada, because this prasada will someday take effect.

We should be careful not to make the mistake of thinking that everyone is Krsna; rather, we should see Krsna in everyone. Krsna is all-pervading. Why is He to be seen only in human beings? As stated in Brahma-samhita, He is also present within the atom: andantara-stha-paramanu-cayantara-stham. The word paramanu means "atom," and we should understand that Krsna is present within every atom. "A true yogi observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me." How does the yogi see every being "in Me"? This is possible because the true yogi knows that everything that we see is Krsna. We are sitting on this floor or on this carpet, but in actuality we are sitting on Krsna. We should know this to be a fact. How is this carpet Krsna? It is Krsna because it is made of Krsna's energy. The Supreme Lord has various energies, of which there are three primary divisions--material energy, spiritual energy, and marginal energy. Parasya saktir vividhaiva sruyate. We living entities are marginal energy, the material world is material energy, and the spiritual world is spiritual energy. We are marginal energy in the sense that we can be either spiritually or materially situated. There is no third alternative; either we become materialistic or spiritualistic.

As long as we are in the material world, we are seated on the material energy, and therefore we are situated in Krsna, because Krsna's

energy is not separate from Krsna. A flame contains both heat and illumination, two energies. Neither the heat nor the illumination are separate from the flame; therefore in one sense heat is fire, and illumination is fire, but they can be distinguished. Similarly, this material energy is also Krsna, and although we are thinking that we are sitting on this floor, we are actually sitting on Krsna. Therefore it is stated, "The self-realized man sees Me everywhere." Seeing Krsna everywhere means seeing every living being as well as everything else in relationship to Krsna. In the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (7.8), Lord Krsna tells Arjuna how He can be seen in various manifestations.

raso 'ham apsu kaunteya
prabhasmi sasi-suryayoh
pranavah sarva- vedesu
sabdah khe paurusam nrsu

"O son of Kunti [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable om in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and ability in man."

Water is drunk by all living entities, and is needed by birds, beasts, and man. It is not only used for drinking, but for washing and for cultivating plants as well. A soldier on the battlefield can understand how important water is. When fighting, soldiers become thirsty, and if they have no water, they die. Once a person has learned the philosophy of Bhagavad-gita, whenever he drinks water, he sees Krsna. And when does a day pass when we do not drink water? This is the way of Krsna consciousness. "I am the light of the sun and the moon." So whether in the day or the night, we see either sunshine or moonshine. How, then, can we forget Krsna? This, then, is the way of perfect yoga. We have to see Krsna everywhere and at all times.

yo mam pasyati sarvatra
sarvam ca mayi pasyati
tasyaham na pranasyami
sa ca me na pranasyati

"For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." (Bg.6.30) This is sada tad-bhava-bhavitah.: always remembering Krsna. If we practice living in this way, we never lose Krsna and are never lost to Krsna, and at the time of death we are therefore sure to go to Krsna. If we are not lost to Krsna, where can we go but to Krsna? In the Ninth Chapter, Krsna tells Arjuna, kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati (Bg. 9.31): "O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes."

Simply don't lose sight of Krsna. That is the perfection of life. We can forget everything else, but we should never forget Krsna. If we can remember Krsna, we are the richest of men, even though people may see us as very poor. Although Rupa Gosvami and Sanatana Gosvami were learned scholars and very opulent ministers, they adopted the poor life of mendicants. In his Sri Sad-gosvamy-astaka (verse 4), Srinivasa Acarya thus describes the six Gosvamis:

tyaktva turnam asesamandala-patisrenim sada tuccha vat
bhutva dina-ganesakau karunaya kaupina-kanthasritau

gopi-bhava-rasamrtabधि-lahari-kallola-magnau muhur
vande rupa-sanatanau raghu-yugau srijiva-gopalakau

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvamis--Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, and Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami--who cast off all aristocratic association as insignificant. To deliver poor, conditioned souls, they accepted loincloths and became mendicants, but they were always merged in the ecstatic ocean of the gopis' love for Krsna, and they were always bathing repeatedly in the waves of that ocean."

The words kaupina-kanthasritau indicate that the Gosvamis were simply wearing underwear and a loincloth and nothing else. In other words, they accepted the poorest way of life as mendicants. Generally, if one is habituated to living according to a high standard, he cannot immediately lower his standard. If a rich man accepts such a poor condition, he cannot live, but the Gosvamis lived very happily. How was this possible? Gopi-bhava-rasamrtabधि-lahari-kallola-magnau muhur/vande rupa-sanatanau raghu-yugau sri-iiva-gopalakau. They were actually rich because they were constantly dipping themselves in the ocean of the loving affairs of the gopis. If one simply thinks of the gopis' love for Krsna, one is not lost. There are many ways not to lose sight of Krsna. If we do not lose sight of Krsna, then we will not be lost.

A person in Krsna consciousness certainly sees Lord Krsna everywhere, and he sees everything in Krsna. Such a person may appear to see all separate manifestations of the material nature, but in each and every instance he is conscious of Krsna, knowing that everything is the manifestation of Krsna's energy. Nothing can exist without Krsna, and Krsna is the Lord of everything--this is the basic principle of Krsna consciousness. How does the devotee know that everything is the manifestation of Krsna's energy? First of all, a Krsna conscious person is a philosopher. If he sees a tree, he thinks, "What is this tree?" He then sees that the tree has a material body--just as he has a material body--and that the tree is also a living entity, but due to the tree's past misdeeds, he has obtained such an abominable body that he cannot even move. The tree's body is material, material energy, and the devotee automatically questions, "Whose energy? Krsna's energy. Therefore the tree is connected to Krsna. Being a living entity, the tree is part and parcel of Krsna." In this way, the Krsna conscious person does not see the tree, but sees Krsna present. That is Krsna consciousness: you don't see the tree. You see Krsna. That is the perfection of yoga, and that is also samadhi.

Krsna consciousness is the development of love of Krsna--a position transcendental even to material liberation. Why does the Krsna conscious person take such an account of the tree? Because he has love for Krsna. If you love your child and your child is away, you think of him when you see his shoes. You think, "Oh, this is my dear child's shoe." It is not that you love the shoe, but the child. The shoe, however, evokes that love. Similarly, as soon as we see Krsna's energy manifested in a living entity, we love that entity because we love Krsna. Therefore, if we love Krsna, universal love is accounted for. Otherwise "universal love" is nonsensical, because it is not possible to love everybody without loving Krsna. If we love Krsna, universal love is automatically there. Without being Krsna conscious, a person may say, "Here is my American brother,

and here is my Indian brother. Now let us eat this cow." Such a person may look on other humans as brothers, but he looks on the cow as food. Is this universal love? A Krsna conscious person, however, thinks, "Oh, here is a cow. Here is a dog. They are part and parcel of Krsna, but somehow or other they have acquired different bodies. This does not mean that they are not my brothers. How can I kill and eat my brothers?" That is true universal love--rooted in love for Krsna. Without such Krsna consciousness, there is no question of love at all.

Krsna consciousness is the stage beyond self-realization in which the devotee becomes one with Krsna in the sense that Krsna becomes everything for the devotee, and the devotee becomes full in loving Krsna. An intimate relationship between the Lord and the devotee then exists. In that stage, the living entity attains his immortality. Nor is the Personality of Godhead ever out of sight of the devotee. To merge in Krsna is spiritual annihilation. A devotee takes no such risk. It is stated in the Brahma-samhita (5.38),

premanja na-cch urita-bhakti- vilocanena
santah sadaiva hrdayesu vilokayanti
yam syamasundaram acintya-guna-svarupam
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, who is always seen by the devotee whose eyes are anointed with the pulp of love. He is seen in His eternal form of Syamasundara, situated within the heart of the devotee." One who has developed such a love for Krsna sees Syamasundara, Kartamesana, always within his heart. At this stage, Lord Krsna never disappears from the sight of the devotee, nor does the devotee ever lose sight of the Lord. In the case of a yogi who sees the Lord as Paramatma within the heart, the same applies. Such a yogi turns into a pure devotee and cannot bear to live for a moment without seeing the Lord within himself.

This is the real process by which we can see God. God is not our order supplier. We cannot demand, "Come and show Yourself." No, we first have to qualify ourselves. Then we can see God at every moment and everywhere.

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

"The yogi who knows that I and the Supersoul within all creatures are one worships Me and remains always in Me in all circumstances." (Bg. 6.31)

A yogi who is practicing meditation on the Supersoul sees within himself the plenary portion of Krsna as Visnu--with four hands, holding conchshell, wheel, club, and lotus flower. This manifestation of Visnu, which is the yogi's object of concentration, is Krsna's plenary portion. As stated in Brahma-samhita (5.48),

yasyaika-ninasita-kalam athavalambya
jivanti loma-vila-ja jagad-anda-nathah
visnur mahan sa iha yasya kala-viseso

govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"The Brahmas and other lords of the mundane worlds appear from the pores of Maha-Visnu and remain alive for the duration of His one exhalation. I adore the primeval Lord, Govinda, for Maha-Visnu is a portion of His plenary portion." The words govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami ("I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord") are most important. The word adi means "original," and purusam means "the Lord as the original male, the original enjoyer." And who is this Govinda whose plenary portion is the Maha-Visnu? And what is the function of the Maha-Visnu?

In every universe there is a primary, original living entity known as Brahma. The life of Brahma is the life of the universe, and this life exists during only one breathing period (exhalation and inhalation) of the Maha-Visnu. The Maha-Visnu lies on the Causal Ocean, and when He exhales, millions of universes issue from His body as bubbles and then develop. When the Maha-Visnu inhales, these millions of universes return within Him, and this is called the process of annihilation. That, in essence, is the position of these material universes: they come out from the body of the Maha-Visnu and then again return. In the Ninth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (9.7) it is also indicated that these material universes are manifest at a certain period and are then annihilated.

sarva-bhutani kaunteya
prakrtim yanti mamikam
kalpa-ksaye punas tani
kalpadau visriamy aham

"O son of Kunti, at the end of the millennium, every material manifestation enters into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency I again create." The creation, maintenance, and annihilation of this material cosmic manifestation are completely dependent on the supreme will of the Personality of Godhead. "At the end of the millennium" means at the death of Brahma. Brahma lives for one hundred years, and his one day is calculated at 4,300,000,000 of our earthly years. His night is of the same duration. His month consists of thirty such days and nights, and his year of twelve months. After one hundred such years, when Brahma dies, the devastation or annihilation takes place; this means that the energy manifested by the Supreme Lord is again wound up in Himself. That is, the Maha-Visnu inhales. Then again, when there is need to manifest the cosmic world, it is done by His will: "Although I am one, I shall become many." This is the Vedic aphorism. He expands Himself in this material energy, and the whole cosmic manifestation again takes place.

Since the entire creation and annihilation of the material universes depend on the exhaling and inhaling of the Maha-Visnu, we can hardly imagine the magnitude of that Maha-Visnu. And yet it is said here that this Maha-Visnu is but a plenary portion of the plenary portion of Krsna, who is the original Govinda. The Maha-Visnu enters into each universe as Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and Garbhodakasayi Visnu further expands as Ksirodakasayi Visnu, and it is this Visnu form that enters into the heart of every living entity. In this way, Visnu is manifest throughout the creation. Thus the yogis concentrate their minds on the Ksirodakasayi Visnu form within the heart. As stated in the last chapter of Bhagavad-gita (18.61),

inarah sarva-bhutanam
hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati
bhramayan sa rva-bhutani
yantrarudhani mayaya

"The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy."

Thus, according to the yogic process, the yogi finds out where the Ksirodakasayi Visnu is seated within the heart, and when he finds this form there, he concentrates on Him. The yogi should know that this Visnu is not different from Krsna. Krsna in this form of Supersoul is situated in everyone's heart. Furthermore, there is no difference between the innumerable Supersouls present in the innumerable hearts of living entities. For example, there is only one sun in the sky, but this sun may be reflected in millions of buckets of water. Or, one may ask millions and trillions of people, "Where is the sun?" And each will say, "Over my head." The sun is one, but it is reflected countless times. According to the Vedas, the living entities are innumerable; there is no possibility of counting them. Just as the sun can be reflected in countless buckets of water, Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can live in each and everyone's heart. It is this form that is Krsna's plenary portion, and it is this form on which the yogi concentrates.

One who is engaged in Krsna consciousness is already a perfect yogi. In fact, there is no difference between a Krsna conscious devotee always engaged in the transcendental loving service of Krsna and a perfect yogi engaged in meditation on the Supersoul. There is no difference between a yogi in samadhi (in a trance meditating on the Visnu form) and a Krsna conscious person engaged in different activities. The devotee--even though engaged in various activities while in material existence--remains always situated in Krsna. This is confirmed in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu of Srila Rupa Gosvami: nikhilasy apy avasthasu/ivan-muktah saucyate. A devotee of the Lord, always acting in Krsna consciousness, is automatically liberated. This is also confirmed in the Fourteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (14.26):

mam ca yo 'vyabhicarena
bhakti-yogena se vate
sa gunan samatityaitan
brahma-bhuyaya kalpate

"One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman."

Thus the devotee engaged in unalloyed devotional service has already transcended the material modes of nature. Being situated on the Brahman platform means being liberated. There are three platforms: the bodily, or sensual; the mental; and the spiritual. The spiritual platform is called the Brahman platform, and liberation means being situated on that platform. Being conditioned souls, we are presently situated on the bodily, or sensual, platform. Those who are a little advanced--speculators, philosophers--are situated on the mental

platform. Above this is the platform of liberation, of Brahman realization.

