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SECTION A

1. INTRODUCTION

SB 2.3.10

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

SYNONYMS

akāmaḥ—one who has transcended all material desires; sarva-kāmaḥ—one who has the sum total of material desires; vā—either; mokṣa-kāmaḥ—one who desires liberation; udāra-dhīḥ—with broader intelligence; tīvreṇa—with great force; bhakti-yogena—by devotional service to the Lord; yajeta—should worship; puruṣam—the Lord; param—the supreme whole.

TRANSLATION

A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead.

SB 4.21.34 purport

Everyone—whether akāma (a devotee), sarva-kāma (a karmī) or mokṣa-kāma (a jnani or yogī)—is encouraged to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the direct method of devotional service. In this way one can get both material and spiritual profit simultaneously.

2. YOGA LADDER DEFINED

Bg 6.3 purport

The process of linking oneself with the Supreme is called yoga. It may be compared to a ladder for attaining the topmost spiritual realization. This ladder begins from the lowest material condition of the living entity and rises up to perfect self-realization in pure spiritual life. According to various elevations, different parts of the ladder are known by different names. But all in all, the complete ladder is called yoga and may be divided into three parts, namely jnana-yoga, dhyāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga. The beginning of the ladder is called the yogāruruḥṣu stage, and the highest rung is called yogārūḍha.

Path of Perfection, Chapter Two

One may compare the yoga system to a stepladder. One yogī may be situated on the fifth step, another yogī 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-gītā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa delineates a number of yoga systems—karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, dhyāna-yoga, and bhakti-yoga. All of these systems are connected with God, Kṛṣṇa, 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 Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so situated. Others are situated on different steps of the yogic ladder.

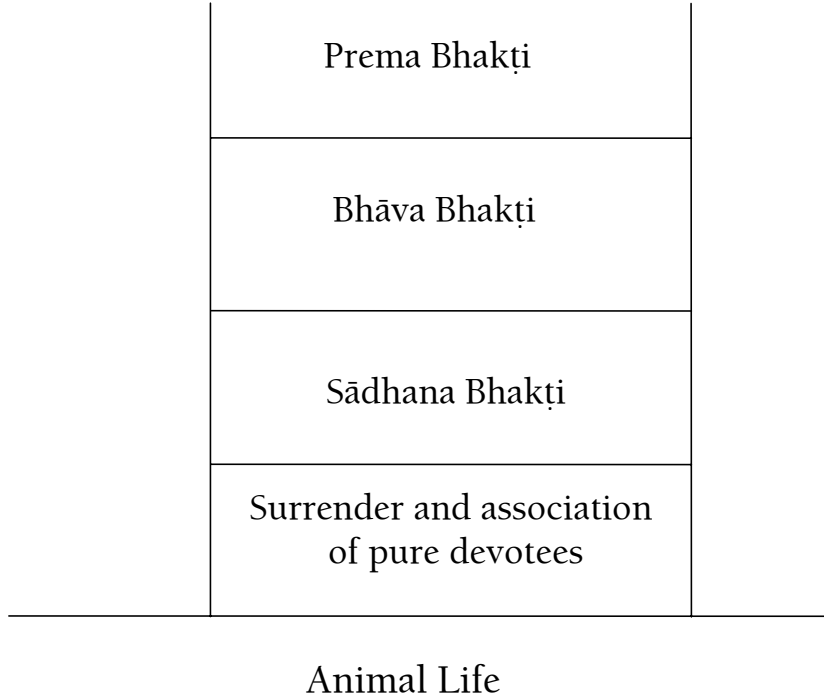
3. ANIMAL LIFE DEFINED

SB 1.1.2 purport

Religion includes four primary subjects, namely pious activities, economic development, satisfaction of the senses, and finally liberation from material bondage. Irreligious life is a barbarous condition. Indeed, human life begins when religion begins. Eating, sleeping, fearing, and mating are the four principles of animal life. These are common both to animals and to human beings. But religion is the extra function of the human being. Without religion, human life is no better than animal life. Therefore, in human societies there is some form of religion which aims at self-realization and which makes reference to man's eternal relationship with God.

SECTION B

1. THE EXPRESS ELEVATOR OF BHAKTI YOGA - DIAGRAM ONE



Narada Bhakti Sutra, Chapter Four

In ignorance and defiance of the recommended yuga-dharma, unauthorized teachers make a business of teaching yoga and meditation. But since almost no one is qualified to practice the severe austerities of meditation, streamlined versions are taught, which are mostly a form of cheating. Even if a person seriously takes up the path of karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, or aṣṭāṅga-yoga, he will meet with many difficulties. For example, the jnani may become very attached to accumulating knowledge for its own sake, up to the point where he tries to merge with the Absolute Truth. The karma-yogī, or man of action, too often forgets to dedicate his activities to God and instead becomes attached to the fruits of his work or to fame. The aṣṭāṅga-yogīs, if they are able to progress at all in the eightfold system, are liable to get sidetracked by the siddhis, or powers, that come to them. But bhakti, by its very nature, purifies one's senses, actions, and motives. Moreover, one doesn't have to go painfully and slowly through every single step on the yoga ladder from karma to jnana to bhakti. At any moment, whenever one decides to surrender, and wherever one gets the association of pure devotees, one can take the express elevator of bhakti-yoga.

2. BHAKTI-YOGA DEFINED

SB 1.7.10 Purport

Unalloyed devotional service of the Lord progresses in different stages. Practice of devotional service in the material field is of eighty-one different qualities, and above such activities is the transcendental practice of devotional service, which is one and is called *sādhana-bhakti*. When unalloyed practice of *sādhana-bhakti* is matured into transcendental love for the Lord, the transcendental loving service of the Lord begins gradually developing into nine progressive stages of loving service under the headings of attachment, love, affection, feelings, affinity, adherence, following, ecstasy, and intense feelings of separation.

