

## CHAPTER FOUR (JNANA KARMA SANNYASA YOGA) TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE

A . In the Fourth Chapter the Lord told Arjuna that all kinds of sacrificial work culminates in knowledge. However, at the end of the Fourth Chapter, the Lord advised Arjuna to wake up and fight, being situated in perfect knowledge. Therefore by simultaneously stressing the importance of both work in devotion and inaction in knowledge, Krsna has perplexed Arjuna and confused his determination. (5.1 Purport)

(review: The last Section of Chapter Three was about controlling lust and anger because they control the knowledge of the soul, therefore they will degrade the soul because accordingly to the knowledge that one has he will act on that level. Because so much stress was given on Chapter Three on transcendental knowledge, naturally Chapter Four is entitled "Transcendental Knowledge" and it is about transcendental knowledge.)

[ A . TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT KRSNA (4. 1-10)

( Krsna's position is established as the Lord)

1 . This Bhagavad-gita was previously spoken by Krsna and later repeated by the discipic succession of saintly kings. Now, as the succession has been broken, Krsna will speak it again to Arjuna. (1-3) ]

(summary: After explaining and glorifying the importance of jnana through karma-yoga, (combining jnana and karma in Chapter Three) now Krsna is going to explain how Vivasvan who is the root of the ksatriya dynasty attained the same knowledge. Krsna is using authority to describe transcendental knowledge.

### TEXT 1

sri-bhagavan uvaca  
imam vivasvate yogam  
proktavan aham avyayam  
vivasvan manave praha  
manur iksvakave 'bravit

sri-bhagavan uvaca--the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; imam--this; vivasvate--unto the sun-god; yogam--the science of one's relationship to the Supreme; proktavan--instructed; aham--I; avyayam--imperishable; vivasvan--Vivasvan (the sun-god's name); manave--unto the father of mankind (of the name Vaivasvata); praha--told; manuh--the father of man iksvakave--unto King Ikshvaku; abravit--said.

### TRANSLATION

**The Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvaku.**

#### TEXT 2

evam parampara-praptam  
imam rajarsayo viduh  
sa kaleneha mahata  
yogo nastah parantapa

evam--thus; parampara--by disciplic succession; praptam--received; imam--this science; raja-rsayah--the saintly kings; viduh--understood; sah--that knowledge; kalena--in the course of time; iha--in this world; mahata--great; yogah--the science of one's relationship with the Supreme; nastah--scattered; parantapa--O Arjuna, subduer of the enemies.

#### TRANSLATION

**This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it appears to be lost.**

(cn) Why is this science, which is so valuable, of transcendental knowledge being now spoken to Arjuna? The next verse describes:

#### TEXT 3

sa evayam maya te 'dya  
yogah proktah puratanah  
bhakto 'si me sakha ceti  
rahasyam hy etad uttamam

sah--the same; eva--certainly; ayam--this; maya--by Me; te--unto you; adya--today; yogah--the science of yoga; proktah--spoken; puratanah--very old; bhaktah--devotee; asi--you are; me--My; sakha--friend; ca--also; iti--therefore; rahasyam--mystery; hi--certainly; etad--this; uttamam--transcendental.

#### TRANSLATION

**That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.**

(cn) It is also explained in the 15th Chapter that only a devotee can understand this science.

[ 2 . Krsna can remember speaking Bhagavad-gita in a previous birth because He is the unborn Lord who possesses a transcendental body that never deteriorates. (4-6) ]

Arjuna asks Krsna a question, he has a doubt.

#### TEXT 4

arjuna uvaca  
aparam bhavato janma  
param janma vivasvatah  
katham etad vijaniyam  
tvam adau proktavan iti

arjunah uvaca--Arjuna said; aparam- junior; bhavatah--Your; janma--birth; param--superior; janma--birth; vivasvatah--of the sun-god; katham--how; etad--this; vijaniyam--shall I understand; tvam--You; adau--in the beginning; proktavan--instructed; iti--thus.

#### TRANSLATION

**Arjuna said: The sun-god Vivasvan is senior by birth to You. How am I to understand that in the beginning You instructed this science to him?**

(cn) This doubt of something that seems impossible by material calculation that Vivasvan is thousands of thousands of thousands of years old whereas Krsna was born within the memory of Arjuna, so how could Krsna have instructed this science to Vivasvan so long ago?

This "acintya" or inconceivable fact that Arjuna asks Krsna about leads to Krsna deepen the transcendental knowledge that He is going to reveal to Arjuna. The first aspect of transcendental knowledge that Krsna explained to Arjuna was how one receives it? And the answer is: in disciplic succession.

Now Arjuna is asking Krsna how is it possible that He explained this science to Vivasvan, because he is senior to birth than Krsna? And Krsna explains:

#### TEXT 5

sri-bhagavan uvaca  
bahuni me vyatitani  
janmani tava carjuna  
tany aham veda sarvani  
na tvam vettha parantapa

sri-bhagavan uvaca--the Personality of Godhead said; bahuni--many; me--of Mine; vyatitani--have passed; janmani--births; tava--of yours; ca--and also; arjuna--O Arjuna; tani--those; aham--I; veda--do know; sarvani--all; na--not; tvam--you; vettha--know; parantapa--O subduer of the enemy.

### TRANSLATION

**The Personality of Godhead said: Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!**

(cn) Here is the start, in this Section, of the intimate knowledge about Krsna. And Krsna calls Arjuna "O subduer of the enemy - parantapa", but another meaning of "parantapa" is "one who gives to others". Arjuna is giving "the others", the opportunity to hear this transcendental knowledge, by asking that question.

Krsna has taken many births but because His body is different from the living entities' bodies. The living entities take many births but they don't remember them whereas Krsna remembers, because He doesn't change His transcendental body.

Here comes transcendental knowledge about Krsna and His body which is non-different from Him:

### TEXT 6

ajo 'pi sann avyayatma  
bhutanam isvaro 'pi san  
prakrtim svam adhisthaya  
sambhavamy atma-mayaya

ajah--unborn; api--although; san--being so; avyaya--without deterioration; atma--body; bhutanam--of all those who are born; isvarah--the Supreme Lord; api--although; san--being so; prakrtim--in the transcendental form; svam--of Myself; adhisthaya--being so situated; sambhavami--I do incarnate; atma-mayaya--by My internal energy.

### TRANSLATION

**Although I am unborn and My transcendental body never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all living entities, I still appear in every millennium in My original transcendental form.**

(cn) Krsna explains why He appears and the word is "atma-mayaya". This word has many meanings: one of them is "by My internal potency" because Krsna's birth is not ordinary, He is not appearing by force, He is not under the modes of material nature by is appearing by His internal energy "atma-mayaya". Another meaning of "atma-mayaya" is that He is appearing by His mercy, because He desires it. Like the sun appears, it doesn't take birth and it has an orbit. Similarly Krsna, He comes and He goes according to His desire, by His internal energy, by His mercy, and He is not taking birth like an ordinary living being.