That the devotee, always acting in Krsna consciousness, is automatically situated on the liberated platform of Brahman is also confirmed in the Narada-pancaratra.:

dik-kalady-ana vacchinne
krsne ceto vidhaya ca
tan-mayo bha vati ksipram
jivo brahmani yojayet

"By concentrating one's attention on the transcendental form of Krsna, who is all-pervading and beyond time and space, one becomes absorbed in thinking of Krsna and then attains the happy state of transcendental association with Him."

Krsna consciousness is the highest stage of trance in yoga practice. This very understanding that Krsna is present as Paramatma in everyone's heart makes the yogi faultless. The Vedas confirm this inconceivable potency of the Lord as follows:

eko 'pi san bahudha yo 'vabhati
ainaryad rupam ekam ca surya vad bahudheyate

"Visnu is one, and yet He is certainly all-pervading. By His inconceivable potency, in spite of His one form, He is present everywhere. As the sun, He appears in many places at once."

atmaupamyena sarvatra
samam pasyati yo 'rjuna
sukham va yadi va dukham
sa yogi paramo matah

"He is a perfect yogi who, by comparison to his own self, sees the true equality of all beings, both in their happiness and distress, O Arjuna!" (Bg. 6.32) This is true universal vision. It is not that God is sitting in my heart and not in the heart of a dog, cat, or cow. Sarva-bhutanam means that He is sitting in the hearts of all living entities, in the human heart and in the ant's heart. The only difference is that cats and dogs cannot realize this. A human being, if he tries to follow the sankhya-yoga or bhakti-yoga system, is able to understand, and this is the prerogative of human life. If we miss this opportunity, we suffer a great loss, for we have undergone the evolutionary process and have passed through more than eight million species of life in order to get this human form. We should therefore be conscious of this and careful not to miss this opportunity. We have a good body, the human form, and intelligence and civilization. We should not live like animals and struggle hard for existence but should utilize our time thinking peacefully and understanding our relationship with the Supreme Lord. This is the instruction of Bhagavad-gita: Don't lose this opportunity; utilize it properly.

Yoga for the Modern Age

arjuna uvaca
yo 'yam yogas tvaya proktah
samyena madhusudana
etasyaham na pasyami
cancaiatvat sthitim sthiram

"Arjuna said: O Madhusudana, the system of yoga which You have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady." (Bg. 6.33)

This is the crucial test of the eightfold astanga-yoga system expounded herein by Lord Sri Krsna. It has already been explained that one must sit in a certain way and concentrate the mind on the form of Visnu seated within the heart. According to the astanga-yoga system, first of all one has to control the senses, follow all the rules and regulations, practice the sitting posture and the breathing process, concentrate the mind on the form of Visnu within the heart, and then become absorbed in that form. There are eight processes in this astanga-yoga system, but herein Arjuna says quite frankly that this astanga-yoga system is very difficult. Indeed, he says that it "appears impractical and unendurable to me."

Actually, the astanga-yoga system is not impractical, for were it impractical, Lord Krsna would not have taken so much trouble to describe it. It is not impractical, but it appears impractical. What may be impractical for one man may be practical for another. Arjuna is representative of the common man in the sense that he is not a mendicant or a sannyasi or a scholar. He is on the battlefield fighting for his kingdom, and in this sense he is an ordinary man engaged in a worldly activity. He is concerned with earning a livelihood, supporting his family, and so on. Arjuna has many problems, just as the common man, and generally this system of astanga-yoga is impractical for the ordinary common man. That is the point being made. It is practical for one who has already completely renounced everything and can sit in a secluded, sacred place on the side of a hill or in a cave. But who can do this in this age? Although Arjuna was a great warrior, a member of the royal family, and a very advanced person, he proclaims this yoga system impractical. And what are we in comparison to Arjuna? If we attempt this system, failure is certain.

Therefore this system of mysticism described by Lord Krsna to Arjuna beginning with the words *sucau dese* and ending with *yogi paramah* is here rejected by Arjuna out of a feeling of inability. As stated before, it is not possible for an ordinary man to leave home and go to a secluded place in the mountains or jungles to practice yoga in this age of Kali. The present age is characterized by a bitter struggle for a life of short duration. As Kali-yuga progresses, our life span gets shorter and shorter. Our forefathers lived for a hundred years or more, but now people are dying at the age of sixty or seventy. Gradually the life span will decrease even further. Memory, mercy, and other good qualities will also decrease in this age.

In Kali-yuga, people are not serious about self-realization even by simple, practical means, and what to speak of this difficult yoga

system, which regulates the mode of living, the manner of sitting, selection of place, and detachment of the mind from material engagements. As a practical man, Arjuna thought it was impossible to follow this system of yoga, even though he was favorably endowed in many ways. He was not prepared to become a pseudo yogi and practice some gymnastic feats. He was not a pretender but a soldier and a family man. Therefore he frankly admitted that for him this system of yoga would be a waste of time. Arjuna belonged to the royal family and was highly elevated in terms of numerous qualities; he was a great warrior, he had great longevity, and, above all, he was the most intimate friend of Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Five thousand years ago, when Arjuna was living, the life span was very long. At that time, people used to live up to one thousand years. In the present age of Kali-yuga, the life span is limited to a hundred years; in Dvapara-yuga, the life span was a thousand years; in Treta-yuga, the life span was ten thousand years; and in Satya-yuga, the life span was one hundred thousand years. Thus as the yugas degenerate, the life span decreases. Even though Arjuna was living at a time when one would live and practice meditation for a thousand years, he still considered this system impossible.

Five thousand years ago, Arjuna had much better facilities than we do now, yet he refused to accept this system of yoga. In fact, we do not find any record in history of his practicing it at any time. Therefore, this system must be considered generally impossible in this age of Kali. Of course, it may be possible for some very few, rare men, but for the people in general it is an impossible proposal. If this were so five thousand years ago, what of the present day? Those who are imitating this yoga system in different so-called schools and societies, although complacent, are certainly wasting their time. They are completely ignorant of the desired goal.

Since this astanga-yoga system is considered impossible, the bhakti-yoga system is recommended for everyone. Without training or education, one can automatically participate in bhakti-yoga. Even a small child can clap at kirtana. Therefore Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has proclaimed bhakti-yoga the only system practical for this age.

harer nama harer nama
harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty eva nasty eva
nasty eva gatir anyatha

"In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." Chanting is very simple, and one will feel the results immediately. Pratyaksavagamam dharmyam. If we attempt to practice other yoga systems, we will remain in darkness; we will not know whether or not we are making progress. In bhakti-yoga, one can understand, "Yes, now I am making progress." This is the only yoga system by which one can quickly attain self-realization and liberation in this life. One doesn't have to wait for another lifetime.

cancalam hi manah krsna
pramathi bala vad drdham
tyayaham nigraham manye
vayor iva suduskaram

"For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate, and very strong, O Krsna, and to subdue it is, it seems to me, more difficult than controlling the wind." (Bg. 6.34) By chanting Hare Krsna, one captures the mind immediately. Just by saying the name Krsna and hearing it, the mind is automatically fixed on Krsna. This means that the yoga system is immediately attained. The entire yoga system aims at concentration on the form of Visnu, and Krsna is the original personality from whom all these Visnu forms are expanded. Krsna is like the original candle from which all other candles are lit. If one candle is lit, one can light any number of candles, and there is no doubt that each candle is as powerful as the original candle. Nonetheless, one has to recognize the original candle as the original. Similarly, from Krsna millions of Visnu forms expand, and each Visnu form is as good as Krsna, but Krsna remains the original. Thus one who concentrates his mind on Lord Sri Krsna, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, immediately attains the perfection of yoga.

sri-bhagavan uvaca
asamsayam maha-baho
mano durnigraham calam
abhyasena tu kaunteya
vairagyena ca grhyate

"The Blessed Lord said: O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by constant practice and by detachment." (Bg. 6.35) Krsna does not say that it is not difficult. Rather, He admits that it is difficult, but possible by means of constant practice. Constant practice means engaging ourselves in some activities that remind us of Krsna. In this Society for Krsna consciousness we therefore have many activities--kirtana, temple activities, prasada, publications, and so on. Everyone is engaged in some activity with Krsna at the center. Therefore whether one is typing for Krsna, cooking for Krsna, chanting for Krsna, or distributing literature for Krsna, he is in the yoga system, and he is also in Krsna. We engage in activities just as in material life, but these activities are molded in such a way that they are directly connected with Krsna. Thus through every activity, Krsna consciousness is possible, and perfection in yoga follows automatically.

asamyatatmana yogo
dusprapa iti me matih
vasyatmana tu yatata
sakyo 'vaptum upayatah

"For one whose mind is unbridled, self-realization is difficult work. But he whose mind is controlled and who strives by right means is assured of success. That is My opinion." (Bg. 6.36) The Supreme Personality of Godhead declares that one who does not accept the proper treatment to detach the mind from material engagement can hardly achieve success in self-realization. Trying to practice yoga while engaging the mind in material enjoyment is like trying to ignite a fire while pouring water on it. Similarly, yoga practice without mental control is a waste of time. I may sit down to meditate and focus my mind on Krsna, and that

is very commendable, but there are many yoga societies that teach their students to concentrate on the void or on some color. That is, they do not recommend concentration on the form of Visnu. Trying to concentrate the mind on the impersonal or the void is very difficult and troublesome. It is stated by Sri Krsna in the Twelfth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (12.5),

kleso 'dhikataras tesam
avyaktasakta-cetasam
avyakta hi gatir duhkham
deha vadbhir a vapyate

"For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied."

In the temple, the devotee tries to concentrate on the form of Krsna. Concentrating on nothingness, on void, is very difficult, and naturally the mind is very flickering. Therefore instead of concentrating on the void, the mind searches out something else. The mind must be engaged in thinking of something, and if it is not thinking of Krsna, it must be thinking of maya. Therefore, pseudomeditation on the impersonal void is simply a waste of time. Such a show of yoga practice may be materially lucrative, but useless as far as spiritual realization is concerned. I may open a class in yogic meditation and charge people money for sitting down and pressing their nose this way and that, but if my students do not attain the real goal of yoga practice, they have wasted their time and money, and I have cheated them.

Therefore one has to concentrate his mind steadily and constantly on the form of Visnu, and that is called samadhi. In Krsna consciousness, the mind is controlled by engaging it constantly in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Unless one is engaged in Krsna consciousness, he cannot steadily control the mind. A Krsna conscious person easily achieves the result of yoga practice without separate endeavor, but a yoga practitioner cannot achieve success without becoming Krsna conscious.

Chapter Eight

Failure and Success in Yoga

Suppose I give up my business, my ordinary occupation, and begin to practice yoga, real yoga, as explained herein by Lord Sri Krsna. Suppose I practice, and somehow or other I fail; I cannot properly complete the process. What, then, is the result? This is Arjuna's very next question.

ariuna uvaca
ayatih sraddhayopeto
yogac calita-manasah
aprapya yoga-samsiddhim
kam gatim krsna gacchati

"Arjuna said: What is the destination of the man of faith who does not persevere, who in the beginning takes to the process of self-realization but who later desists due to worldly-mindedness and thus does not attain perfection in mysticism?" (Bg. 6.37)

The path of self-realization, of mysticism, is described in the Bhagavad-gita. The basic principle of self-realization is knowing that "I am not this material body but am different from it, and my happiness is in eternal life, bliss, and knowledge." Before arriving at the point of self-realization, one must take it for granted that he is not this body. That lesson is taught in the very beginning of Bhagavad-gita: the living entity is not this material body but something different, and his happiness is in eternal life.

Clearly, this life is not eternal. The perfection of yoga means attaining a blissful, eternal life full of knowledge. All yoga systems should be executed with that goal in mind. It is not that one attends yoga classes to reduce fat or to keep the body fit for sense gratification. This is not the goal of yoga, but people are taught this way because they want to be cheated. Actually, if you undergo any exercise program, your body will be kept fit. There are many systems of bodily exercise--weight lifting and other sports--and they help keep the body fit, reduce fat, and help the digestive system. Therefore there is no need to practice yoga for these purposes. The real purpose for practicing yoga is to realize that I am not this body. I want eternal happiness, complete knowledge, and eternal life--that is the ultimate end of the true yoga system.

The goal of yoga is transcendental, beyond both body and mind. Self-realization is sought by three methods: (1) the path of knowledge (jnana); (2) the path of the eightfold system; or (3) the path of bhakti-yoga. In each of these processes, one has to realize the constitutional position of the living entity, his relationship with God, and the activities whereby he can reestablish the lost link and achieve the highest perfectional stage of Krsna consciousness. Following any of the above-mentioned three methods, one is sure to reach the supreme goal sooner or later. This was asserted by the Lord in the Second Chapter: even a little endeavor on the transcendental path offers a great hope for deliverance.