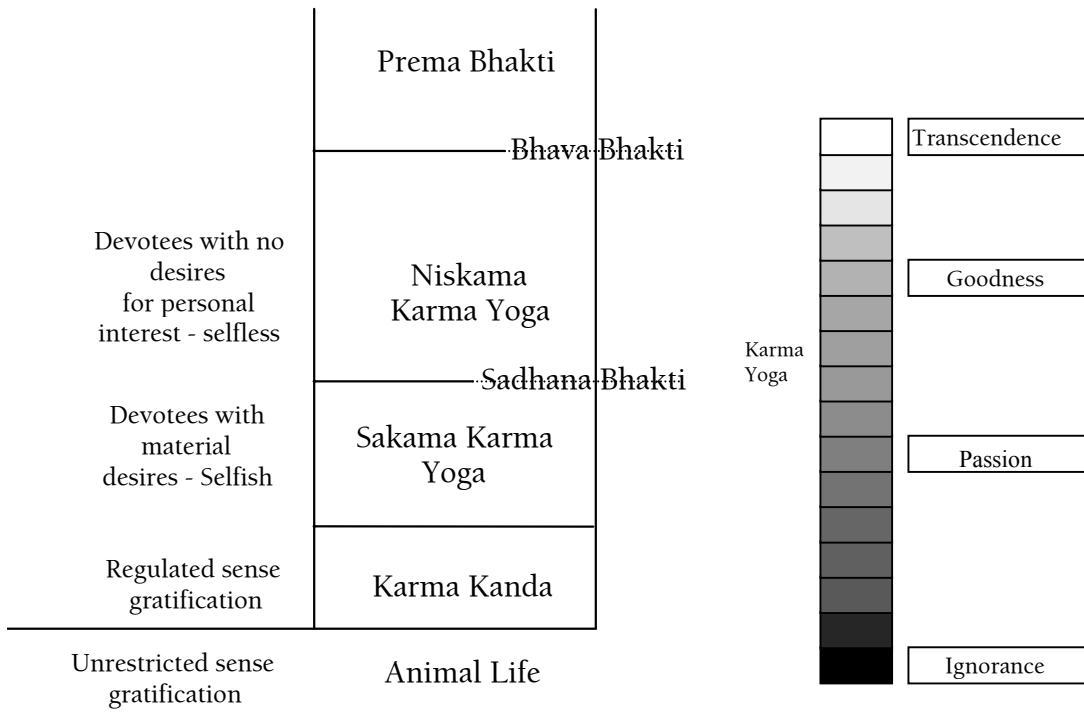
The attachment of an inactive devotee develops up to the stage of transcendental love of God. Attachment of an active servitor develops up to the stage of adherence, and that for a friendly devotee develops up to the stage of following, and the same is also the case for the paternal devotees. Devotees in conjugal love develop ecstasy up to the stage of intense feelings of separation. These are some of the features of unalloyed devotional service of the Lord.

According to *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, the import of the word *ittham-bhūta* is “complete bliss.” Transcendental bliss in the realization of impersonal Brahman becomes comparable to the scanty water contained in the pit made by a cow’s hoof. It is nothing compared with the ocean of bliss of the vision of the Personality of Godhead. The personal form of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that it comprehends all attraction, all bliss and all tastes (*rasas*). These attractions are so strong that no one wants to exchange them for material enjoyment, mystic powers and liberation. There is no need of logical arguments in support of this statement, but out of one’s own nature one becomes attracted by the qualities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We must know for certain that the qualities of the Lord have nothing to do with mundane qualities. All of them are full of bliss, knowledge and eternity. There are innumerable qualities of the Lord, and one is attracted by one quality while another is attracted by another.

Great sages, such as the four bachelor-devotees Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda and Sanat-kumāra, were attracted by the fragrance of flowers and *tulasī* leaves anointed with the pulp of sandalwood offered at the lotus feet of the Lord. Similarly, Śukadeva Gosvāmī was attracted by the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. Śukadeva Gosvāmī was already situated in the liberated stage, yet he was attracted by the pastimes of the Lord. This proves that the quality of His pastimes has nothing to do with material affinity. Similarly, the young cowherd damsels were attracted by the bodily features of the Lord, and Rukmiṇī was attracted by hearing about the glories of the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa attracts even the mind of the goddess of fortune. He attracts, in special cases, the minds of all young girls. He attracts the minds of the elderly ladies by paternal affection. He attracts the mind of the male in the humors of servitude and friendship.

SECTION C

1. THE YOGA LADDER - DIAGRAM TWO



2. KARMA-KĀṆḌA DEFINED

Bg 2.43

TRANSLATION

Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas, which recommend various fruitive activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resultant good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this.

PURPORT

People in general are not very intelligent, and due to their ignorance they are most attached to the fruitive activities recommended in the karma-kāṇḍa portions of the Vedas. They do not want anything more than sense gratificatory proposals for enjoying life in heaven, where wine and women are available and material opulence is very common. In the Vedas many sacrifices are recommended for elevation to the heavenly planets, especially the jyotiṣṭoma sacrifices. In fact, it is stated that anyone desiring elevation to heavenly planets must perform these sacrifices, and men with a poor fund of knowledge think that this is the whole purpose of Vedic wisdom. It is very difficult for such inexperienced persons to be situated in the determined action of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As fools are attached to the flowers of poisonous trees without knowing the results of such attractions, unenlightened men are similarly attracted by such heavenly opulence and the sense enjoyment thereof.

In the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas it is said, apāma somam amṛtā abhūma and akṣayyaṁ ha vai cāturmasya-yājinaḥ sukṛtaṁ bhavati. In other words, those who perform the four-month penances become eligible to drink the soma-rasa beverages to become immortal and happy forever. Even on this earth some are very eager to have soma-rasa to become strong and fit to enjoy sense gratifications. Such persons have no faith in liberation from material bondage, and they are very much attached to the pompous ceremonies of Vedic sacrifices. They are generally sensual, and they do not want anything other than the heavenly pleasures of life. It is understood that there are gardens called Nandana-kānana in which there is good opportunity for association with angelic, beautiful women and having a profuse supply of soma-rasa wine. Such bodily happiness is certainly sensual; therefore there are those who are purely attached to such material, temporary happiness, as lords of the material world.

Bg 2.45

TRANSLATION

The Vedas deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self.

PURPORT

All material activities involve actions and reactions in the three modes of material nature. They are meant for fruitive results, which cause bondage in the material world. The Vedas deal mostly with fruitive activities to gradually elevate the general public from the field of sense gratification to a position on the transcendental plane... When the activities for sense gratification, namely the karma-kāṇḍa chapter, are finished, then the chance for spiritual realization is offered in the form of the Upaniṣads, which are part of different Vedas, as the Bhagavad-gītā is a part of the fifth Veda, namely the Mahābhārata. The Upaniṣads mark the beginning of transcendental life.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is transcendental and not contaminated by this material world. But although He is concentrated spirit soul without material variety, for the benefit of the conditioned soul He nevertheless accepts different types of sacrifice performed with various material elements, rituals and mantras and offered to the demigods under different names according to the interests and purposes of the performers.

