
VAI ± | AVA TRAINING & EDUCATION

Course Material

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

for the Bhakti[®]astri Course
VIHE – ISKCON Ljubljana

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acarya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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Srila Prabhupada about the need for *bhakti-sastri*

Prabhupāda: Whatever books we have got, it should be studied. *Bhakti-çāstré* means Nectar of Devotion, Bhagavad-gētā, Nectar of Instruction, Beyond Death—in this way we select some ten books. That is *bhakti-çāstré*.

Acyutānanda: So when will that...

Prabhupāda: Then we come to Bhāgavata, then we come to Caitanya-caritāmāta, in this way. So from next year, unless one passes *bhakti-çāstré*, he cannot be second initiated. First initiation is open for everyone.

"Come on. Chant Hare Kāñēa." That will purify him. Then let him understand what is *bhakti*.

Morning Walk January 6, 1976, Nellore

Yes. From *Bhagavad-gētā* for title of *bhakti-çāstré*. Now we have to make our organization regularly a spiritual institution so that we may be recognized... April 27, 1969, Boston

If you think yourself unable to pay either of the above mentioned membership fees per month, then you can apply for free membership or for a lesser value of monthly subscription for consideration of the Executive Committee., who will decide on the subject.

But if you become preacher member, in that case you will have to pay once Rs 10/- only for the degree of "Bhakti-sastri" which will be awarded to you by registered certificate of degree for your becoming preaching member of the League and doing the necessary preaching work on behalf of the League. The preaching work is conducted as follows:

(1) As soon as you get the certificate of degree of "Bhakti-sastri" at once you become a bona fide preacher of this institution and for this you will have to read "Bhagavad-gita" regularly. Letter 1955-09-00

Next January there will be an examination on this Bhagavad-gita. Papers will be sent by me to all centers, and those securing the minimum passing grade will be given the title as Bhakti-sastri. Similarly, another examination will be held on Lord Caitanya's Appearance Day in February, 1970 and it will be upon Srimad-Bhagavatam and Bhagavad-gita. Those passing will get the title of Bhakti-vaibhava. Another examination will be held sometimes in 1971 on the four books, Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, and Nectar of Devotion. One who will pass this examination will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975, all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by outsiders, but our students must be well versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realization.

Letter to: Hamsaduta 69-01-02

We wish to hold examinations and award titles such as Bhakti-sastri, Bhakti-vaibhava, and Bhaktivedanta. The whole program will continue for seven years, and the students who will be fully engaged in this study of a seven year course will be classified in the 4-D section of the draft board. Such students will not be called for military activities. Let 69-02-04

I have signed the certificate and sent it to New York for counter signature of the president, entitling you as Bhakti-sastri. The certificate was finally made a little hastily, so the printing is not to my full satisfaction. I have asked Aravinda to make a nicer copy, and if you like, we can give you this nicer copy later on. You remark that in New Vrindaban the capacity is lacking for taking care of the children. If you can organize a higher level school of theology under your care, I shall very much appreciate it. In Los Angeles, although the place is nice, it is already almost congested.

We are planning ministerial status documents through the lawyer here, and it is almost prepared. This document will be submitted to the draft board, and copies will be sent to other centers for doing the necessary arrangements. Bhakti-sastri is actually recognition, accepting a person that he knows the principles of devotional service. Letter 69-07-24

Letter to: All Governing Body Commissioners

Nellore, South India

6 January, 1976

76-01-06

To

All Governing Body Commissioners

Re: Examinations for awarding titles of Bhakti-sastri, Bhakti-vaibhava, Bhaktivedanta and Bhakti-sarvabhauma. Your response is requested immediately by Srila Prabhupada.

Dear Prabhus,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. Srila Prabhupada has requested me to write you in regard to the above examinations which he wishes to institute. Here in India many persons often criticize our sannyasis and brahmanas as being unqualified due to insufficient knowledge of the scriptures. Factually, there are numerous instances when our sannyasis and brahmanas have fallen down often due to insufficient understanding of the philosophy. This should not be a point of criticism nor a reason for falldown, since Srila Prabhupada has mercifully made the most essential scriptures available to us in his books. The problem is that not all the devotees are carefully studying the books, the result being a fall down or at least unsteadiness.

His Divine Grace therefore wishes to institute examinations to be given to all prospective candidates for sannyasa and brahmana initiation. In addition he wishes that all present sannyasis and brahmanas also pass the examination. Awarding of these titles will be based upon the following books:

Bhakti-sastri - Bhagavad-gita, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction, Isopanisad, Easy Journey To Other Planets, and all other small paperbacks, as well as Arcana-paddhati (a book to be compiled by Nitai Prabhu based on Hari-bhakti-vilasa on Deity worship)

Bhakti-vaibhava - All of the above plus the first six cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam

Bhaktivedanta - All of the above plus cantos 7 through 12 of Srimad-Bhagavatam

Bhakti-sarvabhauma - All the above plus the entire Caitanya-caritamrta

Anyone wishing to be initiated as a brahmana will have to pass the Bhaktisastri exam and anyone wishing to take sannyasa will have to pass the Bhaktivaibhava examination as well. This will prevent our Society from degrading to the level of so many other institutions where, in order to maintain the Temple, they accept all third class men as brahmanas. Any sannyasis or brahmanas already initiated who fail to pass the exams will be considered low class or less qualified. Anyone wishing to be 2nd initiated will sit for examination once a year at Mayapur. Answers will be in essay form and authoritative quotations will be given a bigger score.

During the exams books may not be consulted.

Srila Prabhupada wishes to begin this program at this year's Mayapur meeting. He requests that you all send your opinions and comments here immediately so that everything may be prepared in time.

Hoping this meets you in the best of health and Krsna Consciousness.

Approved:

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Your servant,

Tamala Krsna Goswami

Personal Secretary

“A prakāta-bhakta, or materialistic devotee, **does not purposefully study the cāstra** and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service. Consequently he does not show proper respect to advanced devotees. He may, however, follow the regulative principles learned from his spiritual master or from his family who worships the Deity. He is to be considered on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service. Such a person is a bhakta-prāya [neophyte devotee], or bhaktābhāsa, for he is a little enlightened by Vaiṇēava philosophy.’ Madhya 22.74

The Twelve Aims of Systematic Sastric Study

The following Aims apply to all four VTE Sastric degrees, starting with Bhakti Sastri. These Aims are weighted differently for each of the four main courses.

1. To help students memorise and recall the (theoretical) knowledge which forms the foundation of their ongoing progress in Krishna Consciousness
2. To deepen students' understanding of the Krishna consciousness theology, particularly through studying it from a wide range of perspectives and through developing thoughtfulness and introspection
3. To equip students with the ability to see through the eyes of shastra, and with a Krishna conscious worldview. Ultimately, to assist the students in realising scripture, and in seeing Krishna, at all times and in all places.
4. To help students apply the Krishna Consciousness theology, with reference to:
 - (a) their external practices
 - (b) their inner developmentand to help them develop appropriate Vaishnava qualities and behaviour
5. To enhance devotees desire and ability to preach effectively.
6. To help create learned Vaishnava theologians who are expert in assisting the Society through application of sastric knowledge to a wide range of personal, social, moral, topical and theological issues.
7. To facilitate devotees in: (a) understanding and appreciating the mood and mission of Srila Prabhupada
(b) perpetuating that understanding within the Society and its members
8. To ensure that devotees develop moral and academic integrity in the interpretation, evaluation and application of sastric knowledge
9. To simultaneously cultivate within devotees:
 - (a) wholehearted acceptance of the spiritual authority of shastra
 - (b) a mood of open and honest inquiry and a desire to factually understand and realise the import of Vedic knowledge
10. To help build and maintain students' faith and conviction in:
 - (a) the process of Krishna consciousness
 - (b) the sastra as its foundation
11. To develop students' analytical, interpretative and evaluative skills, particularly in respect of the practical application of sastric knowledge
12. To encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and develop healthy study habits by:
 - (a) enhancing their desire to study Srila Prabhupada's books (particularly by nurturing their appreciation of shastra and sastric study, and by demonstrating sastra's relevance to everyday life)
 - (b) equipping them with the appropriate learning skills

1. Knowledge (Memory and Recall)	Kno
2. Understanding	Und
3. Sastra Caksus	SC
4. Personal Application	PeA
5. Preaching Application	PrA
6. Theological Application	ThA
7. Mood and Mission	M+M
8. Academic and Moral Integrity	AMI
9. Sastric Authority	Aut
10. Faith and Conviction	F+C
11. Evaluation	Eva
12. Responsibility for Learning	RfL

Please note:

- (1) Aim number 3 includes "Realisation" Rea
 Although Sastra Caksus ultimately means and requires full realisation, this Aim is also delivered at different levels leading up to full realisation of the Absolute Truth.
- (2) Aim number 12 is broken down into two halves, namely:
 - 12 (a) "Taste/Appreciation/Relevance" TAR
 - 12 (b) "Study Skills" SSK

The first is largely about motivation (and relates to *values*) and the second about acquiring the appropriate learning *skills*.

Making Sense of Our Twelve Aims

Our Twelve Aims are quite complex, and need some considerable endeavour to remember and assimilate. Nonetheless, it is difficult to reduce the number without blurring our clarity of vision. Here we attempt to put them in some form.