Krsna is "ajo' pi sann avyayatma", He is "ajo" like the living entity also is - He is unborn. He is like the living entity, unborn, but He is "avyaya", His birth is different because His body is underiorated like that of the living entity. Here it begins to explain how Krsna is different from the living entity. Krsna doesn't take His birth under karma, because He is "isvara" He is the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada in the "Teachings of Queen Kunti", very nicely explains something about Krsna's birth: "Now the Lord comes to deliver the devotees, "paritranaya sadhunam..." but He clear states in Bhagavad-gita 14.26 that a devotee transcends the material qualities "sagunam samatityatam".(the devotee is in the transcendental position because he is no longer under the control of three modes of material nature. But if a devotee or sadhu, is already delivered because he is free from the modes of material nature, being on the transcendental platform, then where is the necessity for Krsna's descending to deliver him?)."The question may arise...", Srila Prabhupada explains..."that the Lord comes to deliver the devotee but the Lord is already delivered. The answer to this contradiction is that a sadhu, a devotee does not require deliverence but because he is very much anxious to see the Supreme Lord face to face, Krsna comes not to deliver him from the clutches of matter, from which he has already been delivered, but to satisfy his inner desire. Just as the devotee wants to satisfy the Lord in all respects, the Lord even more wants satisfy the devotee. Such are the exchanges of loving affairs." Krsna comes to engage in pastimes with His devotees and this is a very sweet way of understanding. It is also explained that Krsna comes just because He feels like it, it is His independent desire and it is His mercy upon the I entity.

[ 3 . Krsna advents Himself whenever religion declines and irreligion rises. He delivers the pious, annihilates the miscreants, and re-establishes religion. (7-8) ]

Now the next question is : when does Krsna come? And the answer is: according to His whim,

#### TEXT 7

yada yada hi dharmasya  
glanir bhavati bharata  
abhyutthanam adharmasya  
tadatmanam srijamy aham

yada yada--whenever and wherever; hi--certainly; dharmasya--of religion;  
glanih--discrepancies; bhavati--become manifested; bharata--O descendant of Bharata;

abhyutthanam--predominance; adharmasya-of irreligion; tada-at that time; atmanam--self; srjami--manifest; aham--I.

## TRANSLATION

**Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion--at that time I descend Myself.**

(cn) The word isn't "born" is "He appears", "bhavati" (He appears to take birth).  
And why does Krsna appear?

## TEXT 8

paritrāyā sadhūnam  
vīnāśā ca dūṣkṛtām  
dharma-samsthāpanārthāya  
sambhāvāmi yuge yuge

paritrāyā--for the deliverance; sadhūnam--of the devotees; vīnāśā--for the annihilation; ca--and; dūṣkṛtām--of the miscreants; dharma--principles of religion; samsthāpanā-arthāya--to reestablish; sambhāvāmi--I do appear; yuge--millennium; yuge--after millennium.

## TRANSLATION

**To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium.**

[ 4 . One who actually knows the nature of Krsna's birth and activities attains Krsna's abode. Freed from attachment, fear and anger, many persons have become purified and have attained love for Krsna, by being fully absorbed in Krsna. (9-10) ]

## TEXT 9

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

janma--birth; karma--work; ca--also; me--of Mine; divyam--transcendental; evam--like this; yah--anyone who; vetti--knows; tattvatah--in reality; tyaktva--leaving aside; deham--this body; punah--again; janma--birth; na--never; eti--does attain; mam--unto Me; eti--does attain; sah--he; arjuna--O Arjuna.

## TRANSLATION

**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.**

(cn) This is the result of knowing what was just said.

This verse not only explains one result (liberation) but next text explains another result.

## TEXT 10

vita-raga-bhaya-krodha  
man-maya mam upasritah  
bahavo jnana-tapasa  
puta mad-bhavam agatah

vita--freed from; raga--attachment; bhaya--fear; krodhah--and anger; mat-maya--fully in Me; mam--in Me; upasritah--being fully situated; bahavah--many; jnana--of knowledge; tapasa--by the penance; putah--being purified; mat-bhavam--transcendental love for Me; agatah--attained.

## TRANSLATION

**Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me--and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.**

(cn) Beyond liberation is this stage of attaining transcendental love for Krsna (puta mad-bhavam agatah).

This verse is very interesting. Without knowledge of Krsna how can one become absorbed in Krsna? One must know about Krsna, hear about Him, one must have transcendental knowledge about Krsna. And this transcendental knowledge is far beyond the transcendental knowledge that we are not this body that we spiritual soul. And when one has this knowledge of Krsna he becomes purified (puta mad-bhavam agatah) and attains transcendental nature and love for Him.

Each step here is wonderful. Being free from material attachment, material fears, material anger. This was described in the covering of the soul - lust and anger. Attachments, passion and ignorance, and fear. When one is free from these things due to transcendental knowledge he becomes fully absorbed in Krsna and then thinking about Krsna he surrenders to Him, he takes shelter or refuge in Him - these are the points of the verse. And by doing that, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Krsna. Constantly,

just simply taking refuge and shelter of Krsna, the result of that, being purified and taking shelter of Krsna and always thinking about Krsna, being absorbed in Him this is "mad-bhavam agatah" - one attains transcendental love for Krsna.

[ B . TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE APPLIED TO WORK (4. 11-15)

1 . Everyone ultimately surrenders to Krsna, for it is Krsna that is awarding fruits of work. (11-12) ]

(cn) Now in this Section is about how to apply this transcendental knowledge. We have heard that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Every verse where Krsna speaks starts by "Sri Bhagavan uvaca". "Van" means the "possessor" and "Bhaga" means "all opulence and fortune". Krsna possesses all opulence and fortune because He is the Supreme Lord.

Now Krsna explains something interesting. We have just heard that one who takes refuge in Krsna attains transcendental love for Him, because that is what they want, they are devotees. But what happens if one takes shelter of Krsna but doesn't want attain transcendental love for Him? Some people do that, they want to achieve liberation, they want material things..., do they get transcendental love for Krsna?

Krsna answers,

#### TEXT 11

ye yatha mam prapadyante  
tams tathaiva bhajamy aham  
mama vartmanuvartante  
manusyah partha sarvasah

ye--all who; yatha--as; mam--unto Me; prapadyante--surrender; tan--them; tatha--so; eva--certainly; bhajami--reward; aham--I; mama--My; vartma--path; anuvartante--follow; manusyah--all men; partha--O son of Prtha; sarvasah--in all respects.

#### TRANSLATION

**As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prtha.**

(cn) The devotees who worship Krsna with love who want Krsna, who love Krsna - they go to Goloka-Vrndavana. And the mayavadis who think that Krsna's form and activities are not eternal, but they worship Him - they are given to Mayadevi for repeated birth and death (according to Viswanath C. Thakura). And the brahmavadis who are different from the mayavadis, because they worship Krsna, they accept Krsna's form as eternal, but they worship Him to get to Brahman which they think it is higher than Krsna - by Krsna's mercy they go to the Brahman.