PURPORT

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that these karma-kāṇḍa ritualistic ceremonies, although contaminated, contain touches of devotional service because whenever there is a performance of any yajna, Lord Viṣṇu is given a central position. This is very important because even a little endeavor to please Lord Viṣṇu is bhakti and is of great value. A tinge of bhakti purifies the material nature of the performances, which by devotional service gradually come to the transcendental position. Therefore although such yajnas are superficially material activities, the results are transcendental. Such yajnas as Sūrya-yajna, Indra-yajna and Candra-yajna are performed in the names of the demigods, but these demigods are bodily parts of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The demigods cannot accept sacrificial offerings for themselves, but they can accept them for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as a departmental tax collector of a government cannot collect taxes for his personal account but can realize them for the government. Any yajna performed with this complete knowledge and understanding is described in Bhagavad-gītā as brahmārpaṇam, or a sacrifice offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Since no one but the Supreme Lord can enjoy the results of sacrifice, the Lord says that He is the actual enjoyer of all sacrifices (bhoktāraṁ yajna-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram).

3. KARMA-KĀṆḌA LEADS TO REPEATED BIRTH AND DEATH

SB 11.19.18

TRANSLATION

An intelligent person should see that any material activity is subject to constant transformation and that even on the planet of Lord Brahmā there is thus simply unhappiness. Indeed, a wise man can understand that just as all that he has seen is temporary, similarly, all things within the universe have a beginning and an end.

PURPORT

The word *adṛṣṭam* indicates the heavenly standard of life available in the higher planets within this universe. Such celestial neighborhoods are not actually experienced on the earth planet, although they are described in the Vedic literatures. One may argue that promotion to material heaven is recommended in the karma-kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas and that although the happiness available there is not eternal, at least for some time one may enjoy life. Lord Kṛṣṇa here states, however, that even on the planet of Lord Brahmā, which is superior to the heavenly planets, there is no happiness whatsoever. Even in the upper planetary systems there is rivalry, envy, irritation, lamentation and ultimately death itself.

4. KARMA-KĀṆḌA - A BURDEN AND LOSS

SB 11.21.4 purport

Those who follow the ritualistic karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas are burdened with innumerable regulations, rituals and ceremonies, which must be personally performed by the worshipers or performed on their behalf by qualified brāhmaṇas. At any moment there is danger of discrepancy resulting in the total loss of their accumulated piety. Similarly, those on the philosophical path must painstakingly define, refine and adjust philosophical categories, a process that generally ends in confusion and hopelessness. The practitioners of mystic yoga undergo grueling penances, subjecting themselves to severe heat and cold, near starvation and so on. All such materialistic persons have personal desires to fulfill, whereas the devotees of the Lord, who desire the Lord's pleasure, simply depend upon the Lord's mercy and go back home, back to Godhead.

5. KARMA-YOGA DEFINED

Message of Godhead, Chapter Two

The Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, advises us as follows: “The best policy for doing work is to perform all prescribed duties for the satisfaction of Yajna, the Supreme Being—Viṣṇu, the Absolute Truth. Otherwise, all actions will produce reactions that will cause bondage. If work is done for the sake of Yajna, then one can become free from all bondages.”

This method of work, or prescribed duties, that does not cause any bondage is called work with transcendental results, or karma-yoga. By such work with transcendental results, or karma-yoga, not only does one become immune from the bondage of work, but also one develops his transcendental devotion toward the Absolute Personality of Godhead. One must not enjoy the fruits of his work himself, but must dedicate the same for the transcendental loving service of the Personality of Godhead. This is the first step on the ladder of devotional activities. Lord Caitanya taught this process of devotional service, or work with transcendental results, to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī at Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa in Prayāga. Lord Caitanya said that only one who is fortunate can get the seed of transcendental loving service, by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, and that of the spiritual master. Karma-yoga, or work with transcendental results, is the seed of pure devotional activities. This science is taught by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself or by His bona fide, confidential servants. Unless one takes his lessons from such sources, one must inevitably misunderstand the import of karma-yoga, as do the ordinary mundaners who often advertise themselves as karma-yoga experts.

6. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KARMA AND KARMA-YOGA, JNĀNA AND JNĀNA-YOGA

Bg 6.46

TRANSLATION

A yogī is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a yogī.

PURPORT

When we speak of yoga we refer to linking our consciousness with the Supreme Absolute Truth. Such a process is named differently by various practitioners in terms of the particular method adopted. When the linking process is predominantly in fruitive activities it is called karma-yoga, when it is predominantly empirical it is called jnana-yoga, and when it is predominantly in a devotional relationship with the Supreme Lord it is called bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the ultimate perfection of all yogas, as will be explained in the next verse. The Lord has confirmed herein the superiority of yoga, but He has not mentioned that it is better than bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga is full spiritual knowledge, and therefore nothing can excel it. Asceticism without self-knowledge is imperfect. Empiric knowledge without surrender to the Supreme Lord is also imperfect. And fruitive work without Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a waste of time. Therefore, the most highly praised form of yoga performance mentioned here is bhakti-yoga, and this is still more clearly explained in the next verse.

Bg 10.10 purport

When a person knows the goal of life but is addicted to the fruits of activities, he is acting in karma-yoga. When he knows that the goal is Kṛṣṇa but he takes pleasure in mental speculations to understand Kṛṣṇa, he is acting in jnana-yoga. And when he knows the goal and seeks Kṛṣṇa completely in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service, he is acting in bhakti-yoga, or buddhi-yoga, which is the complete yoga. This complete yoga is the highest perfectional stage of life.

SB 1.2.15 Purport

Liberation from material bondage is, therefore, a by-product of devotional service. Attainment of spiritual knowledge is not sufficient to insure liberation. Such knowledge must be overcoated with devotional service so that ultimately the devotional service alone predominates. Then liberation is made possible. Even the reactionary work of the fruitive workers can lead one to liberation when it is overcoated with devotional service. Karma overcoated with devotional service is called karma-yoga. Similarly, empirical knowledge overcoated with devotional service is called jnana-yoga. But pure bhakti-yoga is independent of such karma and jnana because it alone can not only endow one with liberation from conditional life but also award one the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

7. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAKĀMA DEVOTEES AND NISKĀMA (AKĀMA) DEVOTEES

SB 3.9.12 Purport

The demigods are called sakāma devotees, or devotees with material desires in mind, while the pure devotees are called niṣkāma devotees because they have no desires for their personal interests. The sakāma devotees are self-interested because they do not think of others, and therefore they are not able to satisfy the Lord perfectly, whereas the pure devotees take the missionary responsibility of turning nondevotees into devotees, and they are therefore able to satisfy the Lord more than the demigods. The Lord is unmindful of the nondevotees, although He is sitting within everyone's heart as well-wisher and Supersoul. However, He also gives them the chance to receive His mercy through His pure devotees who are engaged in missionary activities. Sometimes the Lord Himself descends for missionary activities, as He did in the form of Lord Caitanya, but mostly He sends His bona fide representatives, and thus He shows His causeless mercy towards the nondevotees. The Lord is so satisfied with His pure devotees that He wants to give them the credit for missionary success, although He could do the work personally. This is the sign of His satisfaction with His pure, niṣkāma devotees, compared to the sakāma devotees.