As in all education, our Aims can be divided between three broad **learning domains**, namely

- 1. Knowledge** (cognition)
- 2. Skills** (action, or application of knowledge)
- 3. Values** (the self — the “knower” and the “doer”)

How the Twelve Aims are categorised is shown below:

Knowledge	Skills	Values and Attitudes	
Knowledge (Memory & Recall)	Personal Application	Mood & Mission	Faith and Conviction
Understanding	Preaching Application	Academic & Moral Integrity	Evaluation
Realisation (+ Sastra Caksus)	Theological Application	(Attitude towards) Sastric Authority	Responsibility for Learning

Notes:

1. Again, it might be a useful exercise to relate these to our Overall Purposes of Sastric Study (page 18) and to see how each part of the statement correlates to the above categories.
2. The three Aims under **skills** can be categorised under two broad groups, with which devotees are extremely familiar, namely:
 - **Sadhana / Achar** (personal application)
 - **Preaching / Prachar** (preaching application and theological application)

In one sense, we could consider that all our Aims fall under these two main categories. In other words, all learning is meant for **application** in ‘the real world’ (i.e. outside the learning environment itself), and this application has two broad divisions.

What we explore on the next few pages is the relevance of these Aims, i.e. how they meet the needs of ISKCON and its members. We will attempt to achieve this by cross-referring the **Knowledge** and **Values** Aims to the two broad categories falling under **Skills**.

The Relevance of Our Knowledge and Value Aims

		S K I L L S	
		PERSONAL APPLICATION	PREACHING & THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION
K N O W L E D G E	KNOWLEDGE	Remembrance of slokas for personal use, especially in times of crisis/decision. Celibacy essential.	Can recall slokas and references for teaching, speaking, etc. Preaching is then suitably authoritative
	UNDERSTANDING	Questioning our own perception and understanding of the truth (in preference to questioning the validity of sastra itself)	The ability to respond thoughtfully to discerning people.
	REALISATION (SASTRA CAKSUS)	The ability to see Krishna and factually realise all the imports of Vedic knowledge	The ability to present Krishna Consciousness just suitable to the audience, speaking from experience and the heart
V A L U E S	MOOD & MISSION	Clear sense of personal identity and purpose (in relationship to Society and its broader traditions)	Clear and balanced sense of mission, as member of ISKCON. Can constructively address internal theological issues.
	ACADEMIC & MORAL INTEGRITY	Personal honesty required, as basis of brahminical qualities. Real knowledge requires purity, honest self-examination, etc.	The honest application of scripture, avoiding self-motivation and distortion. Society's representatives have credibility
	AUTHORITY	Promotes the appropriate attitude towards authority, avoiding both a challenging attitude and blind acceptance.	Avoidance of fanaticism and speculation/compromise; thoughtful acceptance of authority will help promote Krishna Consciousness
	EVALUATION	Ability to make appropriate choices in personal life	Ability to give advice/counsel etc. that is actually relevant & practically useful to society
	RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING	Promotes personal responsibility and self-reliance. Helps students develop a taste for study	Enables students to become respectable and learned theologians and to develop a brahminical leadership
	FAITH & CONVICTION	Essential for addressing the 'inner life' (so easy to neglect) and for sustaining our own spiritual development	Teaching and preaching will carry real weight without being overbearing

The Aims of Systematic Sastric Study

Relevant Quotes From Srila Prabhupada's Teachings

The following quotations are numbered according to the Aim to which they predominantly refer. Some of them will be pertinent to other Aims also. To make the most of studying these quotes, we recommend to students that as they read them they simultaneously refer to the Twelve Aims on page 17 of this handbook.

1. Formerly, people were so sharp in memory that once having heard from the spiritual master, they will remember. . . it is called *ruti* ... Simply by hearing, they will understand everything. They will never forget ... Unless you memorise all the conclusions of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Bhagavad-gita*, you cannot speak.
CC Adi 16.44 purp.
1. The process is that you should memorise the purports of my books and then speak them in your own words. Do not adulterate or change anything. Then you will be the perfect preacher.
Letter, Janajamdhah , Bombay, 15 November, 1975
2. It is not blindly accepted, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. With considerable deliberation, we take the decision.
Lec, Bhagavad-gita 7.1-3, Ahmedabad, December 14, 1972
2. The points of *Bhagavad-gita*, though they are simple and complete, can be understood from unlimited angles of vision. So our philosophy is not dry, like mental speculation. The proper function of the brain and psychological activity is to understand everything through Krishna's perspective or point-of-view. There is no limit to that understanding because *Kāṁṣa* is unlimited, and it can be said that the devotee who knows *Kāṁṣa* knows everything (15th Chapter). Still, the philosophical process never stops and the devotee continues to increase his knowledge, even though he knows everything.
Letter, Caturbhuj, Bombay 1972
3. We have to conclude that spiritual and material life are different angles of vision. If we give more stress to material life, the materialistic way of life, then it is not possible to have spiritual realisation or spiritual emancipation.
Lec, BG 2.59-69 New York, April 29, 1966
3. *Āstra-cakṣus*. When one's consciousness becomes fully purified one can perceive the Absolute Truth with all of one's spiritualised senses.
SB 11.3.37 purport
3. Personal realisation does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one's own learning by trying to surpass the previous *Ācārya*. He must have full confidence in the previous *Ācārya*, and at the same time he must realise the subject matter so nicely that he can present the matter for the particular circumstances in a suitable manner. The original purpose of the text must be maintained. No obscure meaning should be screwed out of it, yet it should be presented in an interesting manner for the understanding of the audience. This is called realisation. **SB 1.4.1. purport**
3. Similarly, those who are actually serious about understanding God should not stick only to a particular scripture. They should read all others containing information on God. For example, we sometimes quote from Bible.
MW, June 21, 1974, Germany
4. Simply having theoretical understanding will not do. *Jñāna vijñāna*. This theoretical knowledge is good, but there must also be practical application. Then it will stand.
Lec, Nellore, January 4, 1976
4. They were practising in order to teach us .. Simply teaching will not do. We must also practise ... Simply quoting verses like a parrot will be of little benefit. One must apply them, *jñānam vijñāna-sahitam*. *Jñāna* means to know, and *vijñāna* means to apply this knowledge in practical life. *Jñānam vijñāna-sahitam*. So we must know the *vijñāna*, how to practically apply this knowledge. This was taught by the Gosvāmīs.
Lec, NOD Bombay, 73

5. That is my programme. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by outsiders, but our students must be well versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realisation. **Letter, Hamsaduta, Los Angeles, 3 December 1968**
5. With these examinations I wish to encourage all my disciples to very carefully learn this philosophy of Krishna Consciousness because there is so many preachers who will be required to bring this message to all corners of the earth. **Letter, Mahapurusa, Los Angeles, 7 February 1969**
6. Nor it is possible that everyone should become a br€hmana. It is not such an easy thing. But a class of br€hmanas must be maintained ... to give council to the ksatriyas.
Conv Hyderabad 22th August 1976
6. The Bh€gavad-g.€ is spoken by the Lord so that human society can be perfectly organized from all angles of vision — politically, socially, economically, philosophically and religiously. From any point of view, human society can be reformed by the K€nSa consciousness movement. **CC Mad 19.167**
7. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes down upon this earth to reestablish the principles of religion, so His representative, the spiritual master, also comes to reestablish religious principles. It is the duty of the disciples to take charge of the mission of the spiritual master and execute it properly.
SB 4.28.50 purport
7. Everything is full of sense and logic, and the exchange of views between the master and disciple is possible only when the reception is submissive and real. In the Caitanya-ca€tama€ta it is said that one should receive the teaching of Lord Caitanya with intellect and full senses so that one can logically understand the great mission.
Lec, Bombay, 24 March 1977
7. In conclusion, if a disciple is very serious to execute the mission of the spiritual master, he immediately associates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead by v€ni or v€p™. This is the only secret of success in seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Instead of being eager to see the Lord in some bush of V€nd€vana while at the same time engaging in sense gratification, if one instead sticks to the principle of following the words of the spiritual master, he will see the Supreme Lord without difficulty.
SB 4.28.51
7. One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the internal features and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. In this way one can avoid seeing the pure devotee from a material point of view ... **NOD Text 6, purp**
8. Somebody is misusing the words “so ‘ham,” and “aham brahm€smi” and concluding that “I am the Supreme.” But that is not correct. These are Vedic words, but so ‘ham does not mean “I am God.” So ‘ham means “I am also of the same quality.”
SB 5.25.1 purp
8. For learning Vedic knowledge, one must approach a person who is cent percent engaged in devotional service. He must not do things that are forbidden in the €stras. A person cannot be a teacher if he drinks or smokes. In the modern system of education, the teacher’s academic qualification is taken into consideration without evaluation of his moral life. Therefore, the result of education is misuse of high intelligence in so many ways.
SB 1.9.26 purp.
8. But the Westerners are very expert in misinterpreting even their own Bible. We say that if you interpret any €stra, whether the Bible or Bhagavad-g.€t€, then it is no longer €stra, but simply your plaything.
MW, 2 April 1973
8. So, on the contrary, our political leaders are misinterpreting €stra and trying to mold it to the materialistic way of life.
Darshan, Hrishikesh, 9 May 1977
9. But faith should not be blind. Blind faith is useless. Now we have already discussed that one should go to the spiritual master with surrender, inquiry and service — three things. First of all, for acquiring knowledge we have to find out the suitable person, and if we are fortunate enough to do that, then

the first thing is to surrender. And after that surrender, there are questions. One must be very intelligent to put questions to the spiritual master. Without questions you cannot make progress. So blind faith is never required, nor should questions be in a mood of challenge ... Questions or answers should be just to understand. And that should be accompanied with service. This is the correct mood.

Lec, BG 4.39 – 5.3 New York 24th August 1966

9. What Krishna said forty millions of years ago, or five thousand years ago, is also correct today. That is *ĕstra*. Not that "So many years have passed and it has become old. Now let us reform it and put it into new way." No. You can put the same thing in a new way, but you cannot change the principle.