Knowing all these factors, that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord and He can give one what he wants, why is it that some people don't surrender to Kṛṣṇa? Why don't they worship Kṛṣṇa?

## TEXT 12

kanksantah karmanam siddhim  
yajanta iha devatah  
ksipram hi manuse loke  
siddhir bhavati karma-ja

kanksantah--desiring; karmanam--of fruitive activities; siddhim--perfection; yajante--they worship by sacrifices; iha--in the material world; devatah--the demigods; ksipram--very quickly; hi--certainly; manuse--in human society; loke--within this world; siddhih--success; bhavati--comes; karma-ja--from fruitive work.

## TRANSLATION

**Men in this world desire success in fruitive activities, and therefore they worship the demigods. Quickly, of course, men get results from fruitive work in this world.**

(cn) When one worships Kṛṣṇa for material things, he will get material things for sure but, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He will purify his heart. But purification takes some time and people don't want that, therefore when they want their material things they worship the demigods because the results are quickly achieved. That is the difference between karma-kanda and sakama karma because in this last stage people have some transcendental knowledge and even though they have material desires, they worship Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu or the Vedic system.

(cn) Different people worship Kṛṣṇa for different reasons and Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, Iṣvara the "Controller of everything", therefore He is controlling everyone's desires. So is Kṛṣṇa who is controlling everyone and making one person a good devotee, another person a bad devotee, another person a worst materialist..., is that Kṛṣṇa? Is that the kind of Supreme Lord He is? Kṛṣṇa first had described that He is the One who gives the fruits of everyone's work ultimately. But now a very interesting question about what Kṛṣṇa's relationship to one's karma is. Although He is giving the fruit of work, is He who gives everyone the desire too? To address this question Kṛṣṇa says:

[ 2. Although Kṛṣṇa creates the varṇasrama system according to the modes and their accompanying work (so that people can attain the fruits of work that they desire), He is beyond the system. No work affects Him nor does He aspire the fruits. (13-14) ]

## TEXT 13

catur-varnyam maya srstam  
guna-karma-vibhagasah  
tasya kartaram api mam  
viddhy akartaram avyayam

catur-varnyam--the four divisions of human society; maya--by Me; srstam--created; guna--of quality; karma--and work; vibhagasah--in terms of division; tasya--of that; kartaram--the father; api--although; mam--Me; viddhi--you may know; akartaram--as the non-doer; avyayam--unchangeable.

## TRANSLATION

**According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.**

(cn) This means that the varnasrama system which is the Vedic system, basically what we heard in the beginning of Chapter Three, is set up to raise someone from the karma-kanda consciousness, where one has material desires, to niskarma. It is a system that was created for that purpose. It is Krsna's system, He created it, but how one fits in that system - that He doesn't create. That is according to the desires of the living entity, "ye yatha mam prapadyante". Krsna is just simply reacting to people's desires, therefore He is impartial in the awarding of the results of people's activities. This explains when Krsna says: "although I am the creator of this system you should know that I am yet the non-doer". Krsna is saying: "I just created this system that awards people's results of their activities but I am the non-doer I don't myself award them the fruits of their work, it is the system that I set up."

Krsna's explanation that He is "unchangeable" it is a technical fact why He has to explain that. Because according to "Nyaya philosophy" if one reacts with something, if I am the one involved in his life awarding the fruits of his labor, because I am dealing with him directly therefore there must be some transformation, some change in me - because I am reacting to what he does and giving him something. Therefore Krsna says: "I am the non-doer and I am unchangeable", because He is aloof.

Krsna has done something very tricky, but it is somewhat in the "acyntia bhedabhedha" principle. He said: "I am the Supreme controller, I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead but yet I am not responsible to what happens to you". It is like this because ultimately we have to take responsibility for what happens to us, even though everything depends on Krsna. It is a very tricky position and a very subtle point what Krsna is doing here. He is saying that He is the Supreme Lord and everything is under His control, yet He is giving us the responsibility, because He is giving us **free will**.

Then Krsna explains His "non-doership" by using the words "viddhy akartaram". He is the "akarta". "Karta" means 'doer'. Later on Krsna explains "prakrti kryamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah, ahankara vimudhatma **kartaham** iti manyate" - 'a person who is bewildered by

the three modes of material nature thinks **kartaham** 'I am the doer'. Krsna says: "If you think that you are the doer you are a **vimudha**, you are bewildered!" But yet Krsna is saying here that He is not the doer either. Krsna is not the doer, the living entity is not the doer, so who is doing everything? This point is very tricky and gets debated again and again in the vedic system. Krsna sometimes takes one side and sometimes the other side and by the time we reach the 18th Chapter we will understand why.

#### TEXT 14

na mam karmani limpanti  
na me karma-phale sprha  
iti mam yo 'bhijanati  
karmabhir na sa badhyate

na--never; mam--Me; karmani--all kinds of work; limpanti--do affect; na--nor; me--My; karma-phale--in fruitive action; sprha--aspiration; iti--thus; mam--Me; yah--one who; abhijanati--does know; karmabhir--by the reaction of such work; na--never; sah--he; badhyate--becomes entangled.

#### TRANSLATION

**There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work.**

(cn) In this verse, Krsna explains His 'nondoership'. How He acts but doesn't act, and why He is like that. And He explains it because He has non-attachments and impartiality. Because He is impartial, He is not bound and He is not changed by anything He does. Anyone who knows Krsna like this, who understands Krsna's position - this is applying transcendental knowledge to work, helping one understand Krsna's position - anyone who understands this, **karmabhir na sa badhyate**, he also doesn't become entangled in the fruits of his work. In other words, he also becomes liberated. Practically speaking he understands Krsna is the Lord, he is detached and he worships Krsna and he is never entangled in the reactions or the fruits of the work.

All the work is going on by karma, which means the desires of the living entities. But Krsna says "I have no desires, therefore I am engaged in so many activities, **paritranaya sadhunam** ... but it is completely desireless. And because there is no desires attached to My work therefore I am unbound by My work and everyone who understands My position as being comp aloof from everything, he also doesn't become bound by work.

And finally the last verse in this Section,

[ 3 . Knowing Krsna as the awarder of the results of all work and as the transcendental creator of varnasrama, all liberated souls acted without becoming entangled. Arjuna should perform his duty and fight for Krsna, but with detachment. (15) ]

#### TEXT 15

evam jnatva krtam karma  
purvair api mumuksubhih  
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam  
purvaiḥ purvataram krtam

evam--thus; jnatva--knowing well; krtam--was performed; karma--work; purvaiḥ--by past authorities; api--indeed; mumuksubhih--who attained liberation; kuru--just perform; karma--prescribed duty; eva--certainly; tasmāt--therefore; tvam--you; purvaiḥ--by the predecessors; purva-taram--in ancient times; krtam--as performed.