Of these three methods, the path of bhakti-yoga is especially suitable for this age, because it is the most direct method of God realization. To be doubly assured, Arjuna is asking Lord Krsna to confirm His former statement. One may sincerely accept the path of self-realization, but the process of cultivation of knowledge (jnana) and the practice of the eightfold yoga system are generally very difficult for this age. Therefore, despite constant endeavor, one may fail for many reasons. First of all, one may not be actually following the process, the rules and regulations. To pursue the transcendental path is more or less to declare war on the illusory energy. When we accept any process of self-realization, we are actually declaring war against maya, illusion, and maya is certain to place many difficulties before us. Therefore, there is a chance of failure, but one has to become very steady. Whenever a person tries to escape the clutches of the illusory energy, she tries to defeat the practitioner by various allurements. A conditioned soul is already allured by the modes of material energy, and there is every chance of being allured again, even while performing

transcendental disciplines. This is called yogac calita-manasah: deviation from the transcendental path. Arjuna is inquisitive to know the results of deviation from the path of self-realization.

As stated in Bhagavad-gita (6.37), quoted above, yogat means "from the practice of yoga," calita means "diversion," and manasah means "mind." So there is every chance for the mind to be diverted from yoga practice. We all have some experience of trying to concentrate by reading a book, and our mind is so disturbed that it does not allow us to concentrate on the book.

Actually, Arjuna is asking a very important question, for one is subject to failure in all types of yoga--be it the eightfold yoga system, the jnana-yoga system of speculative philosophy, or the bhakti-yoga system of devotional service. Failure is possible on any of these paths, and the results of failure are clearly explained by Sri Krsna Himself in the following dialogue with Arjuna (Bg. 6.38-44). Arjuna, continuing his inquiry, asks,

kaccin nobhaya-vibhras/as
chinnabhram iva nasyati
apratistho maha-baho
vimudho brahmanah pathi

"O mighty-armed Krsna, does not such a man, being deviated from the path of Transcendence, perish like a riven cloud, with no position in any sphere?"

etan me samsayam krsna
chettum arhasy asesatah
tvad-anyah samsayasyasya
chetta na hy upapadyate

"This is my doubt, O Krsna, and I ask You to dispel it completely. But for Yourself, no one is to be found who can destroy this doubt."

sri-bhaga van uvaca
partha naiveha namutra
vinasas tasya vidyate
na hi kalyana-krt kascid
durgatim tata gacchati

"The Blessed Lord said: Son of Prtha, a transcendentalist engaged in auspicious activities does not meet with destruction either in this world or in the spiritual world; one who does good, My friend, is never overcome by evil."

prapya punya-krtam lokan
usitva sasvatih samah
sucinam srimatam gehe
yoga-bhrasto 'bhijayate

"The unsuccessful yogi, after many, many years of enjoyment on the planets of the pious living entities, is born into a family of righteous people, or into a family of rich aristocracy."

atha va yoginam eva
kule bha vati dhimatam
etad dhi durlabhataram
loke janma yad idrsam

"Or he takes his birth in a family of transcendentalists who are surely great in wisdom. Verily, such a birth is rare in this world."

tatra tam buddhi-samyogam
labhate paurva-dehikam
yatate ca tato bhuyah
samsiddhau kuru-nandana

"On taking such a birth, he again revives the divine consciousness of his previous life, and he tries to make further progress in order to achieve complete success, O son of Kuru."

purvabhyasena tenaiva
hriyate hy avaso 'pi sah
jijnasur api yogasya
sabda-brahmativartate

"By virtue of the divine consciousness of his previous life, he automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles--even without seeking them. Such an inquisitive transcendentalist, striving for yoga, stands always above the ritualistic principles of the scriptures."

Purification of consciousness is the purpose of this Krsna consciousness movement. Presently we are preparing this divine consciousness, for our consciousness goes with us at the time of death. Consciousness is carried from the body just as the aroma of a flower is carried by the air. When we die, this material body composed of five elements--earth, water, air, fire, and ether--decomposes, and the gross materials return to the elements. Or, as the Christian Bible says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." In some societies the body is burned, in others it is buried, and in others it is thrown to animals. In India, the Hindus burn the body, and thus the body is transformed into ashes. Ash is simply another form of earth. Christians bury the body, and after some time in the grave, the body eventually turns to dust, which again, like ash, is another form of earth. There are other societies--like the Parsee community in India--that neither burn nor bury the body but throw it to the vultures, and the vultures immediately come to eat the body, and then the body is eventually transformed into stool. So in any case, this beautiful body, which we are soaping and caring for so nicely, will eventually turn into either stool, ashes, or dust.

At death, the finer elements (mind, intelligence, and ego), which, combined, are called consciousness, carry the small particle of spirit soul to another body to suffer or enjoy, according to one's work. Our consciousness is molded by our work. If we associate with stool, our consciousness, which is like the air, will carry the aroma of stool, and thus at the time of death will transport us to an undesirable body. Or, if the consciousness passes over roses, it carries the aroma of roses, and thus we are transported to a body wherein we can enjoy the results of our previous work. If we train ourselves to work in Krsna

consciousness, our consciousness will carry us to Krsna. Different types of body are developed according to consciousness; therefore, if we train our consciousness according to the yogic principles, we will attain a body wherein we can practice yoga. We will get good parents and a chance to practice the yoga system, and automatically we will be able to revive the Krsna consciousness practiced in our previous body. Therefore it is stated in this last verse, "By virtue of the divine consciousness of his previous life, he automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles--even without seeking them." Therefore, our present duty is to cultivate divine consciousness. If we want divine life, spiritual elevation, and eternal, blissful life, full of knowledge--in other words, if we want to go back home, back to Godhead--we have to train ourselves in divine consciousness, or Krsna consciousness.

This can be easily done through association (sangat sanjayate kamah). Through divine association, our consciousness is made divine, and through demoniac association, our consciousness is made demoniac. Therefore, our consciousness must be trained to be divine through the proper association of those in Krsna consciousness. That is the duty of one in this human form, a form that gives us a chance to make our next life completely divine. To attain this end, we should try to contact those who are developing divine consciousness.

prayatnad yatamanas tu
yogi samsuddha-kilbisah
aneka-janma-samsiddhas
tato yati param gatim

"But when the yogi engages himself with sincere endeavor in making further progress, being washed of all contaminations, then ultimately, after many, many births of practice, he attains the supreme goal." (Bg. 6.45) As indicated in this verse, making progress is a question of practice. When a child is born, he neither knows how to smoke nor how to drink, but through association he becomes a drunkard or a smoker. Association is the most important factor. Sangat sanjayate kamah. For instance, there are many business associations, and by becoming a member of certain associations, one's business flourishes. In any endeavor, association is very important. For the development of divine consciousness, we have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in which the methods of attaining divine consciousness are taught. In this society we invite everyone to come and chant Hare Krsna. This process is not difficult, and even children can participate. No previous qualifications are necessary; one doesn't need a master's degree or doctorate. Our invitation to everyone is to join this association and become Krsna conscious.

The Supreme Lord, God, is pure, and His kingdom is also pure. If one wants to enter His kingdom, he must also be pure. This is very natural; if we want to enter a particular society, we must meet certain qualifications. If we want to return home, back to Godhead, there is a qualification we must meet--we must not be materially contaminated. And what is this contamination? Unrestricted sense gratification. If we can free ourselves from the material contamination of sense gratification, we can become eligible to enter the kingdom of God. That process of freeing ourselves, of washing ourselves of this contamination, is called the yoga system. As stated before, yoga does not mean sitting down for

fifteen minutes, meditating, and then continuing with sense gratification. To be cured of a certain disease, we must follow the prescriptions of a physician. In this Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, the process of yoga is recommended, and we have to follow the prescribed methods in order to be freed from material contamination. If we succeed in doing so, we can link up, or connect, with the Supreme.

Krsna consciousness is a method for connecting directly with the Supreme. This is the special gift of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Not only is this method direct and immediate, but it is also practical. Although many people entering this Society have no qualifications, they have become highly advanced in Krsna consciousness simply by coming in contact with the Society. In this age, life is very short, and a yoga process that takes a long time will not help the general populace. In Kali-yuga, people are all so unfortunate, and association is very bad. Therefore, this process of directly contacting the Supreme is recommended--hari-nama. Krsna is present in the form of His transcendental name, and we can contact Him immediately by hearing His name. Simply by hearing the name Krsna we immediately become freed from material contamination.

As stated in the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (7.28),

yesam tv anta-gatam papam
jananam punya-karmanam
te dvandva-moha-nirmukta
bhajante mam drdha-vratah

"Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life, whose sinful actions are completely eradicated, and who are freed from the duality of delusion, engage themselves in My service with determination." It is herein stressed that one must be completely fixed in Krsna consciousness, devoid of duality, and must execute only pious activities. Because the mind is flickering, dualities will always come. One is always wondering, "Shall I become Krsna conscious, or should I engage in another consciousness?" These problems are always there, but if one is advanced by virtue of pious activities executed in a previous life, his consciousness will be steadily fixed, and he will resolve, "I will be Krsna conscious."

Whether we acted piously in this life or a previous life really doesn't matter. This chanting of Hare Krsna is so potent that through it we will immediately be purified. We should have the determination, however, not to become implicated in further impious activities. Therefore, for those who want to be initiated in this Society for Krsna consciousness, there are four principles: no illicit sex, no intoxication, no meat-eating, and no gambling. We don't say, "No sex." But we do say, "No illicit sex." If you want sex, get married and have Krsna conscious children. "No intoxication" means not even taking tea or coffee--to say nothing of other intoxicants. And there is no gambling and no meat-eating (including fish and eggs). Simply by following these four basic rules and regulations, one becomes immediately uncontaminated. No further endeavor is necessary. As soon as one joins this Krsna consciousness movement and follows these rules and regulations, material contamination is immediately removed, but one must be careful not to be contaminated again. Therefore these rules and regulations should be followed carefully.

Material contamination begins with these four bad habits, and if we manage to check them, there is no question of contamination. Therefore, as soon as we take to Krsna consciousness, we become free. However, we should not think that because Krsna consciousness makes us free, we can again indulge in these four bad habits and get free by chanting. That is cheating, and that will not be allowed. Once we are freed, we should not allow ourselves to become contaminated again. One should not think, "I shall drink or have illicit sex and then chant and make myself free." According to some religious processes, it is said that one can commit all kinds of sin and then go to church, confess to a priest, and be freed of all sin. Therefore people are sinning and confessing and sinning and confessing over and over again. But this is not the process of Krsna consciousness. If you are freed, that's all right, but don't do it again. After all, what is the purpose of confession? If you confess, "I have committed these sinful activities," why should you commit them again? If a thief confesses that he has been pickpocketing, he is freed of his sin by virtue of his confession, but does this mean that he should go out again and pick pockets? This requires a little intelligence. One should not think that because by confessing one becomes freed, he should continue to commit sinful activities, confess again, and again become freed. That is not the purpose of confession.

We should therefore understand that if we indulge in unrestricted sinful activities, we become contaminated. We should be careful to have sex only according to the rules and regulations, to eat only food that has been prescribed and properly offered, to defend as Krsna advised Arjuna--for the right cause. In this way we can avoid contamination and purify our life. If we can continue to live a pure life until the time of death, we will surely be transferred to the kingdom of God. When one is fully in Krsna consciousness, he does not return to this material world when he gives up his body. This is stated in the Fourth Chapter (Bg. 4.9).

janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punarjanma
naiti mam eti so 'rjuna

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna."

The unsuccessful yogi returns to a good family or to a righteous, rich, or aristocratic family, but if one is situated in perfect Krsna consciousness, he does not return again. He attains Goloka Vrndavana in the eternal spiritual sky. We should be determined not to come back to this material world again, because even if we attain a good birth in a rich or aristocratic family, we can degrade ourselves again by improperly utilizing our good chance. Why take this risk? It is better to complete the process of Krsna consciousness in this life. It is very simple and not at all difficult. We only have to keep thinking of Krsna; then we will be assured that our next birth will be in the spiritual sky, in Goloka Vrndavana, in the kingdom of God.

tapas vibhyo 'dhiko yogi
jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah

karmibhyas cadhiko yogi
tasmad yogi bha varjuna

"A yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist, and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a yogi." (Bg. 6.46) There are different gradations of life within this material world, but if one lives according to the yogic principle, especially the principles of bhakti-yoga, one is living the most perfect life possible. Therefore Krsna is telling Arjuna, "My dear friend Arjuna, in all circumstances be a yogi and remain a yogi."

yoginam api sarvesam
mad-gatenan taratmana
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam
sa me yuktatamo matah

"And of all yogis, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all." (Bg. 6.47) Here it is clearly stated that there are many types of yogis--astanga-yogis, hatha-yogis, jnana-yogis, karma-yogis, and bhakti-yogis--and that of all the yogis, "he who always abides in Me" is said to be the greatest of all. "In Me" means in Krsna; that is, the greatest yogi is always in Krsna consciousness. Such a yogi "abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga, and is the highest of all." This is the prime instruction of this Sixth Chapter on sankhya-yoga: if one wants to attain the highest platform of yoga, one must remain in Krsna consciousness.

In Sanskrit, the word bhajate, with its root bhaj (bhaj-dhatu) means "to render service." But who renders service to Krsna unless he is a devotee of Krsna? In this Society of Krsna consciousness, devotees are rendering service without payment, out of love for Krsna. They can render service elsewhere and get paid hundreds of dollars a month, but this service rendered here is loving service (bhaj), based on love of Godhead. Devotees render service in many ways--gardening, typing, cooking, cleaning, etc. All activities are connected with Krsna, and therefore Krsna consciousness is prevailing twenty-four hours a day. That is the highest type of yoga. That is "worshiping Me in transcendental loving service." As stated before, the perfection of yoga is keeping one's consciousness in contact with Visnu, or Krsna, the Supreme Lord. We are not simply boasting that even a child can be the highest yogi simply by participating in Krsna consciousness; no, this is the verdict of authorized scripture--Bhagavad-gita. These words are not our creation but are specifically stated by Lord Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.