Lec, SB 5.6.8 Vāndĕvana, 30 November 1976

10. You are experiencing some doubts ... To clear up these things the best remedy is to regularly discuss amongst yourselves in classes all our books. Then these doubts will be killed. Without reading books, it becomes hackneyed and such obnoxious ideas trouble us. Our thoughts are always changing; that is the nature of the mind. So you cannot expect that even great saintly persons are free from thoughts, coming and going. But after thinking there is feeling and willing – willing being the stage of putting thoughts into action. So if we are able to employ our intelligence, then we destroy the thoughts before they become manifest in activity. Because we are so much inclined to enjoy unintelligently, we therefore have to daily sharpen our intelligence faculty by reading and discussing and by preaching to others.

Letter, Satyabhĕma, Mayapur, 1972

10. *jñĕna vijnĕna ĕstikyam*, *ĕstikyam* means "full faith in the *ĕtras* and in God." That is called *ĕstikyam*. If you have full faith in the revealed scriptures, then you are *ĕstikyam*. Because you cannot manufacture your God, or a so-called incarnation God. No. You must have full knowledge of God through the authority of revealed scriptures.

Lec, SB 1.16.20, Hawaii, January 16, 1974

10. Whatever the case, we must have faith in the word of Kṛṣṇa. When we purchase a ticket on Pan American or Air India, we have faith that that company will take us to our destination. Faith is created because the company is authorised. Our faith should not be blind; therefore we should accept that which is recognised.

Lec, Bhagavad-gĭta 8.21-22, New York, November 19, 1966

11. Although KāṁṢa advised Arjuna, "Kill him," Arjuna did not like it ... This is consciousness. Even though there is duty, we have to see what will be the effect of that duty. Nothing should be done blindly. This is the nature of a devotee.

Lec, SB 1.7.40

11. You have to analyse that "First of all, I am prominent by my senses. My body means my senses. But the senses are useless unless there is the mind." *Indriyehyah para ĕmanaf*. If your mind is not in order, your senses cannot act. Therefore mind is superior to the senses, and the mind cannot act if you have no intelligence. So *manasas tu para buddhiĕ*. And if you can go beyond the intelligence, then you can find out about the soul. So it requires study. It requires education. The education is there. The books are there. The teachers are there.

Lec, SB 2.3.20 Bombay 1977

12. All the devotees connected with this KāṁṢa consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (*Caitanya-caritĕmĕta*, *Srimad-Bhĕgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gĭtĕ* and others); otherwise, after some time, they will simply eat, sleep and fall down from their position. Thus they will miss the opportunity to attain an eternal, blissful life of transcendental pleasure.

Cc. Mad. 25.278

12. *Bhagavad-gĭtĕ* or *Srimad-Bhĕgavatam* or anything where the topics of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is discussed - if you feel that it is interesting, that means you are getting out of the jaundice of this material disease. Yes. This is the test. If you don't feel interested, then you must know that the jaundice of material disease is still there. So this is the test. The more you feel *kāṁṢa-kathĕ*, the topics of KāṁṢa, to be tasteful, the more you'll know that you are getting free from the jaundice of material disease.

Lec, CC Mad 21.13-49, New York, 1967

12. The householder should study the Vedas every day ...

SB 11.17 Chapter Summary

Outline, Structure and Content of the Bhagavad-gītā

Outline

The Bhagavad Gita begins with an inquiry.¹ With the two armies preparing for battle, Dhritarashtra, the father of the Kurus, was doubtful about the possibility of his sons' victory over the Pandavas (the sons of Pandu). He therefore asked his secretary, Sañjaya, about the situation on the battlefield. Even whilst in the palace, Sañjaya was able to mystically perceive the entire scene and explained everything to the blind king as it happened.

Thus he narrated how Arjuna requested KāṇṢa to steer the chariot between the ranks of the two armies so that he might observe who was present there. Upon seeing so many relatives, friends and teachers in the midst of both parties, Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief and decided to withdraw from the contest. He explained that after killing his own kinsmen it would be impossible for him to enjoy the earthly kingdom. This decision was based on the bodily concept of life, in which he considered his body his very self, and that bodily relations were his brothers, cousins, grandfathers, etc. ... In this situation, and to rectify such a mistaken world-view, Lord KāṇṢa spoke the Bhagavad Gita.

In His opening instructions in Chapter two, verse twelve², KāṇṢa describes the nature of the self as an eternal, conscious being, completely distinct from the temporary, material body. He expounds the science of this eternal self in the following chapters and KāṇṢa's words constitute the subject matter of the Gita. Such instructions are summarised in the eighteenth and final chapter wherein the Lord gives his final opinion. In the sixty-sixth verse³, KāṇṢa states that the constitutional position and duty of everyone, as an eternal, spiritual being, is to serve Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as to act as He desires. Although Arjuna initially chose to retire from battle, after hearing KāṇṢa's instructions, his illusion was dispelled and he resolved to fight.

Dhritarashtra had been hopeful of his sons' victory. He had been pleased to hear that Arjuna was unwilling to fight. But after hearing and repeating the sacred dialogue, Sañjaya again disappointed him. In the closing words of the Gita, he tells the King, "You are thinking of victory, but my opinion is that where KāṇṢa and Arjuna are present, there will be all good fortune"⁴. He directly confirmed that Dhritarashtra could not expect victory. Victory was certain for the side of Arjuna because KāṇṢa was there.

¹ Dhritarashtra said: "O Sañjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pandu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kuruksetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?" (B.G. 1.1)

² "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." (B.G. 2.12).

³ "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (B.G. 18.66).

⁴ "Wherever there is Krishna, the Master of all Mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion." (B.G. 18.78).

Structure

The Gita may be divided into three parts of six chapters each, as follows:

- (a) Chapters 1–6 describe the living entity as a non-material, eternal spirit soul capable of elevating himself to self-realisation by different types of yoga, the highest form of which is KāṇṢa Consciousness (bhakti yoga), as confirmed by the final verse of the sixth chapter. Chapter four specifically deals with the transcendental position of KāṇṢa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and with the importance of guru and disciplic succession. Since KāṇṢa's instructions actually begin in the second chapter,

chapter one serves as a prelude to the rest of the text. Chapter two is a synopsis of the whole subject matter of the Gita.

- (b) In the middle six chapters the Supreme Personality of Godhead and his different energies and opulences are described. This section especially deals with the relationship between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul in regards to devotional service. KāṇṢa also discusses the nature and activities of such pure devotional service which he confirms to be the best process of self-realisation.
- c) In the third six chapters, how the living entity comes into contact with material nature, how he is entangled, and how he is delivered by the Supreme Lord through different methods of fruitive activities (karma), cultivation of knowledge (jnana), and devotional service (bhakti) are all explained. The Gita is actually finished in seventeen chapters; chapter eighteen is considered a summary of all previous instructions.

Content

Five basic truths are explained in the Gita, namely:

- (1) **ISVARA** – the Supreme Controller (Krishna – the Supreme Brahman)
- (2) **JIVA** – the living entity (also called atma or jivatma).
- (3) **PRAKRITI** – material nature.
- (4) **KALA** – time, the duration of existence of the complete manifestation of material nature.
- (5) **KARMA** – activity (more specifically, material activity)

Overview and Breakdown of Each Chapter

Chapter 1

Dhātārāṇṇa questions Sañjaya about the events that took place at Kurukṣetra.

Introduction: Preparations for War (1–13)

Sañjaya describes how Duryodhana, using diplomacy, solves a dilemma of encouraging Droṣa without insulting Bhīma and others. Bhīma rallies his soldiers with the sound of his conchshell. Yet the symbolism of the conchshell indicates their defeat.

Signs of victory (14–20)

Sañjaya describes various signs of victory for the Pāṇḍava army, especially the transcendental sound of the conchshells of KāṇṢa and Arjuna, which shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhātārāṇṇa.

Kṛṣṇa as Bhakta Vatsala (21–27)

KāṇṢa appears as the chariot driver of Arjuna, revealing His quality as bhakta-vatsala, not as the Supreme Lord. Arjuna orders KāṇṢa to place his chariot between the two armies as he wants to see who is present there. Seeing those assembled for battle, Arjuna becomes hesitant to fight.

Arjuna's Doubts (28–46)

Compassion: Arjuna, being a softhearted devotee, becomes overwhelmed with compassion and forgets himself when he sees his relatives before him. He has become fearful due to a material conception of life.

Enjoyment: He argues that he will not be able to enjoy his kingdom if it is won at the cost of the lives of his family members. He fears sinful reactions for killing his kinsmen.

Saintliness and fear of sinful reactions: Arjuna argues that killing one's family is sinful and will lead to hell. The higher principle is that real religion is whatever KāṇṢa says or wants.

Destruction of family: Arjuna further argues that the destruction of the dynasty will lead to unchaste women, unwanted children, and the end of spiritual culture. Arjuna, having decided not to fight, finally casts aside his bow and sits down on the chariot.

Chapter 2

This chapter teaches self-realisation by an analytical study of the material body and the spirit soul. This realisation comes when one works without attachment to fruitive results and is situated in the fixed conception of the real self.

Arjuna's further doubts and surrender (1–10)

Indecision: Arjuna is confused and undecided what to do. KāṇṢa chastises Arjuna for his stance of nonviolence, calling him impotent and non-śṛyan. Arjuna again argues that it is sinful to kill his superiors, but then realises he is confused and has been acting in a miserly way. He therefore surrenders to KāṇṢa and accepts Him as guru, thus changing their relationship from friendship to guru-disciple.