#### TRANSLATION

**All the liberated souls in ancient times acted with this understanding of My transcendental nature. Therefore you should perform your duty, following in their footsteps.**

(cn) Knowing Krsna's position and acting for Him - therefore Arjuna should fight. But he should fight in knowledge about Krsna's position that Krsna wants him to fight. But yet Krsna is not like some clever politician instigating the fight to have his own ends met, because He said He is aloof, and He is not attached to the fruit of the work, therefore unlike the politician, He is unbounded by His actions and His position is completely transcendental. If one does his duty with understanding, he will attain liberation.

[ C . NISKAMA KARMA-YOGA.

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO WORK AS A SACRIFICE (4. 16-24)

Acts serving Krsna are akarma, actions without reactions. A person acting with mind and intelligence free from sense gratification, without a sense of proprietorship, attai sinful reactions. Free from dualities and envy, satisfied in both success and failure, one will attain the spiritual kin Thus Krsna has explained how karma can be seen as jnana. ]

(Understanding karma on the platform of transcendental knowledge)

(cn) This Section is quite tricky and maybe a little more philosophical than the rest of this Chapter.

#### TEXT 16

kim karma kim akarmeti  
kavayo 'py atra mohitah  
tat te karma pravaksyami

yaj jnatva moksyase 'subhat

kim--what is; karma--action; kim--what is; akarma--inaction; iti--thus; kavayah--the intelligent; api--also; atra--in this matter; mohitah--are bewildered; tat--that; te--unto you; karma--work; pravaksyami--I shall explain; yat--which; jnatva--knowing; moksyase--you will be liberated; asubhat--from ill fortune.

### TRANSLATION

**Even the intelligent are bewildered in determining what is action and what is inaction. Now I shall explain to you what action is, knowing which you shall be liberated from all misfortune.**

(cn) The discussion has been about who is the actor or the doer. Now Krsna is going to explain that.

### TEXT 17

karmano hy api boddhavyam  
boddhavyam ca vikarmanah  
akarmanas ca boddhavyam  
gahana karmano gatih

karmanah--of work; hi--certainly; api--also; boddhavyam--should be understood; boddhavyam--should be understood; ca--also; vikarmanah--of forbidden work; akarmanah--of inaction; ca--also; boddhavyam--should be understood; gahana--very difficult; karmanah--of work; gatih--entrance.

### TRANSLATION

**The intricacies of action are very hard to understand. Therefore one should know properly what action is, what forbidden action is, and what inaction is.**

(cn) This is jnana.

In his Purport, Srila Prabhupada says: " To understand Krsna consciousness and action according to its modes, one has to learn one's relationship with the Supreme; i.e., one who has learned perfectly knows that every living entity is an eternal servitor of the Lord and that consequently one has to act in Krsna consciousness. The entire Bhagavad-gita is directed to this conclusion. Any other conclusions, against this consciousness and its attendant actions, are vikarmas, or prohibited actions. To understand all this one has to associate with

authorities in Krsna consciousness and learn the secret from them; this is as good as learning from the Lord directly. Otherwise, even the most intelligent persons will be bewildered."

The issue that has been raised here is 'what one does that brings reactions?'. 'How to act and not get any reaction for one's activities?' Determining what action produces reaction and what action is as good as inaction it is the question here.

There are three main sanskrit words in this verse: **karma**, **vikarma** and **akarma**. **Karma** is working with attachment and the result is that one gets reaction. It is working according with the scriptures - it is karma-kanda. **Vikarma** it is working against the scriptures, it is prohibited work - one gets a bad reaction for that. Then there is **akarma** which Krsna uses here to define no reaction and no work on the material level.

### TEXT 18

karmany akarma yah pasyed  
akarmani ca karma yah  
sa buddhi man manusyesu  
sa yukta krt-sna-karma-krt

karmani--in action; akarma--inaction; yah--one who; pasyet--observes; akarmani--in inaction; ca--also; karma--fruitive action; yah--one who; sah--he; buddhi-man--is intelligent; manusyesu--in human society; sah--he; yukta--is in the transcendental position; krt-sna-karma-krt--although engaged in all activities.

### TRANSLATION

**One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is intelligent among men, and he is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities.**

(cn) When one is in Krsna consciousness, the soul acts but the modes of material nature don't work - such a person is actually working (akarma).

Action in inaction means that when someone is working, the modes are working actually.

When the soul is acting, not the material modes, there is no reaction - this is akarma.

When there is action of the material nature and for the soul there is no activity, then there is reaction - this is karma.

Superficially they look the same it is hard to tell the difference without proper knowledge. Arjuna's fighting is inaction, akarma because the soul is acting not the modes of material nature. But when Duryodhana is fighting that is karma, the modes of material modes are acting not the soul.

### TEXT 19

yasya sarve samarambhah  
kama-sankalpa- varjitah  
jnana-agni-dagdha-karmanam  
tam ahuh panditam budhah

yasya--one whose; sarve--all sorts of; samarambhah--attempts; kama--based on desire for sense gratification; sankalpa--determination; varjitah--are devoid of; jnana--of perfect knowledge; agni--by the fire; dagdha--burned; karmanam--whose work; tam--him; ahuh--declare; panditam--learned; budhah--those who know.

### TRANSLATION

**One is understood to be in full knowledge whose every endeavor is devoid of desire for sense gratification. He is said by sages to be a worker for whom the reactions of work have been burned up by the fire of perfect knowledge.**

(cn) What makes a person akarma? When he has no desires for sense gratification. That is niskama karma, but what makes it bhakti is in addition to not desire sense gratification for himself, is his desire to please Krsna.

Texts 20 to 24 describe this akarma work.

#### TEXT 20

tyaktva karma-phalasangam  
nitya-trpto nirasrayah  
karmany abhipravrtto 'pi  
naiva kincit karoti sah

tyaktva--having given up; karma-phala-asangam--attachment for fruitive results; nitya--always; trptah--being satisfied; nirasrayah--without any shelter; karmani--in activity; abhipravrttah--being fully engaged; api--in spite of; na--does not; eva--certainly; kincit--anything; karoti--do; sah--he.

### TRANSLATION

**Abandoning all attachment to the results of his activities, ever satisfied and independent, he performs no fruitive action, although engaged in all kinds of undertakings.**

#### TEXT 21

nirasir yata-cittatma  
tyakta-sarva-parigraha  
sariram kevalam karma  
kurvan napnoti kilbisam

nirasih--without desire for the result; yata--controlled; citta- atma--mind and intelligence; tyakta--giving up; sarva--all; parigraha--sense of proprietorship over possessions; sariram--in keeping body and soul together; kevalam--only; karma--work; kurvan--doing; na--never; apnoti--does acquire; kilbisam--sinful reactions.