SB 3.21.24 Purport

Even if he has some desires, one engaged in the service of the Lord is never frustrated. Those engaged in His service are called sakāma and akāma. Those who approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead with desires for material enjoyment are called sakāma, and those devotees who have no material desires for sense gratification but serve the Supreme Lord out of spontaneous love for Him are called akāma. Sakāma devotees are divided into four classes—those in distress, those in need of money, the inquisitive and the wise. Someone worships the Supreme Lord because of bodily or mental distress, someone else worships the Supreme Lord because he is in need of money, someone else worships the Lord out of inquisitiveness to know Him as He is,

and someone wants to know the Lord as a philosopher can know Him, by the research work of his wisdom. There is no frustration for any of these four classes of men; each is endowed with the desired result of his worship. (Further reference: Bg 7.16)

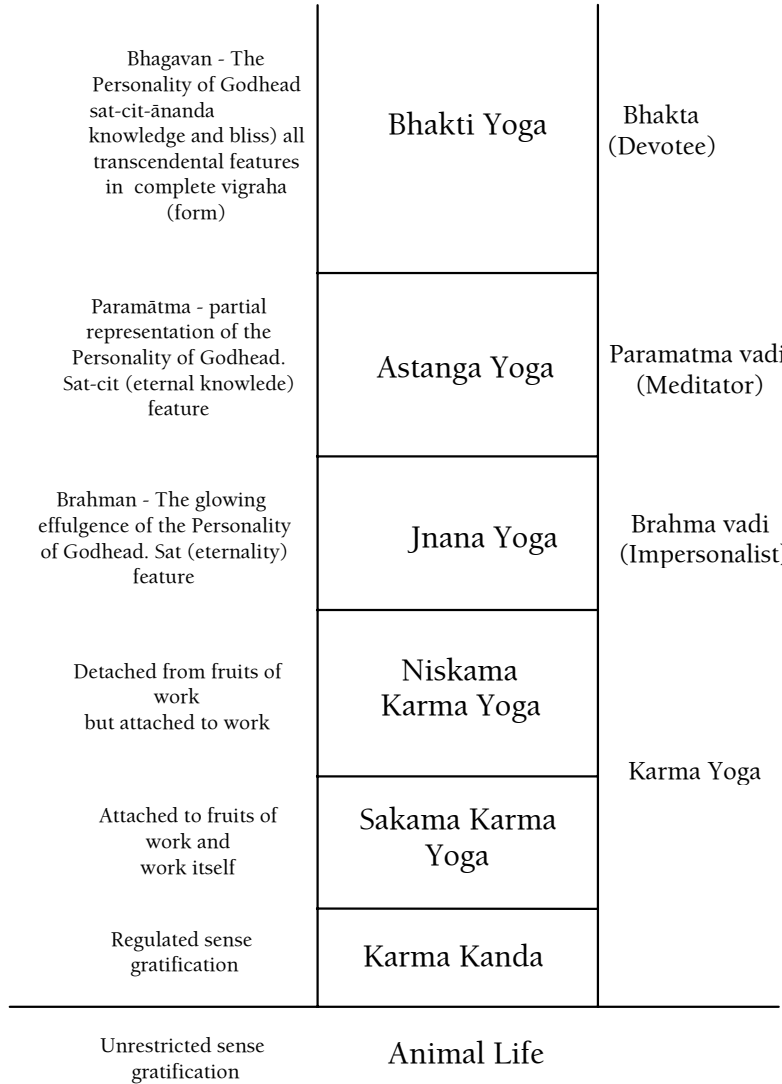
SB 6.9.40 Purport

The difference between sakāma and akāma devotees is that when sakāma devotees, like the demigods, fall into difficulty, they approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead for relief, whereas akāma devotees, even in the greatest danger, never disturb the Lord for material benefits. Even if an akāma devotee is suffering, he thinks this is due to his past impious activities and agrees to suffer the consequences. He never disturbs the Lord. Sakāma devotees immediately pray to the Lord as soon as they are in difficulty, but they are regarded as pious because they consider themselves fully dependent on the mercy of the Lord....

Even while suffering in the midst of difficulties, devotees simply offer their prayers and service more enthusiastically. In this way they become firmly fixed in devotional service and eligible to return home, back to Godhead, without a doubt. Sakāma devotees, of course, achieve from the Lord the results they desire from their prayers, but they do not immediately become fit to return to Godhead.

SECTION D

I. THE YOGA LADDER - DIAGRAM THREE



2. PROGRESSION: KARMA-YOGA TO JNĀNA-YOGA TO AṢṬĀNGA-YOGA (includes Rāja-yoga and Haṭ ha-yoga) TO BHAKTI-YOGA

Bg 6.47

TRANSLATION

And of all yogīs, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.

PURPORT

The culmination of all kinds of yoga practices lies in bhakti yoga. All other yogas are but means to come to the point of bhakti in bhakti-yoga. Yoga actually means bhakti-yoga; all other yogas are progressions toward the destination of bhakti-yoga. From the beginning of karma-yoga to the end of bhakti-yoga is a long way to self-realization. Karma-yoga, without fruitive results, is the beginning of this path. When karma-yoga increases in knowledge and renunciation, the stage is called jnana-yoga. When jnana-yoga increases in meditation on the Supersoul by different physical processes, and the mind is on Him, it is called aṣṭāṅga-yoga. And when one surpasses the aṣṭāṅga-yoga and comes to the point of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, it is called bhakti yoga, the culmination. Factually, bhakti-yoga is the ultimate goal, but to analyze bhakti-yoga minutely one has to understand these other yogas. The yogī who is progressive is therefore on the true path of eternal good fortune. One who sticks to a particular point and does not make further progress is called by that particular name: karma-yogī, jnana-yogī or dhyāna-yogī, rāja-yogī, haṭ ha-yogī, etc. If one is fortunate enough to come to the point of bhakti-yoga, it is to be understood that he has surpassed all other yogas. Therefore, to become Kṛṣṇa conscious is the highest stage of yoga, just as, when we speak of Himālayan, we refer to the world's highest mountains, of which the highest peak, Mount Everest, is considered to be the culmination.