Jnana — Fight! There is no death for the soul (11–30)

As guru, KāṇṢa rebukes Arjuna for his misplaced compassion. KāṇṢa begins His instructions by describing the individual, eternal nature of the soul, contrasting it with the temporary nature of the body. KāṇṢa describes the characteristics of the soul in detail. He then introduces other philosophies to further defeat Arjuna's first argument, whereby he appeals to the virtues of compassion.

Karma-kanda — Fight! By performing prescribed duties gain material enjoyment (31–38)

After defeating Arjuna's arguments by knowledge of the eternality of the soul, KāṇṢa now takes a different approach. Even if Arjuna identifies with his body, by fighting as a kṛātriya he will be happy. KāṇṢa thus refers to karma-kāṇṣa's teachings to primarily defeat Arjuna's second argument (re: enjoyment). KāṇṢa explains that if

Arjuna fights he will enjoy, but if he doesn't he'll incur sinful reaction and infamy. KāṇṢa also touches on Arjuna's other arguments re: compassion and sinful reaction respectively. Verse 32 speaks of the gains Arjuna would get by fighting, and verses 33–37 describe the losses he will incur by avoiding his duty.

Buddhi-yoga — Fight! But without any reaction (39-53)

KāṇṢa changes the topic from jñāna and karma to buddhi-yoga - working in devotional service with fixed intelligence and detachment from the fruits of action. Karma and jñāna are combined together to engage the transcendentalist in work with knowledge. One important theme in the Bhagavad-gītā is the question as to whether to renounce work and use one's intelligence to discriminate between spirit and matter, or to work without attachment to the fruits. This question will be asked by Arjuna in the beginning of the Third, Fifth and Eighteenth chapters. KāṇṢa gives a brief explanation of buddhi-yoga (working in devotional service without attachment to the fruits). KāṇṢa also shows how attachment to sense enjoyment and material opulence, as given in the karma-kāṇṢa a section of the Vedas, is an obstacle to determination in devotional service. He advises Arjuna to transcend the Vedas by performing prescribed duties in devotional service without attachment to the fruits. By devotional service one becomes indifferent to the Vedic rituals, gains freedom from sinful reactions, attains liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and goes back to Godhead. Lord KāṇṢa thus defeats Arjuna's argument of fear of sinful reactions.

Sthita-prajna — Fight! Become fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (54–72)

After hearing KāṇṢa's description of devotional service, Arjuna inquires how to recognise a devotee. KāṇṢa describes how the devotee is transcendental by body, mind and words. The devotee gives up all material desires, is equipoised, detached, and fixed on KāṇṢa. The devotee experiences these symptoms because he is enjoying a higher taste, feeling complete satisfaction in being KāṇṢa's servant. In contrast, a person who allows his senses to go out of control by contemplating the sense objects loses his intelligence and falls down. KāṇṢa therefore advises Arjuna to control his senses by following the regulative principles. By so doing he will attain the mercy of the Lord and be happy. This Second chapter is a summary of the whole Bhagavad-gītā. In this chapter, karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga have been clearly discussed, and a glimpse of bhakti-yoga has also been given.

Chapter 3

In Chapter Two, many different paths were explained, such as sākhyā-yoga, buddhi-yoga, control of the senses by intelligence, and work without fruitive desire. KāṇṢa told Arjuna to keep all abominable activities far distant by buddhi-yoga. Taking the meaning of buddhi as intelligence, KāṇṢa's order would mean that Arjuna, by using his intelligence, should avoid all abominable activities and not fight. Yet, thinks Arjuna, KāṇṢa is still urging me to fight! Arjuna thinks that karma and jñāna are not compatible. Actually karma and jñāna are two stages on the path to transcendental consciousness.

Renunciation of work or work in devotion? (1–9)

In his confused state, Arjuna asks KāṇṢa to clarify His previous instructions. KāṇṢa explains how karma-yoga, devotional service, is superior to renunciation of work and He also recommends sacrifice for ViṇṢu, which frees one from the bondage of work.

From karma-kanda to karma-yoga (10–16)

Previously KāṇṢa established that one should not artificially renounce activities but should perform prescribed duties in a detached way. Now He explains the course of action for those who are not yet at the stage of detached work but wish to attain it. By satisfying their material desires in a religious way, those who are attached will be purified. Now KāṇṢa will show how production of grains is dependent on sacrifice and how the origin of such sacrifice is ViṇṢu.

Karma-yoga — performing detached work to set the example (17–35)

In verses 17-21 KāṇṢa describes the position of a self-realised person in relation to work. Although he need not perform prescribed duties, he continues working to set the example for common men to follow. KāṇṢa uses Himself as an example to show that even God works according to scriptures in order to set the

standard for others to follow. He describes also how a knowledgeable person should relate to ignorant men who are attached to fruitive results. A devotee should encourage people by his words and example to engage the results of their work in devotional service. Arjuna is finally advised to fight with devotion for KāṇṢa and become free from the bondage of fruitive actions. KāṇṢa concludes His explanation of karma-yoga by warning Arjuna not to give up his prescribed duties, though there may be some imperfection. He explains that everyone is forced to act according to their nature.

Beware of lust and anger (36–43)

Arjuna asks KāṇṢa what forces us to act sinfully, and KāṇṢa describes our eternal enemy of lust. One can conquer lust by working in KāṇṢa consciousness with steady intelligence fixed on knowledge of one's pure identity.

Chapter 4

In Chapter Three KāṇṢa explained that lust covers knowledge, and that ignorance binds us. He recommended Karma-yoga for attaining transcendental knowledge. Thus, after urging Arjuna to be transcendental with the help of knowledge, He now explains what that knowledge is and how it is received.

Transcendental knowledge about KāṇṢa (1–10)

As the supreme authority, KāṇṢa spoke this knowledge earlier to Vivasvān and now again to Arjuna because he is KāṇṢa's devotee and friend. Although KāṇṢa is unborn, He appears to reestablish religion, to protect His devotees, and to kill the demoniac. Anyone who understands this knowledge will attain love for KāṇṢa and go back to Godhead at the end of this life.

Kṛṣṇa as Goal of all paths and creator of varṇasrama (11–15)

After giving knowledge about Himself that leads to liberation, KāṇṢa now explains how He is the ultimate goal of all paths and how everyone is dependent upon His mercy for attaining success. He created the varṣā rama system whereby men can fulfill their material desires and make progress toward liberation, but He is above this system.

Karma-yoga (16–24)

After explaining His transcendental position, KāṇṢa analyses action and describes how to perform activities on the transcendental plane.

Sacrifices lead to transcendental knowledge (25–33)

After describing how to act on the transcendental platform, KāṇṢa describes a variety of sacrifices (in verses 25–33) because these sacrifices have transcendental knowledge, which is the theme of this chapter, as their ultimate goal. Sacrifice has already been discussed in Bhagavad-gītā 3.9–16 where KāṇṢa explained that without sacrifice for ViṇṢu one cannot live happily in this world.

Summary of transcendental knowledge (34–42)

Having explained that all sacrifices lead to transcendental knowledge, KāṇṢa now describes aspects of transcendental knowledge. To attain transcendental knowledge one must control the senses and submissively approach a spiritual master to render faithful service to him. Thus one will become free from sinful reactions and understand knowledge of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. KāṇṢa urges Arjuna to arm himself with transcendental knowledge and fight.

Chapter 5

In the Fourth Chapter the Lord told Arjuna that all kinds of sacrificial work culminate 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, KāṇṢa has perplexed Arjuna and confused his determination.

Karma-yoga is equal to, but easier than renouncing work (1–6)

Therefore Chapter Five opens with a question by Arjuna that is similar to the one Arjuna asked at the beginning of Chapter Three, “Which is better, work in devotion or renunciation of work?” KāṇṢa replies that although the results of renunciation and devotional service are ultimately the same, devotional service is superior, because it frees one from reactions so that one can quickly and easily achieve KāṇṢa.

How to perform karma-yoga (7–12)

After describing the superiority of devotional service, KāṇṢa explains how to work devotionally with detachment. One in knowledge of KāṇṢa understands his incompatibility with material nature and thus acts only for purification, giving the results of his work to KāṇṢa. Thus he remains unattached, performing work as a matter of duty.

Relationship between soul, Supersoul and nature (13–16)

The transcendentalist who works with detachment has knowledge of the relationship between the living entity, material nature, and the Supersoul. Although it may appear that the modes of nature or the Supersoul are the cause of action and reaction, they are not responsible. When the living entity desires to enjoy material nature, the modes carry out the necessary actions, after being sanctioned by the Supersoul.

Liberation through focusing one’s consciousness of the Supersoul (17–19)

One who is enlightened with this knowledge of the relationship between the living entity, material nature and the Supersoul, takes shelter of the Supersoul, becomes enlightened, and attains liberation. A KāṇṢa conscious person enjoys unlimited pleasure within by fixing his consciousness on KāṇṢa. Always busy working for the welfare of all beings, he soon achieves liberation. Yog.s can also attain this state by practicing *aṅ ā%ga-yoga*. KāṇṢa introduces *dhyāna-yoga* at the end of this chapter and will elaborate on it in Chapter Six. He also presents the peace formula in the last verse: He Himself is the supreme enjoyer and controller, and is the beneficiary in all human activities.

Chapter 6

In the first five chapters, KāṇṢa has explained *buddhi-yoga*, working with consciousness fixed on Him, without fruitive desires. The Lord has also explained *sā%khyā*, *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* as processes to obtain liberation, and as steppingstones to KāṇṢa consciousness.

Yoga-ruruksu and yogarudha practice (1–9)

At the end of the Fifth Chapter and continuing on to the Sixth Chapter, KāṇṢa explained *dhyāna-yoga*, concluding that He is the goal of meditation. Even in *aṅ ā%ga-yoga* practice, *karma-yoga* is necessary in the beginning stages. When one becomes accomplished in the practice of meditation, he ceases all disturbing mental activities and comes to the stage of *yogār™ ha*.