## TRANSLATION

**Such a man of understanding acts with mind and intelligence perfectly controlled, gives up all sense of proprietorship over his possessions, and acts only for the bare necessities of life. Thus working, he is not affected by sinful reactions.**

### TEXT 22

yadrccha-labha-santusto  
dvandvatito vimatsarah  
samah siddhau asiddhau ca  
krtvapi na nibadhyate

yadrccha--out of its own accord; labha--with gain; santustah--satisfied; dvandva--duality; atitah--surpassed; vimatsarah--free from envy; samah--steady; siddhau--in success; asiddhau--failure; ca--also; krtva--doing; api--although; na--never; nibadhyate--becomes affected.

## TRANSLATION

**He who is satisfied with gain which comes of its own accord, who is free from duality and does not envy, who is steady in both success and failure, is never entangled, although performing actions.**

### TEXT 23

gata-sangasya muktasya  
jnanavasthita-cetasah  
yajnayacaratah karma  
samagram praviliyate

gata-sangasya--of one unattached to the modes of material nature; muktasya--of the liberated; jnana-avasthita--situated in transcendence; cetasah--whose wisdom; yajnaya--for the sa Yajna (Krsna); acaratah--acting; karma--work; samagram--in total; praviliyate--merges entirely.

## TRANSLATION

**The work of a man who is unattached to the modes of material nature and who is fully situated in transcendental knowledge merges entirely into transcendence.**

(cn) And here is the summary of akarma work:

### TEXT 24

brahmarpanam brahma havir  
brahmagnau brahmana hutam  
brahmaiva tena gantavyam  
brahma-karma-samadhina

brahma--spiritual in nature; arpanam--contribution; brahma--the Supreme; havih--butter; brahma--spiritual; agnau--in the fire of consummation; brahmana--by the spirit soul; hutam--offered; brahma--spiritual kingdom; eva--certainly; tena--by him; gantavyam--to be reached; brahma--spiritual; karma--in activities; samadhina--by complete absorption.

## TRANSLATION

**A person who is fully absorbed in Krsna consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature.**

(cn) Such a person's work becomes 'sacrifice'. One's work becomes absolute by offering it to the Supreme Lord.

Thus ends the Section explaining karma in the mood of jnana.

**Question:** It is only devotional action that is akarma or there is something else?

**Answer:** Any work that is performed dutifully without attachment is akarma, niskama karma also. What brings reactions is the attachment in one's activities. That is why passion, which brings attachment, is an enemy and that is what binds one to the fruits or reactions. Detached work brings no reaction.

**Question:** You said that real activity comes from the soul so how can one understand that the modes of material nature are acting, because they are matter?

**Answer:** There are three things with the possibility of being the doer. Krsna has already said that He is not the doer, He just create the system - the law of karma. In that system the living entity is present. And Krsna said also if the living entity thinks he is the doer, he is in illusion. So that leaves the doership to the modes of material nature. But as you are pointing out, the modes of material nature are unconscious, so how can they be the doer? Therefore the answer could be that no one is doing anything. Is that a fact?

The modes of material nature have a presiding deity but they they are unconscious - it is 'pradhana' it is just matter.

One can also answer that the living entity is the doer because he gives the 'impulse' through his desire. But Srila Prabhupada has already said that the desire is a subtle form of conditioning. Therefore one's impulses are also conditioned by the modes of material nature - therefore goes back to the modes being the doer.

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana and other acaryas explain that the living entity is actually the doer but not the only doer - but he has to take responsibility for himself. But one tends to think that he is the only doer: 'because of my great effort, my power, I have done so much!' To stop us from thinking like that Krsna explains that such a person is just bewildered, in illusion. But actually the impulse is coming from his desires.

Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana explains that if the living entity has no freedom of doership than what would be the use of vedic injunctions instructing him to do one thing to go to heaven or another thing to get his desires, and so on... He uses the Vedas to prove that the living entities have free will and doership. But he is not the only doer, that is the point.

[ D . SACRIFICES PROPERLY PERFORMED LEAD TO TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE. (4. 25-33)

1 . Some yogis perfectly worship the demigods through sacrifices, and others sacrifice to Brahman. To control the mind, some sacrifice their hearing, their senses, or their breath. Some sacrifice their possessions, perform severe austerities, practice yoga, or study the Vedas. All who sacrifice advance towards the Supreme. These sacrifices approved by the Vedas suit different workers. Knowing this, one becomes liberated. (25-32) ]

(cn) REVIEW: Krsna has explained how to do one's work as a sacrifice through this niskama karma. In Text 24 He said:

"A person who is fully absorbed in Krsna consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature." Krsna is describing in this verse work as a sacrifice. And the result of that type of work is association with Krsna and is on the platform of knowledge.

Now, Krsna is going to explain others sacrifices, other austerities, other activities from the Vedas, other systems that ultimately will end in knowledge.

#### TEXT 25

daivam evapare yajnam  
yoginah paryupasate  
brahmagnav apare yajnam  
yajnenai vopajuhvati

daivam--in worshiping the demigods; eva--like this; apare--some others; yajnam--sacrifices; yoginah--mystics; paryupasate--worship perfectly; brahma--of the Absolute Truth; agnau--in the fire; apare--others; yajnam--sacrifice; yajnena--by sacrifice; eva--thus; vopajuhvati--offer.

## TRANSLATION

**Some yogis perfectly worship the demigods by offering different sacrifices to them, and some of them offer sacrifices in the fire of the Supreme Brahman.**

(cn) Krsna says that the worship of the demigods as if they were Supreme, as if they were the ultimate suppliers of all the necessities, that worship is for the less intelligent. But one who perfectly worships the demigods understanding that they are just part of Krsna, they are empowered by Krsna to supply all the necessities of life, such a worshiper can actually worship Krsna through the demigods - that is actually the proper way for one involved in demigod's worship.

To perfect worship the demigods means to worship them as Maharaja Bharata did. When Maharaja Bharata used to worship the demigods he would actually feel transcendental energy, ecstasy, because he wouldn't worship them separated from the Supreme Lord, but he would worship them as part of the Lord's virata rupa.

### TEXT 26

srotradi ni driyany anye  
samyama gnisu juhvati  
sabdadin visayan anya  
indriyagnisu juhvati

srotra-adini--such as the hearing process; indriyani--senses; anye--others; samyama--of restraint; agnisu--in the fires; juhvati--offer; sabda-adin--sound vibration, etc.; visayan--objects of sense gratification; anye--others; indriya--of the sense organs; agnisu--in the fires; juhvati--they sacrifice.