SB 11.21.2 purport

In the lower stages of human life one is entangled in false identification with the gross material body and desires to execute material fruitive activities based on society, friendship and love. When such materialistic activities are offered in sacrifice to the Supreme Lord, one becomes situated in karma-yoga. By regulated sacrifice one gradually gives up the gross bodily concept of life and advances to the stage of realization of spiritual knowledge, whereby one understands oneself to be an eternal spirit soul completely different from the material body and mind. Feeling relief from the pangs of materialism one becomes very attached to one's spiritual knowledge, and thus one is situated in the stage of jnana-yoga. As the candidate further advances on the spiritual path, he understands himself to be part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, the Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. He then sees that his conditional life as well as his spiritual knowledge was obtained from the Personality of Godhead, who awards the results of all types of activities, both pious and sinful. By directly engaging in the loving service of the Supreme Lord and understanding oneself to be the Lord's eternal servant, one's attachment evolves into pure love of Godhead. Thus one first gives up the lower stage of attachment to the material body and then subsequently gives up attachment to cultivation of spiritual knowledge. This relieves one of material life. Finally one recognizes the Lord Himself as the resting place of one's eternal love and fully surrenders to God in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

3. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KARMIS, JNĀNIS, YOGIS AND DEVOTEES

SB 2.4.1 Purport

Those who are on the path of self-realization are generally classified as karmīs, jnānis, yogīs, or devotees of the Lord. The karmīs, who are much attracted by the fruitive activities of the Vedic rituals, are called bhukti-kāmī, or those who desire material enjoyment. The jnānis, who try to become one with the Supreme by mental speculation, are called mukti-kāmī, or those who desire liberation from material existence. The mystic yogīs, who practice different types of austerities for attainment of eight kinds of material perfection and who ultimately meet the Supersoul (Paramātmā) in trance, are called siddhi-kāmī, or those who desire the perfection of becoming finer than the finest, becoming heavier than the heaviest, getting everything desired, having control over everyone, creating everything liked, etc. All these are abilities of a powerful yogī. But the devotees of the Lord do not want anything like that for self-satisfaction. They want only to serve the Lord because the Lord is great and as living entities they are eternally subordinate parts and parcels of the Lord. This perfect realization of the self by the devotee helps him to become desireless, to desire nothing for his personal self, and thus the devotees are called niṣkāmi, without any desire. A living entity, by his constitutional position, cannot be void of all desires (the bhukti-kāmī, mukti-kāmī and siddhi-kāmī all desire something for personal satisfaction), but the niṣkāmi devotees of the Lord desire everything for the satisfaction of the Lord. They are completely dependent on the orders of the Lord and are always ready to discharge their duty for the satisfaction of the Lord.

4. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VIPRA (FRUITIVE ACTIVITY), BRĀHMAṆA (SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE) AND VAIṢṆAVA (DEVOTIONAL SERVICE)

SB 1.12.2

TRANSLATION

Thus those who were expert in astrological knowledge and in performance of the birth ceremony instructed King Yudhiṣṭhira about the future history of his child. Then, being sumptuously remunerated, they all returned to their respective homes.

PURPORT

The Vedas are the storehouse of knowledge, both material and spiritual. But such knowledge aims at perfection of self-realization. In other words, the Vedas are the guides for the civilized man in every respect. Since human life is the opportunity to get free from all material miseries, it is properly guided by the knowledge of the Vedas, in the matters of both material needs and spiritual salvation. The specific intelligent class of men who were devoted particularly to the knowledge of the Vedas were called the vipras, or the graduates of the Vedic knowledge. There are different branches of knowledge in the Vedas, of which astrology and pathology are two important branches necessary for the common man. So the intelligent men, generally known as the brāhmaṇas, took up all the different branches of Vedic knowledge to guide society. Even the department of military education (Dhanur-veda) was also taken up by such intelligent men, and the vipras were also teachers of this section of knowledge, as were Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, etc.

The word vipra mentioned herein is significant. There is a little difference between the vipras and the brāhmaṇas. The vipras are those who are expert in karma-kāṇḍa, or fruitive activities, guiding the society towards fulfilling the material necessities of life, whereas the brāhmaṇas are expert in spiritual knowledge of transcendence. This department of knowledge is called jnana-kāṇḍa, and above this there is the upāsana-kāṇḍa. The culmination of upāsana-kāṇḍa is the devotional service of the Lord Viṣṇu, and when the brāhmaṇas achieve perfection, they are called Vaiṣṇavas. Viṣṇu worship is the highest of the modes of worship. Elevated brāhmaṇas are Vaiṣṇavas engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and thus Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the science of devotional service, is very dear to the Vaiṣṇavas. And as explained in the beginning of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, it is the mature fruit of Vedic knowledge and is superior subject matter, above the three kāṇḍas, namely karma, jnana and upāsana.

Amongst the karma-kāṇḍa experts, the jātaka expert vipras were good astrologers who could tell all the future history of a born child simply by the astral calculations of the time (lagna). Such expert jātaka-vipras were present during the birth of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, and his grandfather, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, awarded the vipras sufficiently with gold, land, villages, grains and other valuable necessities of life, which also include cows. There is a need of such vipras in the social structure, and it is the duty of the state to maintain them comfortably, as designed in the Vedic procedure. Such expert vipras, being sufficiently paid by the state, could give free service to the people in general, and thus this department of Vedic knowledge could be available for all.

5. THE THREE CLASSES OF TRANSCENDENTALISTS

Bg Introduction P.4 para 2

He tells Arjuna that He is relating this supreme secret to him because Arjuna is His devotee and His friend. The purport of this is that Bhagavad-gītā is a treatise which is especially meant for the

devotee of the Lord. There are three classes of transcendentalists, namely the jnani, the yogī and the bhakta, or the impersonalist, the meditator and the devotee.

Bg Introduction P.14 para 1

It is also explained in the Gītā that impersonal Brahman is also subordinate to the complete Supreme Person (brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham). Brahman is more explicitly explained in the Brahma-sūtra to be like the rays of the sunshine. The impersonal Brahman is the shining rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Impersonal Brahman is incomplete realization of the absolute whole, and so also is the conception of Paramātmā. In the Fifteenth Chapter it shall be seen that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Puruṣottama, is above both impersonal Brahman and the partial realization of Paramātmā. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is called sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha. The Brahma-saṁhitā begins in this way: īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ/ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam. “Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, is the cause of all causes. He is the primal cause, and He is the very form of eternity, knowledge and bliss.” Impersonal Brahman realization is the realization of His sat (eternity) feature. Paramātmā realization is the realization of sat-cit (eternal knowledge). But realization of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is realization of all the transcendental features: sat, cit and ānanda (eternity, knowledge, and bliss) in complete vigraha (form).