Stages in yoga practice (10–27)

Having described the symptoms of the stages of *aṅ ā%ga-yoga*, KāṇṢa next explains the practices of those stages. By practising yoga with determination, controlling the mind and fixing it on Supersoul, one attains the stage of perfection, called *samādhi*, wherein one enjoys unlimited transcendental pleasure.

Perfection of yoga: realisation of KāṇṢa as Supersoul (28–36)

After describing the yoga practice of fixing the mind on the self, KāṇṢa explains the realisation of the yog...
®r.la Prabhupāda explains: “A KāṇṢa conscious yog... is the perfect seer because he sees KāṇṢa situated in everyone’s heart as Supersoul. He sees KāṇṢa everywhere and everything in KāṇṢa. Thus he sees all living entities equally.” Arjuna rejects the *aṅ ā%ga-yoga* system as impractical, because his mind appears too uncontrollable. KāṇṢa assures Arjuna that it is possible by constant practice and detachment.

Destination of the unsuccessful yogi (37–45)

Arjuna is doubtful about the destination of the unsuccessful yogi, but Kāṇṣa assures him that the yogi's next birth will be auspicious, giving him another chance for self-realisation.

The topmost yogi (46–47)

Kāṇṣa concludes His description of *aṅgā-yoga* by comparing yogis to karmis, jñānis and tapasvīs. The yogi is superior to all, and the best yogi is the bhakta who always thinks of Kāṇṣa, worshiping Him with full faith.

Chapter 7

The first six chapters of Bhagavad-gita deal primarily with karma-yoga, the middle six chapters with bhakti-yoga, and the last six chapters with jnana-yoga. Kāṇṣa has explained in Chapter Six that the yogi most intimately united with Him was thinking of Him within.

Now, the Seventh Chapter explains how one can become such a Kāṇṣa conscious person. By engaging in devotional service one gains determined faith, *drdha-vrata*, and becomes convinced that simply by such service all his objectives will be fulfilled.

Knowing Kāṇṣa in full by hearing about Him (1–7)

In Chapter Seven, Kāṇṣa begins to explain how to attain this state. Kāṇṣa urges Arjuna to hear with mind attached to Him as He explains knowledge of Himself (verses 1–3). He first explains how He is the origin of everything, both material and spiritual (verses 4–7).

Knowing Kāṇṣa as the source of both material and spiritual energies (8–12)

Kāṇṣa describes how He is the essence of everything in verses 8–12. If Kāṇṣa is the origin and essence of everything, as explained in texts 4–12, why do some people not recognise him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

The three modes are controlled by Kāṇṣa — therefore surrender (13–14)

Verses 13–14 explain how the living entities are deluded and controlled by the three modes, but are able to go beyond them by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, since He is the controller of the modes.

Four kinds of impious persons who do not surrender to Kāṇṣa and four kinds of pious persons who surrender (15–19)

Liberation from the laws of material nature has been sought by the leaders of mankind with great plans and perseverance for many years. If such liberation is attained by surrendering to Kṛṣṇa, why don't they adopt this method? Verse 15 describes four types of unqualified persons who do not surrender to Kṛṣṇa and who sometimes pose themselves as leaders simply for material gain. Verses 16–19 describe four types of persons who surrender to Kāṇṣa, and how the wise man is the best because he does not desire some gain.

Demigod worshippers and impersonalists whose surrender is misplaced (20–25)

Verses 20–23 describe less intelligent persons who worship demigods for material gain. Verses 24–25 describe the impersonalists who surrender to the formless aspect of Kāṇṣa. They cannot see Kāṇṣa, who covers Himself from their vision.

The bewilderment of the living entity and his freedom through knowledge of Kāṇṣa (26–30)

Kāṇṣa knows all and is thus different from these foolish living entities who are born into delusion and are bewildered by dualities arising from desire and hate.

Pious persons, freed from dualities arising from delusion engage in devotional service with determination and attain liberation. They have knowledge of Kāṇṣa as *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, and *adhiyajna*.

Chapter 8

Arjuna inquires about the six terms *KāṇṢa* used at the end of Chapter 7 — Brahman, adhyatma, karma, adhibhuta, adhidaiva, and adhiyajna.

KāṇṢa answers Arjuna's questions (1-4)

In this chapter KāṇṢa answers Arjuna's questions and discusses yoga principles and pure devotional service. In verses 1-4 KāṇṢa answers Arjuna's first seven questions.

Remembering KāṇṢa (5-9)

In verses 5-8 KāṇṢa answers his eighth question about the destination of one who thinks of KāṇṢa at the time of death. KāṇṢa explains that one must always think of Him, along with performing active devotional service. Such practice helps one remember KāṇṢa at the time of death and attain to His nature. KāṇṢa explains some ways to meditate on Him in verse 9.

Yogamisra bhakti (10-13)

A yogi can also attain Kṛṣṇa by uttering om and thinking of KāṇṢa at death. Yoga misra bhakti is described in verses 10-13.

Pure Devotional Service (14-16)

KāṇṢa urges Arjuna to engage in pure devotional service by remembering Him without deviation. There is no impediment in such service and one easily attains KāṇṢa.

Comparing the material and spiritual worlds (17-22)

The material world is miserable and temporary, as illustrated by the constant cycle of universal creation and destruction. By hearing this description one gains detachment from this world. In verses 20-22 the eternal nature of the spiritual world is described, as well as the means to attain it, devotional service to KāṇṢa.

The supremacy of devotion in attaining the Supreme (23-28)

In verses 23-26, The Lord describes different ways of leaving this world for the karmis and jnanis. But KāṇṢa's devotees need not worry about these paths, because simply by engaging in devotional service, they attain the beneficial results of all paths and at the end reach the supreme destination (verses 27-28). By hearing the middle six chapters of Bhagavad-gita in the association of devotees, one gets the benefits of performing all sacrifices, penance, etc., and one progresses from anartha-nivṛtti to pure love of KāṇṢa.

Chapter 9

The beginning chapters of Bhagavad-gita describe confidential knowledge of the difference between the soul and the body. Chapters Seven and Eight are more confidential because they describe devotional service, which brings enlightenment in KāṇṢa consciousness. Chapter Nine is most confidential because it describes pure, unalloyed devotional service. In the Eighth Chapter, KāṇṢa has explained that the ananya devotee surpasses both the path of light and darkness. Now KāṇṢa will explain how to become such an ananya devotee. The first step is hearing about KāṇṢa.

Hearing about KāṇṢa — qualifications and disqualifications (1-3)

A non-envious person can obtain the most intimate knowledge of the Absolute Truth by hearing, and can perceive KāṇṢa directly through the process of devotional service. A faithless person, however, must return to the path of birth and death (verses 1-3).

KāṇṢa's inconceivable relationship with the material world (4-10)

KāṇṢa pervades, creates, and annihilates the entire cosmos through His material energy. Although KāṇṢa is the Supreme controller, the material world nevertheless moves independently and Kṛṣṇa thus remains neutral and detached.

Non-worshippers and worshippers (11–19)

KāṇṢa compares the pure devotees to the impersonalists, demigod worshippers and those who worship the universal form. He also describes how to meditate upon Him as the *visva-rupa*.

Comparing demigod worshippers and devotees (20–28)

Demigod worship which neglects KāṇṢa as the supreme enjoyer is improper and causes fall down. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa, however, are personally protected by KāṇṢa, who helps them achieve His association. KāṇṢa accepts His devotees' offerings which are given in devotion. In verse 26, KāṇṢa describes pure devotional service.

The glories of directly worshipping KāṇṢa (27–34)

KāṇṢa advises Arjuna to perform *karmarpanam*, offering the fruits of all activities to Him, which will result in liberation from bondage to work (verses 27–28). KāṇṢa explains His relationship with His devotees (in contrast to His relationship with others); how He becomes a friend to His devotee and protects him despite accidental falldown. He gives shelter to anyone, regardless of birth, and assures everyone of attaining the supreme destination (verses 29–33). He concludes by giving the most confidential knowledge of how to engage in His devotional service. Verse 34 is essential and is repeated in BG. 18.66.

Chapter 10

KāṇṢa has already described devotional service, especially at the end of Chapter Nine. To help generate further devotion in His devotee, KāṇṢa now explains His opulence. (In Chapters Seven and Nine, He has explained knowledge of His energies).

KāṇṢa is origin of everything (1–7)

In Chapter Ten, KāṇṢa explains His opulence more specifically and thereby reveals Himself as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all.

The catur sloka (8–11)

The essence of Bhagavad-gita is stated in verses 8–11. All of KāṇṢa's opulences are summarised in verse 8. By knowing KāṇṢa's greatness, devotees develop love for Him and engage in devotional service. Because their minds are fixed on KāṇṢa, the devotees always relish discussions about KāṇṢa and cannot maintain their lives without Him (verse 9). When KāṇṢa sees the devotees' great eagerness to serve Him, He reciprocates by enlightening them from within their hearts (verse 10–11).

Arjuna's acceptance and his request (12–18)

After hearing the essential four verses of Bhagavad-gita Arjuna became completely free of all doubts and accepted KāṇṢa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He then expressed his eagerness to hear KāṇṢa's glories so he could always think of Him.

KāṇṢa's opulences (19–42)

In response to Arjuna's request, KāṇṢa describes the most prominent among His limitless, all-pervading opulences. KāṇṢa lists various objects or groups of living entities and states that He is their essence or the chief member of each group. After naming eighty-two opulences, KāṇṢa summarises by explaining that these opulences simply indicate His glory, for He pervades and supports the entire universe with a mere fragment of His total potency.