Actually, worship and service are somewhat different. Worship implies some motive. I worship a friend or an important man because if I can please that person, I may derive some profit. Those who worship the demigods worship for some ulterior purpose, and that is condemned in the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (7.20):

kamais tais tair hrta-jnanah
prapadyante 'nya-devatah
tam tam niyamam asthaya

prakrtya niyatah svaya

"Those whose minds are distorted by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures." Those who are bewildered by lust worship the demigods with a motive; therefore, when we speak of worship, some motive is implied. Service, however, is different, for in service there is no motive. Service is rendered out of love, just as a mother renders service to her child out of love only. Everyone can neglect that child, but the mother cannot, because love is present. Bhaj-dhatu is similar in that there is no question of motive, but service is rendered out of pure love. That is the perfection of Krsna consciousness.

This is also the recommendation of Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.2.6):

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

"The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." Yato bhaktir adhoksaje. The word bhakti comes from the same root as bhaj. The test of a first-class religion is whether or not we are developing our love for God. If we practice religion with some ulterior motive, hoping to fulfill our material necessities, our religion is not first class but third class. It must be understood that first-class religion is that by which we can develop our love of Godhead. Ahaituky apratihata. This perfect religion should be executed without ulterior motive or impediment. That is the yoga system recommended in Srimad-Bhagavatam and in this Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita. That is the system of Krsna consciousness.

Krsna consciousness is not rendered with some motive in mind. The devotees are not serving Krsna in order that He supply them this or that. For a devotee there is no scarcity. One should not think that by becoming Krsna conscious, one becomes poor. No. If Krsna is there, everything is there, because Krsna is everything. But this does not mean that we should try to conduct business with Krsna, demanding, "Krsna give me this. Give me that." Krsna knows better than we do, and He knows our motives. A child does not make demands of his parents, saying, "Dear father, give me this. Give me that." Since the father knows his child's necessities, there is no need for the child to ask. Similarly, it is not a very good idea to ask God to give us this or that. Why should we ask? If God is all-knowing and all-powerful, He knows our wants, our necessities, and can supply them. This is confirmed in the Vedas. Eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman: "The single one almighty God is supplying all necessities to millions and trillions of living entities." Therefore, we should not demand anything of God, because our demands are already met. The supplies are already there. We should simply try to love God. Even cats and dogs are receiving their necessities without going to church and petitioning God. If a cat or dog receives its necessities without making demands, why should the devotee not receive what he needs? Therefore we should not demand anything from God but

should simply try to love Him. Then everything will be fulfilled, and we will have attained the highest platform of yoga.

We can actually see how the various parts of the body serve the body. If I have an itch, the fingers immediately scratch. If I want to see something, the eyes immediately look. If I want to go somewhere, the legs immediately take me. As I receive service from the different parts of my body, God receives service from all parts of His creation. God is not meant to serve. If the limbs of the body serve the entire body, the parts of the body automatically receive energy. Similarly, if we serve Krsna, we automatically receive all necessities, all energy.

Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms that we are all parts and parcels of the Supreme. If a part of the body cannot regularly render service, it gives pain to the body, and if a person does not render service to the Supreme Lord, he is simply giving pain and trouble to the Supreme Lord. Therefore such a person has to suffer, just as a criminal has to suffer when he does not abide by the laws of the state. Such a criminal may think, "I'm a very good man," but because he is violating the laws of the state, he is giving the government trouble, and consequently the government puts him in prison. When living entities give the Supreme Lord trouble, the Lord comes, collects them together, and puts them in this material world. In essence, He says, "You live here. You are all disturbing the creation; therefore you are criminals and have to live in this material world." Sthanad bhrastah patanty adhah: "One falls down from his constitutional position." If a finger is diseased, it has to be amputated lest it pollute the entire body. Having rebelled against the principles of God consciousness, we are cut off from our original position. We have fallen. In order to regain our original position, we must resume rendering service unto the Supreme Lord. That is the perfect cure. Otherwise we will continue to suffer pain, and God will suffer pain because of us. If I am a father, and my son is not good, I suffer, and my son suffers also. Similarly, we are all sons of God, and when we cause God pain, we are also pained. The best course is to revive our original Krsna consciousness and engage in the Lord's service. That is our natural life, and that is possible in the spiritual sky, Goloka Vrndavana.

The word avajananti actually means "to neglect." This means thinking, "What is God? I am God. Why should I serve God?" This is just like a criminal thinking, "What is this government? I can manage my own affairs. I don't care for the government." This is called avajananti. We may speak in this way, but the police department is there to punish us. Similarly, material nature is here to punish us with the threefold miseries. These miseries are meant for those rascals who avajananti, who don't care for God or who take the meaning of God cheaply, saying, "I am God. You are God."

Thus the general progress of yoga is gradual. First one practices karma-yoga, which refers to ordinary, fruitive activity. Ordinary activities include sinful activities, but karma-yoga excludes such activities. Karma-yoga refers only to good, pious activities, or those actions which are prescribed. After performing karma-yoga, one comes to the platform of jnana-yoga, knowledge. From the platform of knowledge, one attains to this astanga-yoga, the eightfold yoga system--dhyana, dharana, pranayama, asana, etc.--and from astanga-yoga, as one concentrates on Visnu, one comes to the point of bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga is the perfectional stage, and if one practices Krsna

consciousness, one attains this stage from the very beginning. That is the direct route.

If one practices jnana-yoga and thinks that he has attained the ultimate, he is mistaken. He has to make further progress. If we are on a staircase and have to reach the top floor, which is the hundredth floor, we are mistaken if we think we have arrived when we are on the thirtieth floor. As stated before, the whole yoga system may be likened to a staircase, connecting or linking us to God. In order to attain the ultimate, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we must go to the highest platform, and that is bhakti-yoga.

But why walk up all these steps if we have a chance to take an elevator? By means of an elevator, we can reach the top in a matter of seconds. Bhakti-yoga is this elevator, the direct process by which we can reach the top in a matter of seconds. We can go step by step, following all the other yoga systems, or we can go directly. Since in this age of Kali-yuga people have short life spans and are always disturbed and anxious, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by His causeless mercy, has given us the elevator by which we can come immediately to the platform of bhakti-yoga. That direct means is the chanting of Hare Krsna, and that is the special gift of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Therefore Rupa Gosvami offers respects to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, namo maha-vadanyaya krsna-prema-pradaya te: "Oh, You are the most munificent incarnation because You are directly giving love of Krsna. To attain pure love of Krsna, one has to pass through so many stages of yoga, but You are giving this love directly. Therefore You are the most munificent."

As stated in the Eighteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (18.55),

bhaktya mam abhijanati
yavan yas casmi tattvatah
tato mam tattvatojnatva
visate tad-anantaram

"one can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of the Supreme Lord by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God." In the other yoga systems, there must be a mixture of bhakti, but bhakti-yoga is unadulterated devotion. It is service without a motive. Generally people pray with some motive in mind, but we should pray only for further engagement in devotional service. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has taught us that when we pray we should not pray for anything material. In the beginning, we cited Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's perfect prayer.:

na dhanam najanam na sundarim
ka vitam vajagad-ia kamaye
mama janmanijanmaninare
bha vatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi

"O Almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor to enjoy beautiful women. Nor do I want any number of followers. What I want only is the causeless mercy of Your devotional service in my life, birth after birth." (Siksastaka 4) In this verse, Caitanya Mahaprabhu addresses the Supreme Lord as Jagadisa. Jagat means "universe," and isa means "controller." The Supreme Lord is the controller of the universe,

and this can be understood by anyone; therefore Caitanya Mahaprabhu addresses the Supreme Lord as Jagadisa instead of Krsna or Rama. In the material world we find many controllers, so it is logical that there is a controller of the entire universe. Caitanya Mahaprabhu does not pray for wealth, followers, or beautiful women, because these are material requests. Usually, people want to be very great leaders within this material world. Someone tries to become a very rich man like Ford or Rockefeller, or someone else tries to become president or some great leader that many thousands of people will follow. These are all material demands: "Give me money. Give me followers. Give me a nice wife." Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu refuses to make such materialistic requests. He frankly says, "I don't want any of these things." He even says, mamajanmanijan-maninare. That is, He's not even asking for liberation. Just as the materialists have their demands, the yogis demand liberation. But Caitanya Mahaprabhu does not want anything of this nature. Then why is He a devotee? Why is He worshiping Krsna? "I simply want to engage in Your service birth after birth." He does not even pray for an end to birth, old age, disease, and death. There are no demands whatsoever, for this is the highest platform, the stage of bhakti-yoga.

Chanting Hare Krsna is also asking the Lord, "Please engage me in Your service." This is the mantra taught by Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Hare refers to the energy of the Lord, and Krsna and Rama are names for the Lord Himself. When we chant Hare Krsna, we are asking Krsna to please engage us in His service. This is because our entire material disease is due to our having forgotten to serve God. In illusion, we are thinking, "I am God. What is the other God that I have to serve? I myself am God." Ultimately, that is the only disease, the last snare of illusion. First of all, a person tries to be prime minister, president, Rockefeller, Ford, this and that, and when one fails or attains such a post and is still unhappy, he wants to become God. That is like becoming an even higher president. When I understand that the presidency does not afford me eternal bliss and knowledge, I demand the highest presidency. I demand to become God. In any case, the demand is there, and this demand is our disease. In illusion, we are demanding to be the highest, but the process of bhakti-yoga is just the opposite. We want to become servants, servants of the servants of the Lord. There is no question of demanding to become the Lord; we just want to serve. That's all.

Our original nature is rooted in service, and wanting to serve is the crucial test for the devotee. We may not realize it, but in this material world we are also serving. If we want to become president, we have to make so many promises to the voters. In other words, the president has to say, "I'll give the people my service." Unless he promises to serve his country, there is no question of his becoming president. So even if one is the most exalted leader, his position is to render service. This is very difficult for people to understand. Despite becoming the highest executive in the land, one has to give service to the people. If that service is not given, one is likely to be usurped, fired, or killed. In the material world, service is very dangerous. If there is a little discrepancy in one's service, one is immediately fired. When the people did not like the service that President Nixon was rendering, they forced him to resign. Some people disagreed with President Kennedy, and he was killed. Similarly, in India, Gandhi was also killed because some people did not like the way he was rendering service. This is always the position in the material world; therefore

one should be intelligent enough to decide to cease rendering service for material motives. We must render service to the Supreme Lord, and that rendering of service is our perfection.

We have formed this International Society for Krishna Consciousness in order to teach people what they have forgotten. In this material world, we have forgotten the service of Radha-Krsna; therefore we have become servants of maya, the senses. Therefore, in this Society we are saying, "You are serving your senses. Now just turn your service to Radha and Krsna, and you will be happy. You have to render service-- either to maya [illusion], the senses, or to Sri Sri Radha-Krsna."

In this world, everyone is serving the senses, but people are not satisfied. No one can be satisfied, because the senses are always demanding more gratification, and this means that we are constantly having to serve the senses. In any case, our position as servant remains the same. It is a question of whether we want to be happy in our service. It is the verdict of Bhagavad-gita and the other Vedic scriptures that we will never be happy trying to serve our senses, for they are only sources of misery. Therefore Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu prays to be situated in Krsna's service. He also prays,

ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya ta va pada-pankaja-
sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya

"O son of Maharaja Nanda [Krsna], I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet." (Siksastaka 5) This is another way of asking Krsna to engage us in His service.

Loving devotional service can only be rendered to the personal form of Krsna, Syamasundara. The impersonalists emphasize the vina-rupa, the universal form exhibited in the Eleventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gita, but it is stated therein (11.21) that the demigods are very much afraid of this form, and Arjuna says,

adrsta-purvam hrsito 'smi drstva
bhayena ca pravayathitam mano me
tad eva me darsaya deva rupam
prasida devesa jagan-nivasa

"After seeing this universal form, which I have never seen before, I am gladdened, but at the same time my mind is disturbed with fear. Therefore please bestow Your grace upon me and reveal again Your form as the Personality of Godhead [Krsna, or Syamasundara], O Lord of lords, O abode of the universe." (Bg. 11.45) There is no question of loving the vina-rupa. If Krsna comes before you in the vina-rupa form, you will be so filled with fear that you will forget your love. So don't be eager like the impersonalists to see the vina-rupa form; just render loving service to Syamasundara, Krsna.

We have more or less seen Krsna as the visva-rupa during wartime in Calcutta in 1942. There was a siren, and we ran into a shelter, and the bombing began. In this way, we were seeing that visva-rupa, and I was thinking, "Of course, this is also just another form of Krsna. But this

is not a very lovable form." A devotee wants to love Krsna in His original form, and this visva-rupa is not His original form. Being omnipotent, Krsna can appear in any form, but His lovable form is that of Krsna, Syamasundara. Although a man may be a police officer, when he is at home he is a beloved father to his son. But if he comes home firing his revolver, the son will be so frightened that he will forget that he is his beloved father. Naturally, the child loves his father when he's at home like a father, and similarly we love Krsna as He is in His eternal abode, in the form of Syamasundara.