## TRANSLATION

**Some [the unadulterated brahmacaris] sacrifice the hearing process and the senses in the fire of mental control, and others [the regulated householders] sacrifice the objects of the senses in the fire of the senses.**

(cn) In his Purport, Srila Prabhupada gives interesting details:

"The members of the four divisions of human life, namely the brahmacari, the grhastha, the vanaprastha and the sannyasi, are all meant to become perfect yogis or transcendentalists. Since human life is not meant for our enjoying sense gratification like the animals, the four orders of human life are so arranged that one may become perfect in spiritual life. The brahmacaris, or students under the care of a bona fide spiritual master, control the mind by abstaining from sense gratification. A brahmacari hears only words concerning Krsna consciousness; hearing is the basic principle for understanding, and therefore the pure brahmacari engages fully in namanukirtanam--chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord. He restrains himself from the vibrations of material sounds, and his

hearing is engaged in the transcendental sound vibrati Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna. Similarly, the householders, who have some license for sense gratification, perform such acts with great restraint. Sex life, intoxication and meat-eating are general tendencies of human society, but a regulated householder does not indulge in unrestricted sex life and other sense gratification. Marriage on the principles of religious life is therefore current in all civilized human society because th the way for restricted sex life. This restricted, unattache life is also a kind of yajna because the restricted householder sacrifices his general tendency toward sense gratification for higher, transcendental life."

#### TEXT 27

sarvani-indriya-karmani  
prana-karmani capare  
atma-samyama-yogagnau  
juhvati jnana-dipite

sarvani--of all; indriya--the senses; karmani--functions; prana- karmani--functions of the life breath; ca--also; apare--others; atma-samyama--of controlling the mind; yoga--the linking process; agnau--in the fire of; juhvati--offer; jnana-dipite--because of the urge for self-realization.

#### TRANSLATION

**Others, who are interested in achieving self-realization through control of the mind and senses, offer the functions of all the senses, and of the life breath, as oblations into the fire of the controlled mind.**

(cn) This one is Patanjali-yoga.

#### TEXT 28

dravya-yajnas tapo-yajna  
yoga-yajnas tathapare  
svadhyaya-jnana-yajnas ca  
yatayah samsita-vratah

dravya-yajnah--sacrificing one's possessions; tapah-yajnah--sacrifice in austerities; yoga-yajnah--sacrifice in eightfold mysticism; tatha--thus; apare--others; svadhyaya--sacrifice in the study of the Vedas; jnana-yajnah--sacrifice in advancement of transcendental knowledge; ca--also; yatayah--enlightened persons; samsita-vratah--taken to strict vows.

#### TRANSLATION

Having accepted strict vows, some become enlightened by sacrificing their possessions, and others by performing severe austerities, by practicing the yoga of eightfold mysticism, or by studying the Vedas to advance in transcendental knowledge.

#### TEXT 29

apane juhvati pranam  
prane 'panam tathapare  
pranapana-gati ruddhva  
pranayama-parayanah  
apare niyataharah  
pranan pranesu juhvati

apane--in the air which acts downward; juhvati--offer; pranam--the air which acts outward; prane--in the air going outward; apanam--the air going downward; tatha--as also; apare--others; prana--of the air going outward; apana--and the air going downward; gati--the movement; ruddhva--checking; prana- ayama--trance induced by stopping all breathing; parayanah--so inclined; apare--others; niyata--having controlled; aharah--eating; pranan--the outgoing air; pranesu--in the outgoing air; juhvati--sacrifice.

#### TRANSLATION

**Still others, who are inclined to the process of breath restraint to remain in trance, practice by offering the movement of the outgoing breath into the incoming, and the incoming breath into the outgoing, and thus at last remain in trance, stopping all breathing. Others, curtailing the eating process, offer the outgoing breath into itself as a sacrifice.**

(cn) This are technical forms of practicing 'astanga-yoga'(or the 'pranayama' section or the 'breath control' section). They are all meant to be sacrifices or offerings of one kind or another to the Lord. But people don't generally think of them like that. Here Krsna is going to explain them in the context of transcendental knowledge in a moment.

Here Krsna begins to sum-up all these types of sacrifice,their purpose and their result.

#### TEXT 30

sarve 'py ete yajna-vido  
yajna-ksapita-kalmasah  
yajna-sistamrta-bhujo  
yanti brahma sanatanam

sarve--all; api--although apparently different; ete--these; yajna-vidah--conversant with the purpose of performing sacrifices; yajna-ksapita--being cleansed as the result of such performances; kalmasah--of sinful reactions; yajna-sista--of the result of such performances of yajna; amrta-bhujah--those who have tasted such nectar; yanti--do approach; brahma--the supreme; sanatanam--eternal atmosphere.

### TRANSLATION

**All these performers who know the meaning of sacrifice become cleansed of sinful reactions, and, having tasted the nectar of the results of sacrifices, they advance toward the supreme eternal atmosphere.**

(cn) One who performs sacrifice properly, who knows actually the meaning or purpose of sacrifice: (1) they become free from sinful reactions, and (2) while tasting the nectar or sweetness of that freedom from sinful reactions, they advance towards the Supreme Lord.

### TEXT 31

nayam loko 'sty ayajnyasya  
kuto 'nyah kuru-sattama

na--never; ayam--this; lokah--planet; asti--there is; ayajnyasya--for one who performs no sacrifice; kutah--where is; anyah--the other; kuru-sat-tama--O best amongst the Kurus.

### TRANSLATION

**O best of the Kuru dynasty, without sacrifice one can never live happily on this planet or in this life: what then of the next?**

### TEXT 32

evam bahu-vidha yajna  
vitata brahmano mukhe  
karma-jan viddhi tan sarvan  
evam jnatva vimoksyase

evam--thus; bahu-vidhah--various kinds of; yajnah--sacrifices; vitatah--are spread; brahmanah--of the Vedas; mukhe--through the mouth; karma-jan--born of work; viddhi--you should know; tan--them; sarvan--all; evam--thus; jnatva--knowing; vimoksyase--you will be liberated.

### TRANSLATION

**All these different types of sacrifice are approved by the Vedas, and all of them are born of different types of work. Knowing them as such, you will become liberated.**

## PURPORT

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

(cn) The basic principle is that human life is meant for advancement in spiritual life and the process of advancing is sacrificing. We have learnt of this in the 3rd Chapter when one is performing the karma-kanda, sacrifices recommended in the Vedas - he is working and he is getting the results of his work and he doesn't try to use all for his own sense pleasure, but rather he offers back to the demigods. And Krsna that one who doesn't offer back in sacrifice something that he has, some ability, some fruit of his work, etc, if one just lives selfishly - in the 3rd Chapter says that he lives in vain. And over he Text 31, "without sacrifice one can never live happily on planet or in this life what to speak of the next".

How foolishly contemporary men is trying to live, is trying their utmost to become happy, but without any sacrifice, rather by increase of selfishness. And practically we can see there is no peace, no happiness, even though superficially there is an increase of sense enjoyment.

By selfish living the result is not only no happiness in this life but in the next life it will be worst. Krsna sums it up in the Purport, explaining that according to one's position, according to one's consciousness, according to one's situation in the modes of material nature, according to one's tendency, one will have the tendency or leaning to perform a particular type of sacrifice. According to impressions from previous lives, one will tend to perform one type of sacrifice (someone breath control, others knowledge, others sacrificing material possessions...) and superficially all these look different as if they were completely different sacrifices and therefore they had a completely different goal or purpose - actually they are all born of different type of work or karma or consciousness. According to his consciousness one will have a particular tendency to perform sacrifice.