Chapter 11

In Chapter 11, KāṇṢa proves Himself as the Supreme Lord, and establishes the criterion that anyone who claims to be God must also show a universal form.

Arjuna's request and KāṇṢa's description of His universal form (1-8)

After hearing KāṇṢa say that He pervades and supports the entire universe, Arjuna wishes to see that all-pervasive form of the Lord. KāṇṢa first describes His universal form and then bestows upon Arjuna the vision necessary to see it.

Sanjaya's description of the universal form (9-31)

After seeing KāṇṢa's universal form with astonishment, Arjuna hesitatingly begins to describe what he sees. Arjuna first envisions all existence, immeasurable and radiant, situated in one place. Beginning with verse 19, Arjuna then sees KāṇṢa's frightening, all-destructive kala-rupa (form of time) which is eating all the soldiers on both sides. KāṇṢa had previously promised to show Arjuna things he would be interested in seeing. Arjuna thus sees the future outcome of the battle, wherein most of the soldiers on both sides are killed (verses 26-30). He then asks KāṇṢa, "Who are you? What is your mission?"

KāṇṢa's instructions to become an instrument (32-34)

KāṇṢa explains His form as time, the destroyer of all the worlds, and requests Arjuna, aware of the inevitable deaths of all the warriors, to become His instrument.

Arjuna's prayers (35-46)

Arjuna, trembling, prays to the universal form. He also begs KāṇṢa's forgiveness for having previously and in ignorance treated the Lord as his friend.

Only pure devotees can see KāṇṢa's two-armed supreme form (47-55)

In answer to Arjuna's fearful prayers, KāṇṢa shows His four-armed form before again returning to His original two-armed form. KāṇṢa informs Arjuna that His two-handed form is supreme and understandable only by His devotees engaged in pure, unalloyed devotional service.

Chapter 12

The Bhagavad-gita's middle set of six chapters began with KāṇṢa discussing bhakti and Arjuna wants it to end in the same way.

After witnessing KāṇṢa's awesome universal form, Arjuna wishes to confirm his own position as a devotee who works for KāṇṢa, as opposed to a jñāni who renounces work.

Bhakti over impersonalism (1-7)

Arjuna asks which is superior - worshipping KāṇṢa through devotional service or worshipping His impersonal feature. KāṇṢa immediately responds, saying that one engaged in His personal service is topmost. A worshiper of the impersonal is less perfect and undergoes more difficulty than one who worships KāṇṢa. The path of devotion is easier, and KāṇṢa personally delivers His devotee from material life.

Progressive stages of devotion (8-12)

KāṇṢa describes in reverse order the progressive path leading to pure devotional service. He first advises the devotee to fix his mind constantly on Him. If one cannot do that, one should purify oneself by following the rules and regulations of bhakti-yoga. If that is too difficult, one may engage in karma-yoga, giving up the fruits of work to KāṇṢa. If one cannot even follow this practice, then He recommends the indirect path, which begins with renunciation of work and leads to knowledge and meditation.

Qualities that endear one to KāṇṢa (13-30)

Having described the stages of devotion, KāṇṢa now enumerates the transcendental qualities automatically achieved by a bhakti-yogi, which endear the devotee to KāṇṢa. Pointing out these qualities further substantiates the theme of Chapter 12: that bhakti is the best method of spiritual advancement. KāṇṢa concludes that one who faithfully follows the path of devotional service, making Him the supreme goal, is

very dear to Him. The question of who is better — the personalist or the impersonalist — is resolved and devotional service is considered the ultimate processes of spiritual realisation.

Chapter 13

In the first six chapters of Bhagavad-gita, KāṇṢa discussed how karma-yoga, action on the platform of knowledge, leads to bhakti. In the second six chapters, KāṇṢa spoke directly of Himself and the glories of devotional service. In the third six chapters, KāṇṢa discusses how jnana leads to bhakti. Starting with the Thirteenth Chapter, how the living entity comes into contact with material nature and how he is delivered by the Supreme Lord through the different methods of fruitive activities, cultivation of knowledge, and devotional service are explained.

Ksetra and ksetrajna (1–7)

In Chapter 12, Verse 7, KāṇṢa has promised to redeem His devotees. To that end, He will now declare the knowledge needed to elevate His devotees from the material world. Arjuna asks KāṇṢa to explain six topics: prakṛti, puruṣa, ksetra, ksetra-jna, jnana, and jneya. KāṇṢa explains knowledge of the field of activities and the knower of the field.

The process of knowledge (8–12)

Having described knowledge of the field and knower of the field, KāṇṢa now explains the process of knowledge beginning with humility and culminating in realisation of the Absolute Truth (verses 8–12).

The object of knowledge (13–19)

In verses 13-19 the object of knowledge (jneyam), or the soul and Supersoul is discussed. Previously, KāṇṢa explained the soul and Supersoul as ksetrajna, or knowers of the field. By understanding the difference between the body, the soul and the Supersoul and by following the process of knowledge, the soul can transcend dualities, realise his eternal subordination to KāṇṢa and attain the supreme destination.

Prakṛti, puruṣa and their union (20–26)

Having described jneya as the self and the Supersoul, KāṇṢa now explains the soul and Supersoul as puruṣa, in terms of their connection with material nature. One who understands prakṛti, puruṣa and their interactions attains liberation from birth in this world. Other methods of understanding the Supersoul are jnana, astanga and karma.

Jnana caksusa: the vision of knowledge (27–35)

Those who see the distinction between the body, its owner and the Supersoul, and who recognise the process of liberation, can attain the supreme goal.

Chapter 14

Chapter Thirteen described the conditioned soul as distinct from material nature yet entangled by it, trapped within his field of activities. Chapter Fourteen reveals in detail how the living entity is limited and controlled by the powerful shackles of material nature — the three modes: goodness, passion and ignorance. At the end of this chapter, KāṇṢa informs us how to attain freedom from these modes.

Conditioning of the modes (1–9)

After glorifying the knowledge that He will now speak, KāṇṢa explains the relationship between material nature, the conditioned living entities and Himself. He impregnates the living entities into material nature. The eternal living entity connects with the material energy through conditioning by the three modes. The mode of goodness conditions one to happiness, passion to fruitive activities and ignorance to madness.

Characteristics, action and death in the modes (10–18)

KāṇṢa explains characteristics and manifestations of the modes (verses 11–13), death in the modes (verses 14–15), and the results of action in the modes (verses 16–18).

Transcending the modes (19–27)

One transcends all three modes by knowing that all within this world takes place under the modes, and by understanding that KāṇṢa's activities are transcendental to the modes. One who engages in undeviating devotional service comes to the level of Brahman, of which KāṇṢa is the source. Verse 22 answers Arjuna's first questions about the symptoms of a transcendentalist, and verses 23–25 answer his second question as to what is such a person's behaviour. Verses 26–27 discuss bhakti, the method of transcending the modes, thus answering Arjuna's third question.

Chapter 15

Chapter Fourteen described the modes of nature, those forces that simultaneously restrict and control a soul within his field of activities. Now KāṇṢa, using the allegory of an asvattha (banyan tree) describes the entire material world, with its varieties of fields of activities situated on higher and lower branches of that tree.

Becoming detached from the material world (1–5)

Although the living entities are KāṇṢa's fragmental parts, they are now struggling for existence, being entangled in this banyan tree of the material world. One must detach oneself from this reflection of the spiritual world by surrendering to KāṇṢa and thus proceed to the spiritual world. The banyan tree is analysed in the first five verses of this chapter. Then in verses 6–20, KāṇṢa describes purusottama-yoga.

Transmigration (6–11)

Although all living entities are eternally part and parcel of KāṇṢa, they are transmigrating from one body to another in search of pleasure. Transcendentalists see this clearly, but not the blind materialists.

KāṇṢa as maintainer (12–15)

Knowing KāṇṢa's opulent position as our maintainer on both the cosmic and personal levels — and His position as the compiler of Vedanta and knower of the Vedas — should attract us to Him.

Summary of Vedanta-sutra (16–20)

After concluding that He is the goal of the Vedas and the compiler of the Vedanta, the Lord summarises the Vedanta, which conclusively establishes His position as supreme. In the purport to verse 15, Srila Prabhupada indicated the significance of sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. Verses 16–18 give knowledge of our relationship with KāṇṢa (sambandha-jnana), and are also sometimes referred to as the tri-sloki Gita. KāṇṢa, as "the knower of the Vedas" and "the compiler of Vedanta," in these three verses assists souls in transcending material existence by summarising the essence of the Vedas, which is the Vedanta. Verse 19 indicates abhidheya-jnana, the process of attainment, and the final verse, verse 20, refers to prayojana, the goal.

The problems of material existence are due to two weaknesses of heart: the desire to lord it over material nature, which leads to attachment and the sense of proprietorship. The first five verses of this chapter describe the process of freeing oneself from these weaknesses of heart, and the rest of the chapter, from the sixth verse through the end, discusses purusottama-yoga.

Chapter 16

Chapter Fifteen described the banyan tree of the material world. The modes of material nature nourish both the upper, auspicious, divine branches of the tree and the lower, demoniac branches. In the Sixteenth Chapter, KāṇṢa explains the divine qualities that elevate one within the tree and lead to ultimate liberation.

Transcendental and demoniac qualities (1–9)

KāṇṢa explains in detail the demoniac qualities and the mentality which drives one down to the lower regions of the tree and ultimately to hell. He also explains the advantages and disadvantages of these qualities.

The demoniac nature (10–18)

After briefly describing the demoniac qualities, KāṇṢa further describes the activities, mentality and qualities of one who has demoniac tendencies.