The visva-rupa was shown to Arjuna to warn those rascals who claim, "I am God." Arjuna asked to see the visva-rupa so that in the future we may have some criterion by which to test rascals who claim to be God. In other words, if someone says, "I am God," we can simply reply, "If you are God, please show me your visva-rupa." And we can rest assured that such rascals cannot display this form.

Of course, Arjuna was offering all respects to the visva-rupa form. That is a natural quality of a devotee. A devotee even respects Durga, Maya, because Maya is Krsna's energy. If we respect Krsna, we respect everyone, even an ant. Therefore Brahma prays,

srsti-sthiti-pralaya-sadhana-saktir eka
chayeva yasya bhu vanani bibharti durga
icchanurupam api yasya ca cestate sa
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"The external potency, Maya, who is of the nature of the shadow of the cit [spiritual] potency, is worshiped by all people as Durga, the creating, preserving, and destroying agency of this mundane world. I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, in accordance with whose will Durga conducts herself." (Brahma-samhita 5.44) Thus when we pray to Krsna, we pray to Durga immediately, because Durga is His energy. And when we pray to Durga, we are actually praying to Krsna, because she is working under the direction of Krsna. When the devotee sees the activities of Maya, he sees Krsna immediately, thinking, "Oh, Maya is acting so nicely under the direction of Krsna." When one offers respect to a policeman, he is actually offering respect to the government. Durga, the material energy, is so powerful that she can create, annihilate, and maintain, but in all cases she is acting under Krsna's directions.

Through bhakti, pure devotion to Krsna, we can leave the association of Maya and be promoted to the eternal association of Krsna. Some of the gopas, Krsna's friends, are eternal associates, and others are promoted to that eternal position. If only the eternal associates of Krsna can play with Him and others cannot, then what is the meaning of becoming Krsna conscious? We can also become eternal associates of Krsna through pious deeds executed in many, many lives. Actually, in the Vrndavana manifest in this material world, the associates of Krsna are mainly conditioned living entities who have been promoted to the perfect stage of Krsna consciousness. Thus promoted, they are first of all allowed to see Krsna on the planet where Krsna's pastimes are being enacted. After this, they are promoted to the transcendental Goloka Vrndavana in the spiritual sky. Therefore it is stated in the Bhaga vata (10.12.11), krta-punya-punjah.

Bhakti-yoga means connecting ourselves with Krsna, God, and becoming His eternal associates. Bhakti-yoga cannot be applied to any

other objective; therefore in Buddhism, for instance, there is no bhakti-yoga, because they do not recognize the Supreme Lord existing as the supreme objective. Christians, however, practice bhakti-yoga when they worship Jesus Christ, because they are accepting him as the son of God and are therefore accepting God. Unless one accepts God, there is no question of bhakti-yoga. Christianity, therefore, is also a form of Vaisnavism, because God is recognized. Nonetheless, there are different stages of God realization. Mainly, Christianity says, "God is great," and that is a very good assertion, but the actual greatness of God can be understood from Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. Accepting the greatness of God is the beginning of bhakti. Bhakti-yoga also exists among the Muhammadans, because God is the target in the Muslim religion. However, where there is no recognition of a personal God--in other words, where there is only impersonalism--there is no question of bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga must include three items: the servitor, the served, and service. One must be present to accept service, and one must be present to render service. The via media is the process of service itself, bhakti-yoga. Now, if there is no one to accept that service, how is bhakti-yoga possible? Therefore, if a philosophy or religion does not accept God as the Supreme Person, there is no possibility of bhakti-yoga being applied.

In the bhakti-yoga process, the role of the spiritual master is most important and essential. Although the spiritual master will always come back until his devotees have achieved God realization, one should not try to take advantage of this. We should not trouble our spiritual master but should complete the bhakti-yoga process in this life. The disciple should be serious in his service to the spiritual master, and if the devotee is intelligent, he should think, "Why should I act in such a way that my spiritual master has to take the trouble to reclaim me again? Let me realize Krsna in this life." That is the proper way of thinking. We should not think, "Oh, I am sure that my spiritual master will come and save me. Therefore I will do as I please." If we have any affection for our spiritual master, we should complete the process in this life, so that he does not have to return to reclaim us.

In this regard, there is the example of Bilvamangala Thakura, who, in his previous life, was elevated almost to prema-bhakti, the highest platform of devotional service. However, since there is always a chance for a falldown, somehow or other he fell down. In his next life, he was born in a very rich brahmana family, in accordance with the principle enunciated in the Sixth Chapter of Bhaga vad-gita (6.41): *sucinam srimatam gehe*. Unfortunately, as is often the case with rich boys, he became a prostitute hunter. Yet it is said that his spiritual master instructed him through his prostitute, saying, "Oh, you are so attached to this mere flesh and bones. If you were this much attached to Krsna, how much good you might achieve!" Immediately Bilvamangala Thakura resumed his devotional service.

Although the spiritual master assumes responsibility for his disciple, we should not take advantage of this. Rather, we should try to please the spiritual master (*yasya prasada bhagavat-prasada*). We should not put our spiritual master in such a position that he has to reclaim us from a house of prostitution. But even if he has to do so, he will do it, because he assumes this responsibility when he accepts his disciple.

The bhakti-yoga process should be completed in this life, because in this life we have all the instruments necessary to become fully Krsna conscious. We have mrdangas and cymbals and tongues with which to chant Hare Krsna. Even if we don't have mrdangas and cymbals, we have a tongue. No one has to purchase a tongue. We also have ears with which to hear the sound that the tongue vibrates. Therefore we have all the instruments we need with us--a tongue and ears. We have only to chant Hare Krsna and use our ears to hear this vibration, and all perfection will be there. We don't have to become highly educated scientists or philosophers. We have only to chant and hear.

Thus we have everything complete. Purnam adah purnam idam: everything created by God is complete. This aggregate earth, for instance, is complete. There is sufficient water in the oceans, and the sun acts to evaporate this water, turn it into clouds, and drop rain on the land to produce plants. And from the mountains, pure rivers are flowing to supply water throughout the year. If we want to evaporate a few hundred gallons of water, we have to make many arrangements, but the creation is so complete that millions of tons of water are being drawn from the ocean, turned into clouds, and then sprayed all over the land and reserved on the peaks of mountains so that water will be present for the production of grains and vegetables. Thus the creation is complete because it comes from the complete, and similarly our bodies are also complete for spiritual realization. The complete machine is already with us. We have only to utilize it to vibrate the transcendental sound (sabda) of Hare Krsna, and we will attain complete liberation from all material pangs.

Chapter Nine

Destination After Death

sarva-dvarani samyamya
mano hrdis nirudhya ca
murdhny adhayatmanah pranam
asthito yoga-dharanam

"The yogic situation is that of detachment from all sensual engagements. Closing all the doors of the senses and fixing the mind on the heart and the life air at the top of the head, one establishes himself in yoga." (Bg. 8.12)

One translation of the word yoga is "plus"--that is, just the opposite of minus. At the present moment, due to our materially contaminated consciousness, we are minus God. When we add God to our lives, when we connect with Him, life is perfected. This process has to be finished at the time of death; therefore as long as we are alive, we have to practice approaching that point of perfection so that at the time of death, when we give up this material body, we can realize the Supreme.

prayana-kale manasacalena
bhaktya yukto yoga-balena caiva

bhruvor madhye pranam avesya samyak
sa tam param purusam upaiti divyam

"One who, at the time of death, fixes his life air between the eyebrows and in full devotion engages himself in remembering the Supreme Lord, will certainly attain to the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 8.10) The words prayana-kale mean "at the time of death." Life is kind of a preparation for the final examination, which is death. If we pass that examination, we are transferred to the spiritual world. According to a very common Bengali proverb, "Whatever you do for perfection will be tested at the time of your death."

This process by which the yogi closes the doors of the senses is technically called pratyahara, meaning "just the opposite." Presently, our senses are engaged in seeing worldly beauty. "Just the opposite" means retracting the senses from that beauty and seeing the beauty inside. Hearing is concentrated on the omkara sound that is within. Similarly, all the other senses are withdrawn from external activity. The mind is then concentrated on the visnu-murti within the heart (manah hidi nirudhya). The word nirudhya means "confining" the mind within the heart. When the yogi has thus withdrawn his senses and concentrated his mind, he transfers the life air to the top of the head and decides where he should go. There are innumerable planets, and beyond these planets is the spiritual world. The yogis obtain information of these planets from the Vedic literatures, just as, before coming to the United States, I obtained information about this country from books. Since all the higher planets in the spiritual world are described in the Vedic literatures, the yogi knows everything and can transfer himself to any planet he likes. He does not need a material spaceship.

Scientists have been trying for many years to reach other planets with spaceships, but this is not the process. Maybe by this means one or two men can reach a planet, but that is not the general process. It is not possible for everyone. Generally, if one wants to transfer himself to a higher planet, he practices this jnana-yoga system. Not the bhakti-yoga system. The system of bhakti-yoga is not used for attaining any material planet.

The devotees of Krsna are not interested in any planet within this material universe, because they know that on all planets the four basic miseries exist--birth, old age, disease, and death. In the higher planets, one's life span may be much greater than on this earth, but death is ultimately there. Therefore those who are in Krsna consciousness are not interested in material life but spiritual life, which means relief from these fourfold miseries. Those who are intelligent do not try to elevate themselves to any planet within this material world. To attain a higher planet, one has to prepare a particular type of body to enable one to live on that planet. We cannot attain these planets by artificial, materialistic means, because a suitable body is necessary to live there. We can stay within water only a short while, but fish are living there their entire lives. But the fish does not have a body suitable for living on the land. Similarly, to enter a higher planet, one has to prepare a suitable body.

In the higher planets, six of our months are equal to one of their days, and the inhabitants of these planets live ten thousand years. This is all described in the Vedic literatures. Although the life span on these planets is very long, there is ultimately death. After ten

thousand years, twenty thousand years, or millions of years--it doesn't matter--death is ultimately there.

In the very beginning of Bhagavad-gita, however, we learn that we are not subject to death.

najayate mriyate va kadacin
nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano
na hanyate hanyamane sarire

"For the soul there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain." (Bg. 2.20) Krsna thus instructs us that we are spirit soul and eternal; therefore why should we subject ourselves to birth and death? One who utilizes his intelligence can understand this. One who is situated in Krsna consciousness is not interested in promotion to any planet where death exists; rather, being promoted to the spiritual sky, he receives a body just like God's. Isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. God's body is sac-cid-ananda--eternal, full of knowledge, and full of pleasure. Therefore Krsna is called the reservoir of all pleasure. If, upon leaving this body, we transfer ourselves to the spiritual world--to Krsna's planet or any other spiritual planet--we attain a similar body full of sac-cid-ananda.

The spirit soul is a very minute particle within the body. It cannot be seen like the external body, but it is sustaining the external body. The object of the sat-cakra system is to locate the soul at the topmost part of the head. From there, one who is perfect in dhyana-yoga can transfer himself to a higher planet at will. That is the perfection of this type of yoga. The dhyana-yogi is somewhat like a traveler who thinks, "Oh, let me see what the moon is like, then I will transfer myself to higher planets." He goes from here to there in the universe, just as on earth travelers go from New York to California or Canada. But a Krsna conscious person is not interested in such interplanetary travel within the material universe. His goal is service to Krsna and transferral to the spiritual sky.

om ity ekaksaram brahma
vyaharan mam anusmaran
yah prayati tyajan deham
sa yati paramam gatim

"After being situated in this yoga practice and vibrating the sacred syllable om, the supreme combination of letters, if one thinks of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and quits his body, he will certainly reach the spiritual planets." (Bg. 8.13) Om, or omkara, is the concise form, or impersonal form, of the transcendental vibration. The dhyana-yogi should vibrate om while remembering Krsna, or Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The impersonal sound of Krsna is om, but the sound Hare Krsna contains om. Whatever the case, the entire yoga system aims at concentration on Visnu. Impersonalists may imagine a form of Visnu, but the personalists do not imagine; they actually see the form of the Supreme Lord. Whether one imagines or factually sees, one has to concentrate his mind on the Visnu form. Here the word mam means "unto

the Supreme Lord, Visnu." If one can remember Visnu upon quitting this body, he can enter into the spiritual kingdom.

One who is intelligent naturally thinks, "I am permanent and eternal. Why should I be interested in things that are not permanent?" Actually, no one wants an existence that is temporary. If we are living in an apartment and the landlord asks us to vacate, we have to do so, whether we want to leave or not. However, if we move to a better apartment, we are not sorry. It is our nature, however, to want to remain wherever we live. That is because we are permanent and want a permanent residence. Our inclination is to remain. Therefore we don't want to die. We don't want the miseries of birth, old age, disease, and death. These are external miseries inflicted by material nature, and they attack us like some fever. In order to extricate ourselves, we have to take certain precautions. To get rid of these miseries, it is necessary to get rid of the material body, because these miseries are inherent in material existence.

Thus by vibrating om and leaving the material body thinking of the Supreme Lord, the yogi is transferred to the spiritual world. Those who are not personalists, however, cannot enter into the spiritual planet of Lord Sri Krsna. They remain outside, in the brahmajyoti effulgence. Just as the sunshine is not different from the sun globe, the brahmajyoti effulgence of the Supreme Lord is not different from the Supreme Lord. The impersonalists are placed in that brahmajyoti as minute particles. We are all spiritual sparks, and the brahmajyoti is full of these spiritual sparks. In this way, the impersonalists merge into the spiritual existence; however, individuality is retained, because the spirit soul is constitutionally an individual. Because the impersonalists don't want a personal form, they are placed and held in the impersonal brahmajyoti. There they exist just as atoms exist within the sunshine. The individual spiritual spark remains within the brahmajyoti as if homogeneous.