And, regardless of the type of sacrifice one is performing, they are leading to the same thing and the same goal - that is transcendental knowledge. And the purpose of transcendental knowledge is freedom from the bondage of material life - liberation. And knowing how all different types of sacrifice lead to transcendental knowledge and liberation - just knowing that is so beneficial that will push one towards liberation.

## TEXT 33

sreyan dravya-mayad yajñaj  
jnana-yajñah parantapa  
sarvam karmakhilam partha  
jnane parisamapyate

sreyan--greater; dravya-mayat--of material possessions; yajñat--than the sacrifice;  
jnana-yajñah--sacrifice in knowledge; parantapa--O chastiser of the enemy; sarvam--all;

karma-activities; akhila--in totality; partha--O son of P jnana--in knowledge; parisamapyate--end.

## TRANSLATION

**O chastiser of the enemy, the sacrifice performed in knowledge is better than the mere sacrifice of material possessions. After all, O son of Prtha, all sacrifices of work culminate in transcendental knowledge.**

(cn) Here Krsna gives a gradation of advancement, which sacrifice is more elevated than others.

One may do a sacrifice, like karma-kanda (the sacrifice of a little of sense gratification to get even more sense gratification) but do it without knowledge. Knowledge is to know the difference between the body and the self, to know Krsna's position, how Krsna reacts with the material world... Karma-kanda sacrifice is done without knowledge, still is a sacrifice, and the result of this sacrifice is, gradually, transcendental knowledge. Sacrifices done without knowledge are inferior to those done with knowledge because the purpose of sacrifices done without knowledge is to bring one to the position of transcendental knowledge. Performing something in knowledge is far superior and the results will be different, than performing something without knowledge. This is true in Krsna consciousness as well. The more we know what we are doing, the more potent what we do is.

In his Purport Srila Prabhupada says: "The purpose of all sacrifices is to arrive at the status of complete knowledge, then to gain release from material miseries, and, ultimately, to engage in loving transcendental service to the Supreme Lord (Krsna consciousness). Nonetheless, there is a mystery about all these different activities of sacrifice, and one should know this mystery. Sacrifices sometimes take different forms according to the particular faith of the performer. When one's faith reaches the stage of transcendental knowledge, the performer of sacrifices should be considered more advanced those who simply sacrifice material possessions without such knowledge, for without attainment of knowledge, sacri remain on the material platform and bestow no spiritual benefit. Real knowledge culminates in Krsna consciousness, the hi stage of transcendental knowledge. Without the elevation of knowledge, sacrifices are simply material activities. When, however, they are elevated to the level of transcendental knowledge, all such activities enter onto the spiritual platform. Depending on differences in consciousness, sacrif activities are sometimes called karma- kanda (fruitive activities) and sometimes jnana-kanda (knowledge in the pursuit of truth). It is better when the end is knowledge."

QUESTION: Narottama dasa Thakura considers karma-kanda or jnana- kanda as "pots of poison", and here we are studying these as important. Could you elaborate on this point?

ANSWER: Karma or jnana separated from Krsna, for a devotee is worst than useless because it is an entanglement. Jnana is a product of the mode of goodness and this has to be given up if one wants to transcend. This will be explained in the next chapter. But here we

are talking about jnana, knowledge about Krsna not the other type of knowledge which is considered as a "pot of poison". This knowledge here is transcendental, is elevating.

Searching for knowledge about the difference between the body and the self in order to get free from material bondage is also very entangling, it brings one to the practice of false renunciation. And ultimately in order to get liberation from the path of jnana one has to use bhakti.

QUESTION: The mayavadis preach that all the paths lead to the same goal, and their goal is jnana or knowledge. Here we see, all the different types of sacrifice also lead to transcendental knowledge. Do the mayavadis use this section of Bhagavad-gita to support their statement?

ANSWER: Everything depends on one's consciousness. If someone performs a sacrifice improperly, 'avidhi purvakam', against the actual knowledge, then he will not get any transcendental result.

Krsna has already explained that He is supplying the fruits that the demigods give to everyone. People get the fruits by worshiping the demigods, but they don't get anything transcendental when they worship the demigods if they worship them as independent.

The point is consciousness. If one has transcendental knowledge one's activities will always illuminate one. And if one has not transcendental knowledge one can be performing the same activity and the results they will be simply material, with no lasting benefit.

The last section is more or less a repetition of the point already covered.

[ E . SUMMARY OF TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE : (4. 34-42)

- 1 . HOW TO ACHIEVE TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE
- 2 . THE FRUIT OF TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE
- 3 . WHO CAN SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE
- 4 . THE SYMPTOMS OF ONE WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED  
TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE TO WORK
- 5 . CONCLUSION

1 . How to achieve: To receive transcendental knowledge, approach and surrender to a self-realized spiritual master with submissive inquiry and service. (34) ]

(cn) This Section has ultimately the conclusion of this Chapter, because doesn't want that someone stays just on the platform of jnana and just renounce from work - He wants him to work but in transcendental knowledge. When one receives transcendental knowledge from the disciplic succession it is so powerful that if one becomes fixed in this transcendental knowledge about Krsna, who is He, what His position is, and one works in that consciousness, then all the reactions to one's work will be destroyed. This is the result of working in transcendental knowledge, in Krsna consciousness - there will be no reactions. This is actually the conclusion of this Section which is the conclusion of this Chapter, and practically is the conclusion the Bhagavad-gita.

TEXT 34

tad viddhi pranipatena  
pariprasnena sevaya  
upadeksyanti te jnanam  
jnaninas tatt va-darsinah

tat--that knowledge of different sacrifices; viddhi--try to understand; pranipatena--by approaching a spiritual master; pariprasnena--by submissive inquiries; sevaya--by the rendering of service; upadeksyanti--they will initiate; te--you; jnanam--into knowledge; jnaninah--the self-realized; tattva--of the truth; darsinah--seers.

## TRANSLATION

**Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.**

(cn) This is how to attain this transcendental knowledge, because without approaching a spiritual master there is no question of achieving any transcendental knowledge. Initiation means to begin.

[ 2 . The fruit: Once having knowledge one never again falls into illusion, for he knows all living beings are in Krsna and are part of Him. (35)

Transcendental knowledge destroys all miseries, for it destroys all reactions to all material activities. It is the mature fruit of both mysticism and devotional service. (36-38) ]

## TEXT 35

yaj jnatva na punar moham  
evam yasyasi pandava  
yena bhutany asesani  
draksyasi atmany atho mayi

yat--which; jnatva--knowing; na--never; punah--again; moham--to illusion; evam--like this; yasyasi--you shall go; pandava--O son of Pandu; yena--by which; bhutani--living entities; asesani--all; draksyasi--you will see; atmani--in the Supreme Soul; athau--or in other words; mayi--in Me.

## TRANSLATION

Having obtained real knowledge from a self-realized soul, you will never fall again into such illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine.