Results of demoniac activities and the choice of elevation or degradation (19–24)

The result of performing demoniac activities is to be cast by KāṇṢa into lower species and other types of hellish life. Because lust, anger and greed are the beginning of demoniac life, all sane men should give them up and understand their duty by faithfully following the scriptures. The ultimate difference between divine and demoniac is that the divine follow scripture whereas demons do not.

Chapter 17

In Chapter 16 KāṇṢa has established that faithful followers of sastra are divine and that the faithless are demoniac. But into which category does a man fit who follows with faith something other than sastra?

Faith, worship and foods in the modes (1–10)

KāṇṢa answers by describing how the modes of material nature determine a person's faith, worship and eating habits.

Sacrifices, austerities and charity in the modes (11–22)

Lord KāṇṢa describes sacrifice, austerity, and charity under the influence of the modes of nature.

Chanting om tat sat purifies activities (23–28)

All activities are contaminated by the modes, and those defects can be offset by acting, even if within the modes of nature, in KāṇṢa's service and by chanting om tat sat. Actually, all our activities should be aimed at pleasing the Supreme Lord. When sacrifice, penance and austerity are performed without faith in the Supreme they are useless, both in this life and the next.

Chapter 18

The entire Bhagavad-gita is concluded in seventeen chapters, and to emphasise the goal of surrender to KāṇṢa, the essence of the previous chapters is taught in this, the final chapter. Here KāṇṢa concludes, as He has done throughout the Bhagavad-gita, that one should practise devotional service.

Karma-yoga: Superiority of working in devotion over renunciation of work (1–12)

KāṇṢa begins His summary of all He has previously spoken by reiterating His prescription that Arjuna renounce the fruit of work, not work itself. Verses 1–12 are a summary of the first six chapters of Bhagavad-gita, which describe karma-yoga (read purport, verse 1, para. 1).

Jnana-yoga (13–18)

After summarising His teachings on karma, KāṇṢa describes from the viewpoint of jnana (which is the subject matter of the last six chapters) how it is possible to act and yet remain free from all reactions. KāṇṢa cites Vedanta and analyses activities as comprised of five factors (verses 13–18).

The modes of nature (19–40)

He then describes in detail (verses 19–40) how one's work according to the five factors is dictated by the three modes of material nature. Knowledge in the modes is described in verses 19–22, whereas one's actions in the modes are described in verse 23–25.

Verses 26–28 describe one's performance of action, verses 29–32 describe one's understanding, verses 33–35 describe one's determination, and verses 36–39 describe one's happiness in the modes.

Worshipping KāṇṢa through one's work (41–48)

Although all work is controlled by the modes, as described in the previous verses, one can become free from the reactions of work by performing one's occupational duty as a brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, or sudra while at the same time worshipping the Lord through that work .

From jnana-yoga to pure devotional service (49–55)

Lord Kāṇṣa then explains the stage where one can give up prescribed duties, jnana-yoga, wherein one purifies himself by use of intelligence. This leads to the stage of liberation when one becomes qualified to perform pure devotional service (verses 49–55).

Surrender to Kāṇṣa (56–66)

After explaining the importance of devotional service for understanding Him, Kāṇṣa describes how one can overcome all obstacles by depending on Him and working under His protection. He next explains more confidential knowledge of Supersoul, then the most confidential knowledge of surrender to Him by becoming His devotee.

Arjuna agrees to fight and victory is assured by Sañjaya (67–78)

After hearing the instructions of Sri Kāṇṣa, Arjuna is fixed in determination and ready to fight. Sañjaya, after narrating this conversation to Dhrtarastra, ecstatically thinks of the universal form of Kāṇṣa and predicts victory for Arjuna, the supreme archer, for he is surrendered to Kāṇṣa, the master of all mystics. This is his reply to Dhrtarastra's oblique question, which comprises the opening verse of the Gita.

List of Key Verses (Bhagavad-Gita)

The following verses are the **Key Thematic Verses**. Students are expected to know in English (if not by heart, at least sufficiently well to be able to locate) many of these verses. **Key Memory Verses** are underlined. Students are required to learn these in both Sanskrit and English, and they will be assessed during the exams (Modules 1 & 2). The respective totals for both sets of verses are shown below in the two right-hand columns.

Chapter	V e r s e s	KMV's	KTV's
1.	--	0	0
2.	12 <u>13</u> 14 20 22 23 24 45 55 56 59 70	1	12
3.	4 5 6 7 8 9 13 <u>27</u> 30 43	1	10
4.	1 <u>2</u> 3 6 <u>8</u> <u>9</u> 11 13 <u>34</u>	4	9
5.	2 3 5 6 13 14 15 18 22 23 24 <u>29</u>	1	12
6.	1 6 20 21 22 23 26 27 29 30 31 32 35 46 <u>47</u>	1	15
7.	1 4 5 6 7 <u>14</u> 15 16 19 20 23 24	1	12
8.	<u>5</u> 6 7 14 28	1	5
9.	1 <u>2</u> 4 5 10 11 12 13 <u>14</u> 20 21 22 23 24 25 <u>26</u> <u>27</u> 29 34	4	19
10.	<u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>10</u> <u>11</u>	4	4
11.	54 55	0	2
12.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	0	11
13.	3 20 21 22 23 25 26	0	7
14.	<u>4</u> 6 7 8 18 <u>26</u> 27	2	7
15.	<u>7</u> 8 9 <u>15</u> 19 20	2	6
16.	13 14 15 19 21 23 24	0	7
17.	–	0	0
18.	11 42 43 44 46 47 48 <u>54</u> <u>55</u> <u>61</u> <u>65</u> <u>66</u>	5	12
Totals		27	150

Overview of All Major Themes

Bhagavad-gita

1. The Soul and Transmigration
2. Characteristics of the Self-Realised Person
- 3(a) The Levels of Knowledge
- 3(b) How to Receive Knowledge
4. Mind and Sense Control
- 5(a) The Yoga Processes
- 5(b) Renunciation of Work versus Work in Devotion
6. Levels of God-Realisation
7. Defeating Impersonalism
8. Demigod Worship
9. Devotees and Non-Devotees
- 10(a) The Relationship between Jiva, Isvara and Prakrti
- 10(b) The Material Modes of Nature
11. Varnasrama Dharma
- 12(a) Bhakti
- 12(b) Ananya-Bhakti

16 Themes

Bhagavad-gita – 150 Key Thematic Verses

page 68

Themes	Chapters and Verses																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. The Soul and Transmigration (15)		12-14 20, 22			14-15			5-6					22-23	18	8-9	19		
2. Characteristics of the Self-realised Person (14)		55-56 59, 70			18, 24	20-23			13-14					26				54
3(a). The Levels of Knowledge (17)		12-14 20		6, 8-9 11			4-7		2	8					19			65-66
3(b). How to Receive Knowledge (7)				1-3 34			1		1	10								
4. Mind and Sense Control (13)		59	43		22-23	6 26-27 35		7, 14	34							21		65
5(a). The Yoga Processes (12)						46-47	19	28				8-12	25-26					66
5(b). Renunciation of Work vs. Work in Devotion (13)		59	4-9		2-3 5-6	1												11
6. Levels of God-Realisation (17)						29-32	7		29, 34	8-11				26-27	15, 20			54, 66
7. Defeating Impersonalism (15)		12 23-24					7, 24			8		2-7		27	7			54
8. Demigod Worship (7)							20, 23		20-21 23-25									
9. Devotees and Non-devotees (14)			13				15-16		11-14 29							13-15 19 23-24		
10(a). The Relationship Between Jiva, Isvara and Prakrti (23)					13-15		4-7		4-5 10, 29	8-11			3 20-23		7, 15			61
10(b). The Mat. Modes of Nature (10)		45	27	11			14							4, 6-8 18, 26				
11. Varnasrama Dharma (7)				13														42-44 46-48
12(a). Bhakti (27)			9, 30		29	47	14, 19	5, 7 14	13-14 22, 26- 27, 29 34	8-11	54-55	2		26				55 65-66
12(b). Ananya-bhakti (9)									13, 22 26, 29 34		54			26				65-66

Major Themes in Bhagavad-gita (all main verses)

Themes	Chapters and Verses																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. The Soul and Transmigration		11-29			13-16		5	5-6 23-28					20-22 30-35	14-15 18	7-10	19-20		
2. Characteristics of the Self-realised Person		54-72		19-24	7-10 17-26	20-23			13-14			13-20		22-26		1-3		54
3(a). The Levels of Knowledge		11-25		5-11 24-42			4-14		2, 4-10 34	8-11			6-23 29-35	1-19 26-27	1-20			65-66
3(b). How to Receive Knowledge				1-3 34, 39			1		1	10			8-12					68
4. Mind and Sense Control		55-68	37-43	26-29	22-23	4-7 10-27 35-36		7-14	34			8				21		51-53 65
5(a). The Yoga Processes		39-41 48-51	3-9	19-24	2-12 26-27	10-27 46-47	19	10-13 28			53-54	3-7 8-12 20	1-23 25-26	1-19	1-20		1-22	2-12 13-18 66
5(b). Renunciation of Work vs. Work in Devotion		59	3-9		2-7													2-12
6. Levels of God-Realisation					15-16	27-32	7	3	29, 34	8-11 41-42		3-5	13-23 29-34	26-27	12-20			54 61-63 66
7. Defeating Impersonalism		12 23-24					7, 24 26	15	33	8		2-7		27	7			54
8. Demigod Worship			11-12	12			20-23		20-21 23-25								4	
9. Devotees and Non-devotees		49	13 26-29				15-18		11-14 29							1-24		
10(a). The Relationship Between Jiva, Isvara and Prakrti	21-22			5-11 35	13-16		4-7		4-10 22, 29-31	8-11			1-7 13-23	3-5	7 12-20			61, 66
10(b). The Material Modes of Nature		45	27		14		14						20-22	1-19 26			1-22	19-40
11. Varnasrama Dharma	39-43	31-38	5-16 22-26 29,33 35	13,15 26 31-33	29				32-33			10-12						7-9 41-48
12(a). Bhakti		49-51 61	9	9-11	29	47	1, 14 19	5, 7 10-14, 28	2,13,14 22,26- 27,29, 34	8-11	54-55	2,6-8, 13-20	11	26	18-19			46, 55 65-66
12(b). Ananya-bhakti								14	2,13, 22, 26 29,34	8-11	54	6-7		26	18-20			65-66

Homework Questions

Part One (Generic Questions)

for **Module One**, **Module Two** and **Module Three**

There are no rigidly defined answers for these questions (Part One). You may want to discuss answers in class, time permitting. Keep in mind also that by answering these questions you are training yourself to read in an active way.