As living entities, we all want enjoyment. We do not simply want existence. We are constitutionally sac-cid-ananda--eternal (sat), full of knowledge (cit), and full of bliss (ananda). Those who enter the impersonal brahmajyoti cannot remain there eternally with the knowledge that "Now I am merged. I am now one with Brahman." Although there is eternality and knowledge, bliss (ananda) is lacking. Who can remain alone in a room year after year reading some book and trying to enjoy himself? We cannot remain alone forever. Eventually we will leave that room and look for some association. It is our nature to want some recreation with others. The impersonalists, dissatisfied with the loneliness of their position in the impersonal effulgence of the Lord, therefore return again to this material world. This is stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.2.32):

ye 'nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas
tvayy asta-bhavad a visuddha-buddhayah
aruhya krcchrena param padam tatah
patanty adho 'nadrta-yusmad-anghrayah

"O lotus-eyed Lord, although nondevotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from

their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for Your lotus feet."

The impersonalists are like astronauts in search of a planet. If they cannot rest in some planet, they have to return to earth. It is herein stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (anadrta-yusmad-anghrayah) that the impersonalist must return to the material world because he has neglected to serve the Supreme Lord with love and devotion. As long as we are on this earth, we should practice to love and serve Krsna, the Supreme Lord; then we can enter His spiritual planet. If we are not trained up in this way, we can enter the brahmajyoti as an impersonalist, but there is every risk that we will again fall down into material existence. Out of loneliness, we will search out some association and therefore return to the material world. What we actually want is the eternal association of the Supreme Lord. This is our constitutional position of eternality, knowledge, and pleasure. If we are alone, if we do not associate with the Supreme Lord, that pleasure is lacking. For want of pleasure, we feel uncomfortable. For want of pleasure, we will accept any kind of association, any kind of pleasure. Therefore, out of a kind of desperation, we will say, "All right, then let me have material pleasure again." That is the risk the impersonalists take.

In the material world, the highest pleasure is found in sex. That is but a perverted reflection of the pleasure experienced with Krsna in the spiritual world. Unless there is sex present in the spiritual world, it cannot be reflected here. However, we should understand that here the reflection is perverted. Actual life is there in Krsna. Krsna is full of pleasure, and if we train ourselves to serve Him in Krsna consciousness, it will be possible at the time of death to transfer ourselves to the spiritual world and enter into Krsnaloka, Krsna's planet, and enjoy ourselves in the association of Krsna, the reservoir of all pleasure.

Krsna's planet is described in Brahma-samhita (5.29) in this way:

cintamani-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vrksa-
laksavrtesu surabhir abhipalayantam
laksmi-sahasra-sata-sambhrama-se vyamanam
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending the surabhi cows that fulfill all desires, who is surrounded by millions of purpose (wish-fulfilling) trees and abodes built with spiritual gems, and who is always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune." In this way Krsnaloka is described. There the houses are made of touchstone (cintamani). If a small particle of touchstone touches an iron rod, that rod will immediately turn to gold. Of course, in this material world we have no experience with such a thing as touchstone, but according to Brahma-samhita all the abodes in Krsnaloka are composed of touchstone. Similarly, the trees there are called desire trees (kalpa-vrksa) because one can get whatever he desires from them. Here we can get only mangos from a mango tree, but in Krsnaloka we can get whatever we desire from any tree because the trees are kalpa-vrksa. This is just a partial description of Krsnaloka, Krsna's eternal abode in the spiritual sky.

The conclusion, therefore, is not to try to elevate ourselves to any material planet, because the same miserable conditions of birth, old age, disease, and death exist in all of them. Scientists are very proud

of "scientific" advancement, but they have not been able to check old age, disease, and death. They can manufacture something to accelerate death, but nothing that can stop death. That is not within their power.

Those who are intelligent are interested in putting an end to birth, old age, disease, and death and entering into a spiritual life full of eternality, bliss, and knowledge. The bhakti-yogi knows that such a life is possible through practice of Krsna consciousness and remembrance of Krsna at the time of death.

ananya-cetah satatam-
yo mam smarati nityasah
tasyaham sulabhah partha
nitya-yuktasya yoginah

"For one who remembers Me without deviation, I am easy to obtain, O son of Prtha, because of his constant engagement in devotional service." (Bg. 8.14) In this verse, the word nitya-yukta means "continuously in trance." Such a person who is continuously thinking of Krsna and always engaged in Krsna consciousness is the highest yogi. His attention is not diverted to jnana-yoga, dhyana-yoga, or any other system. For him, there is only one system--Krsna. Ananya-cetah means "without deviation." A Krsna conscious devotee is not disturbed by anything, because his mind is always concentrated on Krsna. The word satatam means that he is thinking of Krsna at all places and at all times. When Krsna descended onto this earth, He appeared in Vrndavana. Although I am presently living in America, my residence is in Vrndavana because I am always thinking of Krsna. Although I may be in a New York apartment, my consciousness is there, and this is as good as being there.

Krsna consciousness means always living with Krsna in His spiritual planet. Because we are conscious of Krsna, we are already living with Him. We simply have to wait to give up this material body to go there. For one who remembers Krsna without deviation, He is easy to obtain. Tasyaham sulabhah partha.: "I become very cheap for them." For one who takes to Krsna consciousness, the most valuable thing becomes very easy to obtain. Because one is engaged in bhakti-yoga, Krsna becomes easily available. Why should we try so hard to attain Krsna, when Krsna Himself says, "I am easy to obtain"? We have only to chant Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare twenty-four hours daily. There is no fast rule and regulation. We can chant in the street or on the subway, in our home or in our office. There is neither expenditure nor tax.

Actually Krsna, being omnipotent, is unconquerable, but it is said that He is not only obtained but conquered through pure devotional service. As stated before, it is generally very difficult to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore one of His names is Ajita, meaning, "He whom no one can conquer." In Srimad-Bhagavatam (10. 14.3), Lord Brahma prays to Ajita,

jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva
jivanti san-mukharitam bha vadiya- vartam
sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir
ye prayaso 'jitajito 'py asi tais tri-lokyam

"O my dear Lord Ajita, those devotees who have thrown away the impersonal conceptions of the Absolute Truth and have therefore abandoned discussing empiric philosophical truths should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name, form, pastimes, and qualities. They should completely follow the principles of devotional service and remain free from illicit sex, gambling, intoxication, and animal slaughter. Surrendering themselves fully with body, words, and mind, they can live in any asrama or social status. Indeed, You are conquered by such persons, although You are always unconquerable."

In this verse, the words jnane prayasam refer to theosophists and philosophers who are trying year after year and life after life to understand God, or the Absolute Truth. Their attempts are like those of the frog in a well trying to comprehend the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Even our attempts to measure outer space are futile, to say nothing of the attempt to measure God. Such attempts are doomed to failure; therefore Srimad-Bhagavatam recommends that we abandon all attempts to measure the Supreme. It is completely useless to try to understand God by our limited knowledge, and an intelligent man understands this. We should become submissive and try to understand that our position is that of a very insignificant segment in this creation. The words namanta eva indicate that we are just to become submissive in order to understand the Supreme from a reliable source. And what is that source? San-mukharitam: from the lips of realized souls. Arjuna is understanding God directly from the lips of Krsna, and we have to understand God through the lips of Arjuna or his bona fide representative. We can understand the transcendental nature of God only from a reliable source. That source may be Indian, European, American, Japanese, Hindu, Muslim, or whatever. The circumstances are not important. We just have to try to understand by hearing and then try to put the process to practice in our daily lives. By becoming submissive, hearing from the right source, and trying to apply the teachings in our daily lives, we can become conquerors of the Supreme. For one who does this, Lord Krsna becomes easily available. Ordinarily, God realization is very difficult, but it is very easy for one who submissively hears (sruti-gatam).

There are two processes by which we can acquire knowledge: one is the ascending process (aroha-pantha), and the other is the descending process (avaroha-pantha). By the ascending process, one attempts to understand God by his own efforts--by philosophizing, meditating, or speculating. According to the descending process, one acquires knowledge simply by hearing from an authority, from the bona fide spiritual master and the scriptures. As far as the ascending process is concerned, it is stated in Brahma-samhita (5.34),

panthas tu koti-sata-vatsara-sampragamyo
vayor athapi manaso muni-punga vanam
so 'py asti yat-prapada-simny a vicintya-tattve
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, only the tips of the toes of whose lotus feet are approached by the yogis and jnanis, who travel for billions of years at the speed of the wind or mind." We can all understand how great the speed of mind is. Although sitting in New York City, I can immediately think of India, which is thousands and thousands

of miles away. It is herein stated that even if one travels at this speed for billions of years, Krsna will still remain inconceivable. The word muni-pungavanam refers to a great thinker, not an ordinary man. Even if such a great thinker travels for millions of years at the speed of mind, he will still find the Supreme Person unknowable. Yet for one who takes undeviatingly to this path of Krsna consciousness, Krsna is easy to obtain. Why is this? Nitya-yuktasya yoginah: "Because such a person is constantly engaged in My devotional service, and I cannot forget him." So this is the process. We have only to become submissive to attract the attention of God. My Guru Maharaja used to say, "Don't try to see God, but work in such a way that God will see you. God will take care of you. You don't have to try to see Him."

This should be our attitude. We should not think, "I want to see God. O God, please come and stand before me. Be like my servant." But since God is no one's servant, we have to oblige Him by our love and service. We all know how difficult it is to see the king or president of a country. It is practically impossible for an ordinary man to get an interview with such an important person, to say nothing of having this important person come and stand before him. Yet people are demanding that the Supreme Personality of Godhead come and stand before them. It is our nature to hanker after Krsna, because He is the most attractive, most beautiful, most opulent, most powerful, most learned, and most famous person in the universe. Everyone hankers after these qualities, and Krsna is the reservoir of all these qualities, and He possesses them in full. Krsna is the reservoir of everything (raso vai sah); therefore when we hanker after beauty or power or knowledge or fame, we should just turn our attention to Krsna. Then we will automatically get whatever our hearts desire.

Chapter Ten

The Path of Perfection

mam upetya punarjanma
duhkhalayam asasvatam
napnu vanti mahatmanah
samsiddhim paramam gatah

"After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogis in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection." (Bg. 8.15)

This material world is certified by its very creator, the Supreme Lord, as duhkhalayam, which means "the place of miseries." Since this is the case, how can we possibly make it comfortable by so-called scientific advancement? Duhkha means "misery" or "suffering," and real suffering is birth, old age, disease, and death. We have set these problems aside because we cannot solve them; therefore scientists concentrate on atomic bombs and spaceships. Why can't they solve these important problems that are always causing us to suffer? Obviously, they haven't the power to do so.

But in this verse, Sri Krsna gives the solution: mam upetya punar janma. That is, "If one attains My platform, he does not come back again to this place of misery." Unfortunately, in the mode of ignorance, people cannot understand that they are in a miserable situation. Animals cannot understand their miserable situations because they haven't the reason. Man possesses reason whereby he can understand this, but in this age people are using their reasoning power in order to gratify their animal propensities. Reason should be used in getting liberated from this miserable condition. However, if we engage in Krsna consciousness twenty-four hours a day without deviation, we will go to Krsna and not be reborn in this miserable world. Mahatmanah samsiddhim paramam gatah: those great souls who have attained the highest perfection, Krsna consciousness, are forever freed from misery. In this verse, the word mahatma refers to a Krsna conscious man eligible to enter the abode of Krsna. The word mahatma does not refer to a political leader like Mahatma Gandhi but to a great soul, a pure devotee of Krsna.

When Krsna says that the mahatma enters His abode, He is referring to His transcendental kingdom, Goloka Vrndavana. The Vrndavana from which I have come is called Bhauma Vrndavana, which means it is the same Vrndavana descended on this earth. Just as Krsna descended on this earth through His own internal potency, similarly His dhama, His abode, also descends. In other words, when Krsna descends on this earth, He manifests Himself in that particular land, Vrndavana, and therefore that land is also sacred. Apart from this, Krsna has His own abode in the spiritual sky, and this is called Goloka Vrndavana.

The mahatma prepares in this life to enter that transcendental abode. The human form of life can utilize nature to its best interest. Animals cannot. These facilities should be utilized in striving to become a mahatma and putting an end to birth in this material world, which is characterized by threefold miseries. The threefold miseries are those that pertain to the mind or the body, natural disturbances, and miseries caused by other living entities. Whatever our position in this material world, there is always some kind of misery being inflicted upon us. Sri Krsna frankly says that it is not possible to avoid misery in this material world, because this world is meant for misery. Unless miseries are present, we cannot come to Krsna consciousness. Misery serves as an impetus to help elevate us to Krsna consciousness. An intelligent person understands that although he does not want misery, miseries are being inflicted upon him by force. No one wants misery, but a person should be intelligent enough to question, "Why are these miseries being forced upon me?" Unfortunately, in modern civilization, people try to set miseries aside, thinking, "Oh, why suffer? Let me cover my miseries with some intoxication." However, the miseries of life cannot be solved by artificial intoxication. As soon as the intoxication is over, one returns to the same point. The miseries of material existence can be solved only by Krsna consciousness. If we always remain in Krsna consciousness, we'll be transferred to Krsna's planet upon leaving this material body. That is called the highest perfection.