### TEXT 36

api cet asi papebhyah  
sarvebhyah papa-krt-tamah  
sarvam jnana-plavenaiva  
vrjinam santarisyasi

api--even; cet--if; asi--you are; papebhyah--of sinners; sarvebhyah--of all; papa-krt-tamah--the greatest sinner; sarvam--all such sinful reactions; jnana-plavena--by the boat of transcendental knowledge; eva--certainly; vrjinam--the ocean of miseries; santarisyasi--you will cross completely.

## TRANSLATION

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

(cn) This is pertaining to Arjuna's position because he was afraid of committing sins and going to hell. But here Krsna is telling him that if one is situated in transcendental knowledge there is no question of being affected.

One question can be raised: How can a sinful person be in transcendental knowledge? The word "api cet" means 'even if'; even if there was a sinful person with transcendental knowledge he would be free. It is no likely because one has to be pure to get transcendental knowledge.

This verse glorifies knowledge.

### TEXT 37

yathaidhamsi samiddho 'gni  
bhasma-sat kurute 'rjuna  
jnanagnih sarva-karmani  
bhasma-sat kurute tatha

yatha- just as; edhamsi--firewood; samiddhah--blazing; agnih--fire; bhasma-sat--ashes; kurute--turns; arjuna--O Arjuna; jnana-agnih--the fire of knowledge; sarva-karmani--all reactions to material activities; bhasma-sat--to ashes; kurute--it turns; tatha--similarly.

## TRANSLATION

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

(cn) When one thinks that transcendental knowledge is going to destroy all the reactions to activities normally he thinks about sinful reactions and he is eager to welcome the pious reactions, let me enjoy them. But actually transcendental knowledge burns to ashes both, pious and sinful activities.

## TEXT 38

na hi jnanena sadrsam  
pavitram iha vidyate  
tat svayam yoga-samsiddhah  
kalenatmani vindati

na--nothing; hi--certainly; jnanena--with knowledge; sadrsam--in comparison; pavitram--sanctified; iha--in this world; vidyate--exists; tat--that; svayam--himself; yoga--in devotion; samsiddhah--he who is mature; kalena--in course of time; atmani--in himself; vindati--enjoys.

## TRANSLATION

**In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has become accomplished in the practice of devotional service enjoys this knowledge within himself in due course of time.**

(cn) The word "kalena" means 'in due course of time'. Krsna puts this word in the verse because Arjuna wanted to renounce. And this is a warning to those who want to renounce and take sannyasi thinking that just by superficially adopting the outward garb and become a renunciate, they will be factually renounced and full of transcendental knowledge. For this reason, Krsna uses the word "kalena", by niskama karma 'in due course of time' one will actually enjoy this knowledge within. Not by just taking sannyasi and renouncing work.

[ 3 . Who can achieve: One who has faith can acquire transcendental knowledge; one who doubts cannot. (39-40) ]

## TEXT 39

sraddhava labhate jnanam  
tat-parah samyatendriyah  
jnanam labdhva param santim  
acirenadhigacchati

sraddha-van--a faithful man; labhate--achieves; jnanam--knowledge; tat-parah--very much attached to it; samyata--controlled; indriyah--senses; jnanam--knowledge; labdhva--having achieved; param--transcendental; santim--peace; acirena--very soon; adhigacchati--attains.

### TRANSLATION

**A faithful man who is dedicated to transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses is eligible to achieve such knowledge, and having achieved it he quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.**

(cn) This is the qualification for getting this knowledge: faithful, dedicated, subduing one's senses.

Arjuna has been requested to have faith in these words of Krsna's, and do his duty and fight. And on the other hand,

### TEXT 40

ajnas casraddadhanas ca  
samsayatma vinasyati  
nayam loko sti na paro  
na sukham samsayatmanah

ajnah--a fool who has no knowledge in standard scriptures; ca--and; asraddadhanah--without faith in revealed scriptures; ca--also; samsaya--of doubts; atma--a person; vinasyati--falls back; na--never; ayam--in this; lokah--world; asti--there is; na--nor; parah--in the next life; na--not; sukham--happiness; samsaya--doubtful; atmanah--of the person.

### TRANSLATION

**But ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness; they fall down. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next.**

(cn) There are three classes of people mentioned here: ignorant, faithless and doubters. The first is the "ajna" translated as 'the fool who has no knowledge in standard scriptures'. The second one is "asraddadhanas" which means that he reads many sastras but he doesn't have faith in anyone of them. And the third one is the "samsaya atma", the 'doubter'. Out of these

three the 'doubter' is in the most precarious position because there is no happiness for him neither in this world nor the next.

Such a person is not happy in the present and will not be happy in the future either.

[ 4 . The symptoms of success: One successfully working in transcendental knowledge desires no fruits, has no doubts, knows he's an eternal servant of Krsna, and is not bound by work. (41) ]

#### TEXT 41

yoga-sannyasta-karmanam  
jnana-sanchinna-samsayam  
atmavantam na karmani  
nibadhnanti dhananjaya

yoga--by devotional service in karma-yoga; sannyasta--one who has renounced; karmanam--the fruits of actions; jnana--by knowledge; sanchinna--cut; samsayam--doubts; atma-vantam--situated in the self; na--never; karmani--works; nibadhnanti--do bind; dhananjaya--O conqueror of riches.

#### TRANSLATION

**One who acts in devotional service, renouncing the fruits of his actions, and whose doubts have been destroyed by transcendental knowledge, is situated factually in the self. Thus he is not bound by the reactions of work, O conqueror of riches.**

(cn) This is niskama karma knowledge applied to work. Acts accordingly to one's duty in devotional service or just even prescribed duties, renunciation of the fruits of one's actions, no doubts due to one's deep, intense and realized transcendental knowledge - he is actually situated in the self. That means he knows that he is not this body. Therefore, even though working, but in this consciousness, with this knowledge - he is not bound by the reactions of work.

And what is the knowledge? That ultimately we are all parts and parcels of Krsna (already explained in text 35).

[ 5 . Conclusion: Slash with knowledge all doubts born of ignorance. "Arjuna, armed with yoga, stand and fight!" (42) ]

#### TEXT 42

tasmad ajnana-sambhutam  
hrt-stham jnanasi natmanah  
chittvainam samsayam yogam

atisthottistha bharata

tasmāt--therefore; ajnāna-sambhūtam--born of ignorance; hṛt-stham--situated in the heart; jñāna--of knowledge; aśina--by the weapon; atmanah--of the self; chittva--cutting off; enam--this; saṁśayaṁ--doubt; yogaṁ--in yoga; aśiṣṭha--be situated; uttiṣṭha--stand up to fight; bharata--O descendant of Bharata.

### TRANSLATION

**Therefore the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, O Bharata, stand and fight.**

(cn) Kṛṣṇa wants Arjuna to fight but in the right consciousness, fixed in transcendental knowledge, detached from the results and thereby free from all reactions which was Arjuna's basic fear.

THUS ENDS THE STUDY OF CHAPTER FOUR.