Bg Introduction P.25 para 2

As explained before, there are different kinds of transcendentalists—the brahma-vādī, paramātmā-vādī and the devotee—and, as mentioned, in the brahmajyoti (spiritual sky) there are innumerable spiritual planets. The number of these planets is far, far greater than all of the planets of this material world. This material world has been approximated as only one quarter of the creation (ekāmsena sthito jagat). In this material segment there are millions and billions of universes with trillions of planets and suns, stars and moons. But this whole material creation is only a fragment of the total creation. Most of the creation is in the spiritual sky. One who desires to merge into the existence of the Supreme Brahman is at once transferred to the brahmajyoti of the Supreme Lord and thus attains the spiritual sky. The devotee, who wants to enjoy the association of the Lord, enters into the Vaikuṅṭha planets, which are innumerable, and the Supreme Lord by His plenary expansions as Nārāyaṇa with four hands and with different names like Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Govinda associates with him there. Therefore at the end of life the transcendentalists think either of the brahmajyoti, the Paramātmā or Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In all cases they enter into the spiritual sky, but only the devotee, or he who is in personal touch with the Supreme Lord, enters into the Vaikuṅṭha planets or the Goloka Vṛndāvana planet.

Bg 2.2 Purport

Kṛṣṇa and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are identical. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Bhagavān throughout the Gītā. Bhagavān is the ultimate in the Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding, namely Brahman, or the impersonal all-pervasive spirit; Paramātmā, or the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of all living entities; and Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11) this conception of the Absolute Truth is explained thus:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñanam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

“The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding by the knower of the Absolute Truth, and all of them are identical. Such phases of the Absolute Truth are expressed as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān.”

These three divine aspects can be explained by the example of the sun, which also has three different aspects, namely the sunshine, the sun’s surface and the sun planet itself. One who studies the sunshine only is the preliminary student. One who understands the sun’s surface is further advanced. And one who can enter into the sun planet is the highest. Ordinary students who are satisfied by simply understanding the sunshine—its universal pervasiveness and the glaring effulgence of its impersonal nature—may be compared to those who can realize only the Brahman feature of the Absolute Truth. The student who has advanced still further can know the sun disc, which is compared to knowledge of the Paramātmā feature of the Absolute Truth. And the student who can enter into the heart of the sun planet is compared to those who realize the personal features of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Therefore, the bhaktas, or the transcendentalists who have realized the Bhagavān feature of the Absolute Truth, are the topmost transcendentalists, although all students who are engaged in the study of the Absolute Truth are engaged in the same subject matter. The sunshine, the sun disc and the inner affairs of the sun planet cannot be separated from one another, and yet the students of the three different phases are not in the same category.

6. THE COMMON FACTOR OF ALL YOGĀS

SB 3.32.27

The greatest common understanding for all yogīs is complete detachment from matter, which can be achieved by different kinds of yoga.

PURPORT

There are three kinds of yoga, namely bhakti-yoga, jnana-yoga and aṣṭāṅga-yoga. Devotees, jnanis and yogīs all try to get out of the material entanglement. The jnanis try to detach their sensual activities from material engagement. The jnana-yogī thinks that matter is false and that Brahman is truth; he tries, therefore, by cultivation of knowledge, to detach the senses from material enjoyment. The aṣṭāṅga-yogīs also try to control the senses. The devotees, however, try to engage the senses in the service of the Lord. Therefore it appears that the activities of the bhaktas, devotees, are better than those of the jnanis and yogīs. The mystic yogīs simply try to control the senses by practicing the eight divisions of yoga—yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, etc.—and the jnanis try by mental reasoning to understand that sense enjoyment is false. But the easiest and most direct process is to engage the senses in the service of the Lord.

The purpose of all yoga is to detach one's sense activities from this material world. The final aims, however, are different. Jnanis want to become one with the Brahman effulgence, yogīs want to realize Paramātmā, and devotees want to develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness and transcendental loving service to the Lord. That loving service is the perfect stage of sense control. The senses are actually active symptoms of life, and they cannot be stopped. They can be detached only if there is superior engagement. As it is confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā, *paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate*: the activities of the senses can be stopped if they are given superior engagements. The supreme engagement is engagement of the senses in the service of the Lord. That is the purpose of all yoga.

7. THE GOAL OF JNĀNA-YOGA, AṢṬĀṄGA-YOGA AND BHAKṬI-YOGA

SB 3.32.26

The Supreme Personality of Godhead alone is complete transcendental knowledge, but according to the different processes of understanding He appears differently, either as impersonal Brahman, as Paramātmā, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead or as the puruṣa-avatāra.

PURPORT

The word *dṛṣy-ādibhiḥ* is significant. According to Jīva Gosvāmī, *dṛṣi* means jnana, philosophical research. By different processes of philosophical research under different concepts, such as the process of jnana-yoga, the same Bhagavān, or Supreme Personality of Godhead, is understood as impersonal Brahman. Similarly, by the eightfold yoga system He appears as the Paramātmā. But in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or knowledge in purity, when one tries to understand the Absolute Truth, one realizes Him as the Supreme Person. The Transcendence is realized simply on the basis of knowledge. The words used here, *paramātmēśvaraḥ pumān*, are all transcendental, and they refer to Supersoul. Supersoul is also described as puruṣa, but the word Bhagavān directly refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is full of six opulences: wealth, fame, strength, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. He is the Personality of Godhead in different spiritual skies. The various descriptions of paramātmā, īśvara and pumān indicate that the expansions of the Supreme Godhead are unlimited.

The one Supreme Personality of Godhead reveals Himself to different thinkers as the Supreme person or impersonal Brahman or Paramātmā. Impersonalists merge into the impersonal

Brahman, but that is not achieved by worshipping the impersonal Brahman. If one takes to devotional service and at the same time desires to merge into the existence of the Supreme Lord, he can achieve that. If someone desires at all to merge into the existence of the Supreme, he has to execute devotional service.

The devotee can see the Supreme Lord face to face, but the jnani, the empiric philosopher or yogī cannot. They cannot be elevated to the positions of associates of the Lord. There is no evidence in the scriptures stating that by cultivating knowledge or worshipping the impersonal Brahman one can become a personal associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nor by executing the yogic principles can one become an associate of the Supreme Godhead. Impersonal Brahman, being formless, is described as *adr̥śya* because the impersonal effulgence of brahmajyoti covers the face of the Supreme Lord. Some yogīs see the four-handed Viṣṇu sitting within the heart, and therefore in their case also the Supreme Lord is invisible. Only for the devotees is the Lord visible. Here the statement *dr̥śy-ādibhiḥ* is significant. Since the Supreme Personality of Godhead is both invisible and visible, there are different features of the Lord. The Paramātmā feature and Brahman feature are invisible, but the Bhagavān feature is visible.

8. MĀYĀVĀDI PHILOSOPHERS DEFINED

Bg 7.24 Purport

...One cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, or His form, quality or name simply by mental speculation or by discussing Vedic literature. One must understand Him by devotional service. When one is fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beginning by chanting the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—then only can one understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nondevotee impersonalists think that Kṛṣṇa has a body made of this material nature and that all His activities, His form and everything are māyā. These impersonalists are known as Māyāvādīs. They do not know the ultimate truth...