People may inquire, "Well, you say that entering Krsna's planet constitutes the highest perfection, but we are interested in going to the moon. Is this not a kind of perfection?" Well, the desire to enter the higher planets is always there in the human mind. In fact, another name for the living entity is sarva-gata, which means that he wants to travel everywhere. That is the nature of the living entity. Americans

who have money often go to India, Europe, or some other country, because they do not like to stagnate in one place. That is our nature, and therefore we are interested in going to the moon or wherever. But according to Krsna, even if we attain the higher planets, we are still subject to the material miseries.

abrahma-bhu vanal lokah
punar avartino 'rjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya
punarjanma na vidyate

"From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again." (Bg. 8.16)

The universe is divided into fourteen planetary systems (caturdasa-bhuvana)--seven lower and seven higher. The earth is situated in the middle. In this verse, Sri Krsna says, abrahma-bhuvanah lokah: even if one enters the highest planet, Brahmaloaka, there is still birth and death. The words punar avartinah mean "returning again," or "repetition of birth and death." We are changing bodies just as we change clothes, leaving one body and entering another. All planets are filled with living entities. We shouldn't think that only the earth is inhabited. There are living entities on the higher planets and lower planets as well. From our experience, we can see that no place on earth is vacant of living entities. If we dig into the earth, we find some worms, and if we go into the water we find many aquatics. The air is filled with birds, and if we analyze outer space, we will find many living entities. It is illogical to conclude that there are no living entities on the other planets. To the contrary, they are full of living entities.

In any case, Krsna says that from the highest planet to the lowest planet, there is repetition of birth and death. Yet again, as in the former verse, He says, mam upetya: "If you reach My planet, you don't have to return to this miserable material world." To stress this point, Sri Krsna repeats that upon reaching Goloka Vrndavana, His eternal abode, one is liberated from the cycle of birth and death and attains eternal life. It is the duty of human life to understand these problems and attain a blissful, eternal life that is full of knowledge. Unfortunately, people in this age have forgotten the aim of life. Why? Durasaya ye bahir-artha-maninah (SB. 7.5.31). People have been trapped by the material glitter--by skyscrapers, big factories, and political activities. People do not stop to consider that however big the skyscraper may be, they will not be allowed to live there indefinitely. We should not spoil our energy, therefore, in building great cities but should employ our energy to elevate ourselves to Krsna consciousness. Krsna consciousness is not a religious formula or some spiritual recreation but is the most important factor in our lives.

People are interested in attaining higher planets because there one's enjoyment is a thousand times greater and the duration of life much longer.

sahasra-yuga-paryantam
ahar yad brahmano viduh
ratrim yuga-sahasrantam

te 'ho-ratra-vido janah
(Bg. 8.17)

The duration of the material universe is limited. It is manifested in cycles of kalpas. A kalpa is a day of Brahma, and one day of Brahma consists of a thousand cycles of four yugas, or ages: Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. The cycle of Satya is characterized by virtue, wisdom, and religion, there being practically no ignorance and vice, and the yuga lasts 1,728,000 years. In the Treta-yuga vice is introduced, and this yuga lasts 1,296,000 years. In the Dvapara-yuga there is an even greater decline in virtue and religion, vice increasing, and this yuga lasts 564,000 years. And finally, in Kali-yuga (the yuga we have now been experiencing over the past 5,000 years), there is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion, and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent, and this yuga lasts 432,000 years. In Kali-yuga vice increases to such a point that at the termination of the yuga, the Supreme Lord Himself appears as the Kalki-avatara, vanquishes the demons, saves His devotees, and commences another Satya-yuga. Then the process is set rolling again. These four yugas rotating a thousand times comprise one day of Brahma, the creator god, and the same number comprise one night. Brahma lives one hundred of such "years" and then dies. These "hundred years" by earth calculations total 31 I trillion and 40 million earth years. By these calculations, the life of Brahma seems fantastic and interminable, but from the viewpoint of eternity, it is as brief as a lightning flash. In the Causal Ocean there are innumerable Brahmas rising and disappearing like bubbles in the Atlantic. Brahma and his creation are all part of the material universe, and therefore they are in constant flux.

In the material universe, not even Brahma is free from the process of birth, old age, disease, and death. Brahma, however, is directly engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord in the management of this universe; therefore he at once attains liberation. Elevated sannyasis are promoted to Brahma's particular planet, Brahmaloaka, which is the highest planet in the material universe and which survives all the heavenly planets in the upper strata of the planetary system, but in due course Brahma and all inhabitants of Brahmaloaka are subject to death, according to the law of material nature. So even if we live millions and trillions of years, we have to die. Death cannot be avoided. Throughout the entire universe the process of creation and annihilation is taking place, as described in the next verse:

avyaktad vyaktayah sarvah
prabha vanty ahar-agame
ratry-agame praliyante
tatraiva vyakta-samjnake

"When Brahma's day is manifest, this multitude of living entities comes into being, and at the arrival of Brahma's night they are all annihilated." (Bg. 8.18)

Unless we go to the spiritual sky, there is no escaping this process of birth and death, creation and annihilation. When Brahma's days are finished, all these planetary systems are covered by water, and when Brahma rises again, creation takes place. The word ahar means "in the daytime," which is twelve hours of Brahma's life. During this time

this material manifestation--all these planets--are seen, but when night comes they are all merged in water. That is, they are annihilated. The word ratry-agame means "at the fall of night." During this time, all these planets are invisible because they are inundated with water. This flux is the nature of the material world.

bhuta-gramah sa evayam
bhutva bhutva praliyate
ratry-agame 'vasah partha
prabhavaty ahar-agame

"Again and again the day comes, and this host of beings is active; and again the night falls, O Partha, and they are helplessly dissolved." (Bg. 8.19) Although we do not want devastation, devastation is inevitable. At night, everything is flooded, and when day appears, gradually the waters disappear. For instance, on this one planet, the surface is three-fourths covered with water. Gradually, land is emerging, and the day will come when there will no longer be water but simply land. That is nature's process.

paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatanah
yah sa sarvesu bhutesu
nasyatsu na vinasyati

"Yet there is another nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and nonmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is." (Bg. 8.20)

We cannot calculate the length and breadth of this universe. There are millions and millions of universes like this within this material world, and above this material world is the spiritual sky, where the planets are all eternal. Life on those planets is also eternal. This material manifestation comprises only one fourth of the entire creation. Ekamsena sthito jagat. Ekamsena means "one fourth." Three fourths of the creation is beyond this material sky, which is covered like a ball. This covering extends millions and millions of miles, and only after penetrating that covering can one enter the spiritual sky. That is open sky, eternal sky. In this verse it is stated, paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyah: "Yet there is another nature." The word bhava means another "nature." We have experience only with this material nature, but from Bhagavad-gita we understand that there is a spiritual nature that is transcendental and eternal. We actually belong to that spiritual nature, because we are spirit, but presently we are covered by this material body, and therefore we are a combination of the material and spiritual. Just as we can understand that we are a combination of both natures, we should understand also that there is a spiritual world beyond this material universe. Spiritual nature is called superior, and material nature is called inferior, because without spirit, matter cannot move.

This cannot be understood by experimental knowledge. We may look at millions and millions of stars through telescopes, but we cannot approach what we are seeing. Similarly, our senses are so insufficient that we cannot approach an understanding of the spiritual nature. Being incapable, we should not try to understand God and His kingdom by

experimental knowledge. Rather, we have to understand by hearing Bhagavad-gita. There is no other way. If we want to know who our father is, we simply have to believe our mother. We have no other way of knowing except by her. Similarly, in order to understand who God is and what His nature is, we have to accept the information given in Bhagavad-gita. There is no question of experimenting. Once we become advanced in Krsna consciousness, we will realize God and His nature. We can come to understand, "Yes, there is God and a spiritual kingdom, and I have to go there. Indeed, I must prepare myself to go there."

The word *vyakta* means "manifest." This material universe that we are seeing (or partially seeing) before us is manifest. At least at night we can see that stars are twinkling and that there are innumerable planets. But beyond this *vyakta* is another nature, called *avyakta*, which is unmanifest. That is the spiritual nature, which is *sanatana*, eternal. This material nature has a beginning and an end, but that spiritual nature has neither beginning nor end. This material sky is within the covering of the *mahat-tattva*, matter. This matter is like a cloud. When there is a storm, it appears that the entire sky is covered with clouds, but actually only an insignificant part of the sky is covered. Because we are very minute, if just a few hundred miles are covered, it appears that the entire sky is covered. As soon as a wind comes and blows the clouds away, we can see the sky once again. Like the clouds, this *mahat-tattva* covering has a beginning and an end. Similarly, the material body, being a part of material nature, has a beginning and an end. The body is born, grows, stays for some time, leaves some by-products, dwindles, and then vanishes. Whatever material manifestation we see undergoes these six basic transformations. Whatever exists within material nature will ultimately be vanquished. But herein Krsna is telling us that beyond this vanishing, cloudlike material nature, there is a superior nature, which is *sanatana*, eternal. *Yah sa sarvesu bhutesu nasyatsu na vinasyati*. When this material manifestation is annihilated, that spiritual sky remains. This is called *avyakto 'vyaktat*.

In the Second Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, we find a description of the spiritual sky and the people who live there. Its nature and features are also discussed. From this Second Canto we understand that there are spiritual airplanes in the spiritual sky, and that the living entities there--who are all liberated--travel like lightning on those planes throughout the spiritual sky. This material world is simply an imitation; whatever we see here is simply a shadow of what exists there. The material world is like a cinema, wherein we see but an imitation or a shadow of the real thing that is existing. This material world is only a shadow. As stated in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (1.1.1), *yatra tri-sargo 'mrta*: "This illusory material world is a combination of matter." In store windows we often see mannequins, but no sane man thinks that these mannequins are real. He can see that they are imitations. Similarly, whatever we see here may be beautiful, just as a mannequin may be beautiful, but it is simply an imitation of the real beauty found in the spiritual world. As *Sridhara Svami* says, *yat satyataya mithya-sargo 'pi satyavat pratiyate*: the spiritual world is real, and this unreal material manifestation only appears to be real. We must understand that reality will never be vanquished and that in essence reality means eternality. Therefore material pleasure, which is temporary, is not actual; real pleasure exists in Krsna. Consequently, those who are after the reality don't participate in this shadow pleasure.

Thus when everything in the material world is annihilated, that spiritual nature remains eternally, and it is the purpose of human life to reach that spiritual sky. Unfortunately, people are not aware of the reality of the spiritual sky. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.5.31), na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum: people do not know their self-interest. They do not know that human life is meant for understanding spiritual reality and preparing oneself to be transferred to that reality. No one can remain here in this material world. All Vedic literatures instruct us in this way. Tamasi majyotir gama: "Don't remain in this darkness. Go to the light." According to the Fifteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (15.6),

na tad bhasayate suryo
na sasanko na pavakah
yad gatva na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama

"That abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world." This material world is dark by nature, and we are artificially illuminating it with electric lights, fire, and so on. In any case, its nature is dark, but the spiritual nature is full of light. When the sun is present, there is no darkness; similarly, every planet in the spiritual sky is self-luminous. Therefore there is no darkness, nor is there need of sun, moon, or electricity. The word suryo means "sun," sasanko means "moon," and pavakah means "fire" or "electricity." So these are not required in the spiritual sky for illumination. And again, Krsna herein says, yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama: "That is My supreme abode, and one who reaches it never returns to this material world." This is stated throughout Bhagavad-gita. Again, in this Eighth Chapter (Bg. 8.21),

avyakto 'ksara ity uktas
tam ahuh paramam gatim
yam prapya na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama

"That supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode." Again, the word avyakta, meaning "unmanifest," is used. The word aksara means "that which is never annihilated," or "that which is infallible." This means that since the supreme abode is eternal, it is not subject to the six transformations mentioned previously.

Because we are presently covered by a dress of material senses, we cannot see the spiritual world, and the spiritual nature is inconceivable for us. Yet we can feel that there is something spiritual present. Even a man completely ignorant of the spiritual nature can somehow feel its presence. One need only analyze his body silently: "What am I? Am I this finger? Am I this body? Am I this hair? No, I am not this, and I am not that. I am something other than this body. I am something beyond this body. What is that? That is the spiritual." In this way, we can feel or sense the presence of spirituality within this matter. We can sense the absence of spirit when a body is dead. If we

witness someone dying, we can sense that something is leaving the body. Although we do not have the eyes to see it, that something is spirit. Its presence in the body is explained in the very beginning of Bhagavad-gita (2.17):

avinasi tu tad viddhi
yena sarvam idam tatam
vinasam a vyayasyasya
na kascit kartum arhati

"Know that which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul."

Spiritual existence is eternal, whereas the body is not. It is said that the spiritual atmosphere is avyakta, unmanifest. How, then, can it be manifest for us? Making the unmanifest manifest is this very process of Krsna consciousness. According to Padma Purana,

atah sri-krsna-namadi
na bha ved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hijih vadau
svayam eva sphuraty adah

"No one can understand Krsna as He is by the blunt material senses. But He reveals Himself to the devotees, being pleased with them for their transcendental loving service unto Him." In this verse, the word indriyaih means "the senses." We have five senses for gathering knowledge (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin), and five senses for working (voice, hands, legs, genitals, and anus). These ten senses are under the control of the mind. It is stated in this verse that with these dull material senses, we cannot understand Krsna's name, form, and so forth. Why is this? Krsna is completely spiritual, and He is also absolute. Therefore His name, form, qualities, and paraphernalia are also spiritual. Due to material conditioning, or material bondage, we cannot presently understand what is spiritual, but this ignorance can be removed by chanting Hare Krsna. If a man is sleeping, he can be awakened by sound vibration. You can call him, "Come on, it's time to get up!" Although the person is unconscious, hearing is so prominent that even a sleeping man can be awakened by sound vibration. Similarly, overpowered by this material conditioning, our spiritual consciousness is presently sleeping, but it can be revived by this transcendental vibration of Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. As stated before, Hare refers to the energy of the Lord, and Krsna and Rama refer to the Lord Himself. Therefore, when we chant Hare Krsna, we are praying, "O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please accept me." We have no other prayer than "Please accept me." Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught us that we should simply cry and pray that the Lord accept us. As Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself prayed,

ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya ta va pada-pankaja-
sthita-dhuyi-sadrsam vicintaya

"O Krsna, son of Nanda, somehow or other I have fallen into this ocean of nescience and ignorance. Please pick me up and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet." If a man has fallen into the ocean, his only hope for survival is that someone comes to pick him up. He only has to be lifted one inch above the water in order to feel immediate relief. Similarly, as soon as we take to Krsna consciousness, we are lifted up, and we feel immediate relief.

We cannot doubt that the transcendental is there. Bhagavad-gita is being spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself; therefore we should not doubt His word. The only problem is feeling and understanding what He is telling us. That understanding must be developed gradually, and that knowledge will be revealed by the chanting of Hare Krsna. By this simple process, we can come to understand the spiritual kingdom, the self, the material world, God, the nature of our conditioning, liberation from material bondage, and everything else. This is called *ceto-darpana-marjanam*, cleaning the dusty mirror of the impure mind.

Whatever the case, we must have faith in the word of Krsna. When we purchase a ticket on Pan American or Air India, we have faith that that company will take us to our destination. Faith is created because the company is authorized. Our faith should not be blind; therefore we should accept that which is recognized. Bhagavad-gita has been recognized as authorized scripture in India for thousands of years, and even outside India there are many scholars, religionists, and philosophers who have accepted Bhagavad-gita as authoritative. It is said that even such a great scientist as Albert Einstein was reading Bhagavad-gita regularly. So we should not doubt Bhagavad-gita's authenticity.

Therefore when Lord Krsna says that there is a supreme abode and that we can go there, we should have faith that such an abode exists. Many philosophers think that the spiritual abode is impersonal or void. Impersonalists like the Sankarites and Buddhists generally speak of the void or emptiness, but Bhagavad-gita does not disappoint us in this way. The philosophy of voidism has simply created atheism, because it is the nature of the living entity to want enjoyment. As soon as he thinks that his future is void, he will try to enjoy the variegatedness of this material life. Thus impersonalism leads to armchair philosophical discussions and attachment to material enjoyment. We may enjoy speculating, but no real spiritual benefit can be derived from such speculation.

Bhaktih paresanubha vo viraktir anyatra ca (SB. 11.2.42). Once we have developed the devotional spirit, we will become immediately detached from all kinds of material enjoyment. As soon as a hungry man eats, he feels immediate satisfaction and says, "No, I don't want any more. I am satisfied." This satisfaction is a characteristic of the Krsna conscious man.

brahma-bhutam prasannatma
na socati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu
mad-bhaktim labhate param

"One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is

equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me." (Bg. 18.54)

As soon as one is spiritually realized, he feels full satisfaction and no longer hankers after flickering material enjoyment. As stated in the Second Chapter of Bhagavad-gita (2.59),

visaya vinivartante
niraharasya dehinah
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya
param drstva nivartate

"The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness." A doctor may tell a diseased man, "Don't eat this. Don't eat that. Don't have sex. Don't. Don't." In this way, a diseased man is forced to accept so many "don'ts," but inside he is thinking, "Oh, if I can just get these things, I'll be happy." The desires remain inside. However, when one is established in Krsna consciousness, he is so strong inside that he doesn't experience the desire. Although he's not impotent, he doesn't want sex. He can marry thrice, but still be detached. Param drstva nivartate. When something superior is acquired, one naturally gives up all inferior things. That which is superior is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and atheism and impersonalism cannot give us this. He is attained only by unalloyed devotion.

purusah sa parah partha
bhaktya labhyas tv ananyaya
yasyantah-sthani bhutani
yena sarvam idam tatam

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attained by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all-pervading, and everything is situated within Him." (Bg. 8.22) The words purusah sa parah indicate the supreme person who is greater than all others. This is not a void speaking, but a person who has all the characteristics of personality in full. Just as we are talking face to face, when we reach the supreme abode we can talk to God face to face. We can play with Him, eat with Him, and everything else. This state is not acquired by mental speculation but by transcendental loving service (bhaktya labhyah). The words tv ananyaya indicate that this bhakti must be without adulteration. It must be unalloyed.

Although the Supreme Personality is a person and is present in His abode in the spiritual sky, He is so widespread that everything is within Him. He is both inside and outside. Although God is everywhere, He still has His kingdom, His abode. The sun may pervade the universe with its sunshine, yet the sun itself is a separate entity.

In His supreme abode, the Supreme Lord has no rival. Wherever we may be, we find a predominating personality. In the United States, the predominating personality is the President. However, when the next election comes, the President will have so many rivals, but in the spiritual sky the Supreme Lord has no rival. Those who want to become rivals are placed in this material world, under the conditions of material nature. In the spiritual sky there is no rivalry, and all the

inhabitants therein are liberated souls. From Srimad-Bhagavatam we receive information that their bodily features resemble gods. In some of the spiritual planets, God manifests a two-armed form, and in others He manifests a four-armed form. The living entities of those planets have corresponding features, and one cannot distinguish who is God and who is not. This is called sarupya-mukti liberation, wherein one has the same features as the Lord. There are five kinds of liberation: sayujya, sarupya, salokya, sarsti, and samipya. Sayujya-mukti means merging into God's impersonal effulgence, the brahmajyoti. We have discussed this, and have concluded that the attempt to merge and lose individuality is not desirable and is very risky. Sarupya-mukti means attaining a body exactly like God's. Salokya-mukti means living on the same planet with God. Sarsti-mukti means having the opulence of God. For instance, God is very powerful, and we can become powerful like Him. That is called sarsti. Samipya-mukti means always remaining with God as one of His associates. For instance, Arjuna is always with Krsna as His friend, and this is called samipya-mukti. We can attain any one of these five types of liberation, but out of these five, sayujya-mukti, merging into the brahmajyoti, is rejected by Vaisnava philosophy. According to the Vaisnava philosophy, we worship God as He is and retain our separate identity eternally in order to serve Him. According to the Mayavada philosophy, impersonalism, one tries to lose his individual identity and merge into the existence of the Supreme. That, however, is a suicidal policy and is not recommended by Krsna in Bhagavad-gita.

This has also been rejected by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who advocated worship in separation. As stated before, the pure devotee does not even want liberation; he simply asks to remain Krsna's devotee birth after birth. This is Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's prayer, and the words "birth after birth" indicate that there is no liberation. This means that the devotee doesn't care whether he is liberated or not. He simply wants to engage in Krsna consciousness, to serve the Supreme Lord. Always wanting to engage in God's transcendental loving service is the symptom of pure devotion. Of course, wherever a devotee is, he remains in the spiritual kingdom, even though in the material body. On his part, he does not demand any of the five types of liberation, nor anything for his personal superiority or comfort. But in order to associate with God in the spiritual planets, one must become His pure devotee.

For those who are not pure devotees, Lord Krsna explains at what times one should leave the body in order to attain liberation.

yatra kale tv anavrttim
avrttim caiva yoginah
prayata yanti tam kalam
vaksyami bharatarsabha

"O best of the Bharatas, I shall now explain to you the different times at which, passing away from this world, one does or does not come back." (Bg. 8.23) In India, unlike in the West, it is common for astrologers to make minute calculations of the astronomical situation at the moment of one's birth. Indeed, a person's horoscope is read not only when he is born but also when he dies, in order to determine what his situation will be in the next life. All this can be determined by astrological calculation. In this verse, Lord Krsna is accepting those astrological principles, confirming that if one leaves his body at a

particular time, he may attain liberation. If one dies at one moment, he may be liberated, or if he dies at another moment, he may have to return to the material world. It is all a question of "chance," but that chance someway or other is what one has. For the devotee, however, there is no question of chance. Whatever the astrological situation, the devotee in Krsna consciousness is guaranteed liberation. For others, there are chances that if they leave their body at a particular moment, they may attain liberation and enter the spiritual kingdom, or they may be reborn.

agnirjyotir ahah suklah
san-masa uttarayanam
tatra prayata gacchanti
brahma brahma-vido janah

"Those who know the Supreme Brahman pass away from the world during the influence of the fiery god, in the light, at an auspicious moment, during the fortnight of the moon and the six months when the sun travels in the north." (Bg. 8.24) As we all know, the sun's movements are different: six months it is north of the equator, and six months it is south. The sun is also moving, according to Vedic calculations, and from Srimad-Bhagavatam we are informed that the sun is situated at the center of the universe. Just as all the planets are moving, the sun is also moving at a speed calculated to be sixteen thousand miles per second. If a person dies when the sun is in the northern hemisphere, he can attain liberation. That is not only the verdict of Bhagavad-gita, but also of other scriptures.

dhumo ratris tatha krsnah
san-masa daksinayanam
tatra candramasam jyotir
yogi prapya nivartate

"The mystic who passes away from this world during the smoke, the night, the moonless fortnight, or in the six months when the sun passes to the south, or who reaches the moon planet, again comes back." (Bg. 8.25) No one can say when he is going to die, and in that sense the moment of one's death is accidental. However, for a devotee in Krsna consciousness, there is no question of "accidents."

sukla-krsne gati hy ete
jagatah sasvate mate
ekaya yaty anavrttim
anyayavartate punah

"According to the Vedas, there are two ways of passing from this world--one in light and one in darkness. When one passes in light, he does not come back; but when one passes in darkness, he returns." (Bg. 8.26) The same description of departure and return is quoted by Acarya Baladeva Vidyabhusana from the Chandogya Upanisad. In such a way, those who are fruitive laborers and philosophical speculators from time immemorial are constantly going and coming. Actually they do not attain ultimate salvation, for they do not surrender to Krsna.

naite sr̥ti partha janan
yogi muhyati kascana
tasmat sarvesu kalesu
yoga-yukto bhavarjuna

"The devotees who know these two paths, O Arjuna, are never bewildered. Therefore be always fixed in devotion." (Bg. 8.27) Herein the Lord confirms that there is no "chance" for one who practices bhakti-yoga. His destination is certain. Whether he dies when the sun is in the northern or southern hemisphere is of no importance. As we have already stated, if one thinks of Krsna at the time of death, he will at once be transferred to Krsna's abode. Therefore Krsna tells Arjuna to always remain in Krsna consciousness. This is possible through the chanting of Hare Krsna. Since Krsna and His spiritual kingdom are nondifferent, being absolute, Krsna and His sound vibration are the same. Simply by vibrating Krsna's name, we can enjoy Krsna's association. If we are walking down the street chanting Hare Krsna, Krsna is also going with us. If we walk down the street and look up at the sky, we may see that the sun or the moon is accompanying us. I can recall about fifty years ago, when I was a householder, my second son, who was about four years old at the time, was walking with me down the street, and he suddenly asked me, "Father, why is the moon going with us?"

If a material object like the moon has the power to accompany us, we can surely understand that the Supreme Lord, who is all-powerful, can always remain with us. Being omnipotent, He can always keep us company, provided that we are also qualified to keep His company. Pure devotees are always merged in the thought of Krsna and are always remembering that Krsna is with them. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu has confirmed the absolute nature of Krsna in His Siksastaka (verse 2):

namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatarpita niyamitah smarane na kalah
etadrsi ta va krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah

"My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as Krsna and Govinda, by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard-and-fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting."

We may take the effort to spend a great deal of money and attempt to build or establish a temple for Krsna, but if we do so we must observe many rules and regulations and see properly to the temple's management. But herein it is confirmed that simply by chanting, any man can have the benefit of keeping company with Krsna. Just as Arjuna is deriving benefit by being in the same chariot with Lord Sri Krsna, we can also benefit by associating with Krsna through the chanting of His holy names--Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. This maha-mantra is not my personal concoction but is authorized by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is

considered to be not only an authority but the incarnation of Lord Sri Krsna Himself. It was Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu who said, "O Lord, You are so kind to the people of this material world that You expand Yourself in Your holy name so that they can associate with You."

Although the maha-mantra is in the Sanskrit language and many people do not know its meaning, it is still so attractive that people participate when it is chanted publicly. When chanting the maha-mantra, we are completely safe, even in this most dangerous position. We should always be aware that in this material world, we are always in a dangerous position. Srimad-Bhagavatam confirms: padam padam yad vipadam na tesam. In this world, there is danger at every step. The devotees of the Lord, however, are not meant to remain in this miserable, dangerous place. Therefore we should take care to advance in Krsna consciousness while in this human form. Then our happiness is assured.

"Path of Perfection" by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.