Madhya 17.132 Puport

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is herein pointing out to the brāhmaṇa that Māyāvādī philosophers cannot understand that the living entity is equal in quality with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because they do not accept this, they think that the living entity has been falsely divided from the original Brahman due to being conditioned by māyā. Māyāvādīs believe that the Absolute Truth is ultimately impersonal. When an incarnation of God or God Himself comes, they think He is covered by māyā. In other words, Māyāvādī impersonalists think that the Lord's form is also a product of this material world. Due to a poor fund of knowledge, they cannot understand that Kṛṣṇa has no body separate from Himself. His body and Himself are both the same Absolute Truth. Not having perfect knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, such impersonalists certainly commit offenses at His lotus feet. Therefore they do not utter the original name of the Absolute Truth, Kṛṣṇa. In their impersonal way, they utter the name of impersonal Brahman, spirit soul. In other words, they indulge in indirect indications of the Absolute Truth. Even if they happen to utter the name of Govinda, Kṛṣṇa or Mādhava, they still cannot understand that these names are as good as Govinda, Kṛṣṇa or Mādhava the person. Because they are ultimately impersonalists, their uttering of the personal name has no potency. Actually they do not believe in Kṛṣṇa but consider all these names to be material vibrations. Not being able to appreciate the holy name of the Lord, they simply utter indirect names like Brahman, ātmā and caitanya.

9. MĀYĀVĀDIS FALLDOWN

Bg 5.6 Purport

The Māyāvādī sannyāsīs sometimes fall down from the path of self-realization and again enter into material activities of a philanthropic and altruistic nature, which are nothing but material engagements. Therefore, the conclusion is that those who are engaged in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities are better situated than the sannyāsīs engaged in simple speculation about what is Brahman and what is not Brahman, although they too come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, after many births.

SB 10.2.32 Purport

Aside from devotees, there are many others, nondevotees, known as karmīs, jnanis or yogīs, philanthropists, altruists, politicians, impersonalists and voidists. There are many varieties of nondevotees who have their respective ways of liberation, but simply because they do not know the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet, although they falsely think that they have been liberated and elevated to the highest position, they fall down.

SB 7.13.27 Purport

The difference between the philosophy of the Māyāvādīs and that of the Vaiṣṇavas is explained herein. Both the Māyāvādīs and Vaiṣṇavas know that in materialistic activities there is no happiness. The Māyāvādī philosophers, therefore, adhering to the slogan brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā, want to refrain from false, materialistic activities. They want to stop all activities and merge in the Supreme Brahman. According to the Vaiṣṇava philosophy, however, if one simply ceases from materialistic activity one cannot remain inactive for very long, and therefore everyone should engage himself in spiritual activities, which will solve the problem of suffering in this material world. It is said, therefore, that although the Māyāvādī philosophers strive to refrain from materialistic activities and merge in Brahman, and although they may actually merge in the Brahman existence, for want of activity they fall down again into materialistic activity (āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ patanty adhaḥ). Thus the so-called renouncer, unable to remain in meditation upon Brahman, returns to materialistic activities by opening hospitals and schools and so on. Therefore, simply cultivating knowledge that materialistic activities cannot give one happiness, and that one should consequently cease from such activities, is insufficient. One should cease from materialistic activities and take up spiritual activities. Then the solution to the problem will be achieved. Spiritual activities are activities performed according to the order of Kṛṣṇa (ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam).

SB Adi 7.142

The Māyāvādī philosophers miss even the first stage in self-realization because they have no conception of God's being personal. He is the master of all, and He is the only person who can accept the service of all living entities, but since this knowledge is lacking in Māyāvāda philosophy, Māyāvādīs do not have knowledge even of their relationship with God. They wrongly think that everyone is God or that everyone is equal to God. Therefore, since the real position of the living entity is not clear to them, how can they advance further? Although they are very puffed-up at being liberated, Māyāvādī philosophers very shortly fall down again to material activities due to their neglecting the lotus feet of the Lord. That is called patanty adhaḥ.

Bg 15.1 Lecture. Bombay, October 28, 1 73

So simply to realize that “I am Brahman,” ahaṁ brahmāsmi, that is not perfection. That is aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ, uncleansed intelligence. Ye ’nye ’ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ. Simply understanding ahaṁ brahmāsmi will not help us because it is stated in the śāstra that āruhya kṛ cchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ patanty adhaḥ, even by severe austerities and penances one comes to the stage of merging into Brahman, sāyujya mukti, still, there is chance of falling down. Āruhya kṛ cchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ patanty adhaḥ. Why? Now anādṛ ta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ. One who has not realized the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛ ṣṇa, he falls down.

We have seen many big, big sannyāsīs in India, very learned scholar, and very nicely they can describe śāstra also, but they are entangled in politics. Why? If this world is mithyā, jagan mithyā, you have rejected it, then why you are again coming to politics? Why you are coming in the mithyā world? Because there is no realization. Aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ. Ye ’nye ’ravindākṣa vimukta-māninaḥ. They are thinking that “We have now become liberated,” māninaḥ. Actually, they are not liberated. Because aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ, their intelligence is not yet clear, therefore, even after severe austerities, penances, they come to the point of Brahman realization, because they have no realization of the lotus feet of Kṛ ṣṇa, they fall down. Because there is no engagement. I do not wish to name the big, big sannyāsīs of India who fell down in this way. But you know that the Māyāvādī sampradāya, they take this world as mithyā. Brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā. If jagat is mithyā, then why you come down again for philanthropic activities, for political activities? That is called māyā. That is the last snare of māyā. Māyā dictates that “Now we have failed to become minister, to president, and so many other big, big posts. Now you become Brahman.” You are already Brahman. Simply you have to realize. That’s all. That is knowledge, that I am not the... Brahman realization means that “I am not this body.” Because so long one identifies with this body, he is no better than animal. That is the first lesson. Kṛ ṣṇa says in the beginning of the Bhagavad-gītā, dehino ’smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā, tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ. Deha and dehinaḥ. So that is preliminary knowledge of Brahman realization. But if you do not fix up in your Brahman realization... That is parā-bhakti.

10. AṢṬĀṄGA YOGA

Bg 5.27-28

Shutting out all external sense objects, keeping the eyes and vision concentrated between the two eyebrows, suspending the inward and outward breaths within the nostrils, and thus controlling the mind, senses and intelligence, the transcendentalist aiming at liberation becomes free from desire, fear and anger. One who is always in this state is certainly liberated.

PURPORT

Being engaged in Kṛ ṣṇa consciousness, one can immediately understand one’s spiritual identity, and then one can understand the Supreme Lord by means of devotional service. When one is well situated in devotional service, one comes to the transcendental position, qualified to feel the presence of the Lord in the sphere of one’s activity. This particular position is called liberation in the Supreme.

After explaining the above principles of liberation in the Supreme, the Lord gives instruction to Arjuna as to how one can come to that position by the practice of the mysticism or yoga known

as aṣṭ āṅga-yoga, which is divisible into an eightfold procedure called yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi. In the Sixth Chapter the subject of yoga is explicitly detailed, and at the end of the Fifth it is only preliminarily explained. One has to drive out the sense objects such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell by the pratyāhāra process in yoga, and then keep the vision of the eyes between the two eyebrows and concentrate on the tip of the nose with half-closed lids. There is no benefit in closing the eyes altogether, because then there is every chance of falling asleep. Nor is there benefit in opening the eyes completely, because then there is the hazard of being attracted by sense objects. The breathing movement is restrained within the nostrils by neutralizing the up-moving and down-moving air within the body. By practice of such yoga one is able to gain control over the senses, refrain from outward sense objects, and thus prepare oneself for liberation in the Supreme.

This yoga process helps one become free from all kinds of fear and anger and thus feel the presence of the Supersoul in the transcendental situation. In other words, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the easiest process of executing yoga principles. This will be thoroughly explained in the next chapter. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, being always engaged in devotional service, does not risk losing his senses to some other engagement. This is a better way of controlling the senses than by the aṣṭ āṅga-yoga.

11. MYSTIC PERFECTIONS

SB 2.2.22 Purport

In the upper status of the planetary systems there are facilities thousands and thousands of times greater for material enjoyments than in the lower planetary systems. The topmost planetary systems consist of planets like Brahmāloka and Dhruvaloka (the polestar), and all of them are situated beyond Maharloka. The inhabitants of those planets are empowered with eightfold achievements of mystic perfection. They do not have to learn and practice the mystic processes of yoga perfection and achieve the power of becoming small like a particle (aṇimā-siddhi), or lighter than a soft feather (laghimā-siddhi). They do not have to get anything and everything from anywhere and everywhere (prāpti-siddhi), to become heavier than the heaviest (mahimā-siddhi), to act freely even to create something wonderful or to annihilate anything at will (īśitva-siddhi), to control all material elements (vaśitva-siddhi), to possess such power as will never be frustrated in any desire (prākāmya-siddhi), or to assume any shape or form one may even whimsically desire (kāmaśāyitā-siddhi). All these expedencies are as common as natural gifts for the inhabitants of those higher planets. They do not require any mechanical help to travel in outer space, and they can move and travel at will from one planet to any other planet within no time. The inhabitants of the earth cannot move even to the nearest planet except by mechanical vehicles like spacecraft, but the highly talented inhabitants of such higher planets can do everything very easily.

SECTION E

CONCLUSION

1. THE YOGA FOR THE AGE OF KALI

SB 11.2.4 purport

The pure devotee of the Lord, however, does not experience material misery, because he has given up the bodily concept of life and identifies himself correctly as an eternal servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. As stated by the Lord Himself in Bhagavad-gītā (9.2), *susukham kartum avyayam*. Even in the stage of regulative practice, the process of bhakti-yoga is very joyful. Similarly, Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, a near contemporary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, said, *saba avatāra sāra śiromaṇi kevala ānanda-kāṇḍa*. Although there are various kāṇḍas, or divisions, of Vedic discipline, such as karma-kāṇḍa (fruitive ceremonies) and jnana-kāṇḍa (regulated speculation), Caitanya Mahāprabhu's hari-nāma saṅkīrtana movement is kevala ānanda-kāṇḍa, the pathway of pure bliss. Simply by chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, eating the remnants of sumptuous food offered to the Supreme Lord and hearing the enchanting pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, one merges into an ocean of bliss called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

2. A PURE DEVOTEE HAS ALREADY SURPASSED ALL YOGAS

SB 10.8.45

TRANSLATION

The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are studied through the three Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the literature of Sāṅkhya-yoga, and other Vaiṣṇava literature, yet mother Yaśodā considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child.

PURPORT

As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (15.15) by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the purpose of studying the Vedas is to understand Him (*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*). Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī that there are three purposes in the Vedas. One is to understand our relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha*), another is to act according to that relationship (*abhidheya*), and the third is to reach the ultimate goal (*prayojana*). The word *prayojana* means “necessities,” and the ultimate necessity is explained by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *premā pum-artho mahān*: the greatest necessity for a human being is the achievement of love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Here we see that mother Yaśodā is on the highest stage of necessity, for she is completely absorbed in love for Kṛṣṇa.

In the beginning, the Vedic purpose is pursued in three ways (*trayī*)—by karma-kāṇḍa, jnana-kāṇḍa and upāsana-kāṇḍa. When one reaches the complete, perfect stage of upāsana-kāṇḍa, one comes to worship Nārāyaṇa, or Lord Viṣṇu. When Pārvatī asked Lord Mahādeva, Lord Śiva, what is the best method of upāsana, or worship, Lord Śiva answered, *ārādhanaṁ sarveṣāṁ viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param*. Viṣṇūpāsana, or viṣṇv-ārādhana, worship of Lord Viṣṇu, is the highest stage

of perfection, as realized by Devakī. But here mother Yaśodā performs no upāsanā, for she has developed transcendental ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore her position is better than that of Devakī. In order to show this, Śrīla Vyāsadeva enunciates this verse, trayyā copaniṣadbhiḥ etc.

When a human being enters into the study of the Vedas to obtain vidyā, knowledge, he begins to take part in human civilization. Then he advances further to study the Upaniṣads and gain brahma jnana, impersonal realization of the Absolute Truth, and then he advances still further, to sāṅkhya-yoga, in order to understand the supreme controller, who is indicated in Bhagavad-gītā (paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān/puruṣaṁ śāśvatam). When one understands that puruṣa, the supreme controller, to be Paramātmā, one is engaged in the method of yoga (dhyānāvasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yaṁ yoginaḥ). But mother Yaśodā has surpassed all these stages. She has come to the platform of loving Kṛṣṇa as her beloved child, and therefore she is accepted to be on the highest stage of spiritual realization. The Absolute Truth is realized in three features (brahmeti paramāmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate), but she is in such ecstasy that she does not care to understand what is Brahman, what is Paramātmā or what is Bhagavān. Bhagavān has personally descended to become her beloved child. Therefore there is no comparison to mother Yaśodā's good fortune, as declared by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (ramyā kācid upāsanā vrajavadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā). The Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, may be realized in different stages. As the Lord says in Bhagavad-gītā (4.11):

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

“As men surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Pṛthā.” One may be a karmī, a jnani, a yogī and then a bhakta or prema-bhakta. But the ultimate stage of realization is prema-bhakti, as actually demonstrated by mother Yaśodā.