- 1) Choose one verse/passage from this section which you find difficulty in understanding — examine and explain why. (Und)
- 2) Choose one verse/passage in this section which you don't understand so well/fully. Identify and write down up to three questions which, if answered, would help you to better understand the subject. (Und)
- 3) Write down what you consider to be the main philosophical points of this section. Identify some of the specific Sanskrit words/ phrases that directly relate to these main points. Make a note of any especially significant statements made by Srila Prabhupada. (Und/ SSK)
- 4) Explain how this section of verses relates to the last section of verses.
(Und/ SSK)
- 5) Choose one verse from this section which, if applied, would enhance your own Krishna consciousness. Write down a plan for doing this. (PeA)
- 6) Identify one verse/passage etc. that appears to “speak to you directly” (i.e. seems just relevant to you, and your current situation, challenges, etc). Explore and write down one thing you could do based on this to improve your spiritual life. (PeA)
- 7) Choose 1/2/3* (*delete as required) personal qualities mentioned in this section. Write down the specific behaviour traits that demonstrate this quality. Explore how well you are doing in developing this quality (perhaps even ask a devotee friend). (PeA)
- 8) Of all the Vaishnava qualities listed in this section, choose those in which you feel most challenged. Write down your behaviour/attitudes that demonstrate this. (PeA)
- 9) Choose a verse or passage from the section which you feel enhances your faith and conviction in Krishna Consciousness and/or Srila Prabhupada (and the disciplic succession) (F+C)
- 10) Choose one verse in this section which you consider most useful in preaching. Explain why and discuss. (PrA)
- 11) Identify one statement which appears to be contradictory to popular contemporary thought (values, opinions, etc.). Explain how you would present it to an audience of non-devotees in such a way as to be tactful but not compromising our principles and values. (PrA)
- 12) Considering the (many) current topical issues in society, choose a verse/passage that could constructively contribute towards that debate. Explain why you chose this verse/passage. (Th.A)
- 13) Choose one verse or passage from this section which reflects Srila Prabhupada's Mood and Mission (or just one of these). Write a paragraph or two exploring this. (M+M)
- 14) Choose a verse that relates to a difference of practice between members of ISKCON and those belonging to its broader tradition (e.g. Hinduism in general, other Vaishnava traditions, other Gaudiya Vaishnava traditions). Explain how those practices differ and explore reasons for the differences. (M+M)

- 15) Choose one verse that you feel is pertinent to Srila Prabhupada's life and/or ISKCON's mission. Explain what it means to you and how it affects your life. (M+M, PeA)
- 16) Select one verse/passage that you consider is relevant to ISKCON's development and explain. (M+M, Th.A).
- 17) Choose one verse in this section, and identify and explain how it is or could be misused (one example is enough). Then identify and explain the fallacy. Finally, disprove it. (AMI)
- 18) Choose one verse/passage from this section. Explain how it could be used to support non-Krishna conscious behaviour. Analyse the arguments (are they honest, logical, well-supported, etc.?) (AMI)
- 19) Choose one verse in this section that could serve as a trigger for helping you remember sastra in certain situations. Identify and briefly describe those situations. (SC)
- 20) Choose one verse/passage in this section that reminds you of something written by a person outside of the Vaishnava tradition (e.g. a play or poem). Evaluate their statements in the light of Krishna consciousness. (SC)
- 21) Choose one verse in this section about which you feel you have some realisation. Explore and discuss your insights and realisations. (Rea)
- 22) Choose one verse from this section which you have difficulty in accepting, or which raises doubts in your mind. Try to identify why. (Auth, F+C)
- 23) Choose one verse/passage that you have difficulty accepting (for example, it may appear illogical or exaggerated). Write a paragraph on how you deal with such scriptural passages (perhaps describing your thoughts, feelings, etc.). (Aut)
- 24) Choose a verse that is relevant to some dilemma or difficult choice you've had in life. Explore how scripture might be useful in ascertaining what is your best course of action. (Eva)
- 25) Choose a verse in this section that is relevant to Aim Number (specify 1–12) and explain why. (RfL, plus whatever Aim you specify)
- 26) Choose a verse/passage from this section which you really like, which inspires you and/or which stands out for you. Identify and explain why or how. (T/A/R)

Marking criteria for essays (which account for 50% of the total mark)

To get 70% an essay must satisfy 4 requirements:

- 1) correct philosophy
- 2) Vaisnava attitude
- 3) based on the appropriate section with quotes and references
- 4) the announced aim (from the 12 aims of sastric study, as explained in the Student's Handbook) is covered

To get **more** than 70% the essay should be/have:

- exceptional quotes,
- very poetic,
- great examples,
- personal examples,
- Srila Prabhupada's mood and mission very well expressed,
- clear intro/end,
- smooth flow,
- good structure,
- very strong arguments,
- catchy etc.

Part Two

(Content-specific Homework Questions for preliminary Self-Study)

Bhagavad-gētā 1-9

(Ch1. Verses 1–13)

Generic 26

1. How was Sai jaya able to envision the Battlefield of Kurukñetra even while he was in the room of Dhātārāñra?
2. Why is Dhātārāñra fearful about the outcome of the battle?
3. Why was Duryodhana confident of the full support of Bhēṁmadeva and Droëäcārya in the battle?

(Ch1. Verses 14–26)

Generic 21

1. State any three signs that point to a victory for the Pandavas.
2. Explain the significance of Krishna's name acyuta in verses 21-22.
3. Explain the significance of Arjuna's addressing Krishna as Hāñēkeça in verse 24.

(Ch1. Verses 27–46)

Generic 17

1. Explain the significance of Arjuna's addressing Krishna as Govinda in verse 32.
2. What is the significance of the word *kula-dharmāu*?
3. Make a summary list of Arjuna's arguments for not fighting.

(Ch2. Verses 1–11)

Generic 11

1. What words does Krishna use to describe Arjuna's compassion?
2. Summarize the main point of the purport to verse 2.7.
3. What exactly does a *pandita* not lament for?

(Ch2. Verses 12–19)

Generic 10

1. Summarize Çrēla Prabhupāda's arguments against Mayavada philosophy in the purports to 2.12–13.
2. What examples does Çrēla Prabhupāda give to show how one must perform one's duty in spite of inconveniences?
3. What is the proof of the presence of the soul?

(Ch2. Verses 20–30)

Generic 10 or 12

1. Explain the analogies of the "the surgeon" and "the justice of the peace".
2. Why does the Lord accompany jēva?
3. List the reasons, given in purport, why the soul is described as amazing?

(Ch2. Verses 31–41)

Generic 9 or 15

1. What are the two types of "*sva-dharma*"? What are their purposes?
2. Define Buddhi -yoga
3. What is "*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir*"?

(Ch2. Verses 42–53)

Generic 14

1. What is the relationship between the Vedas and the Krishna consciousness movement?
2. What is the aim of varëçrama-dharma?

(Ch2. Verses 54–63)

Generic 5

1. What does Çrēla Prabhupāda specify as being the most important symptom for recognizing a person's nature?
2. How does a sthita-dhēr muni regard happiness and distress?
3. What is the secret of success as shown by the example of Haridāsa Öhākura?

(Ch2. Verses 64–72)

Generic 8

1. Explain the analogy of the boat on the water.
2. Explain the night and day analogy.
3. How can one become actually desireless?

(Ch3. Verses 1–9)

Generic 6

1. What is the nature of the soul?
2. Explain the term "*mithyacarah*".
3. Drawing from 2.58 - 3.9 (verses & purports), list points showing the superiority of work in devotion over renunciation of work.

(Ch3. Verses 10–16)

Generic 12

1. Explain how one gradually become Kāñëa conscious by performing Vedic yajñ as.
2. Explain how the demigods are automatically worshiped when Lord Kāñëa is worshiped.
3. What is the result of eating Kāñëa prasādam?

(Ch3. Verses 17–32)

Generic 14 or 17

1. Why is a Kāñëa conscious person no longer obliged to follow the Vedic injunctions?
2. Why does Krishna strictly perform prescribed duties of *varēāçrama-dharma*?
3. Write a brief list of points comparing the *vimūhātmā* to the *tattva-vit*

(Ch3. Verses 33–43)

Generic 5 or 11

1. Explain the analogy of the "milk".
2. Briefly summarize Kāñëa 's instructions on conquering lust.

(Ch4. Verses 1–9)

Generic 13

1. Give evidence from the text to prove that a living entity can never equal the Supreme Lord.
2. Explain *ātma-māyayā*.
3. Why does Kāñëa appear on Earth?

(Ch4. Verses 10–33)

Generic 16

1. How is Kāñëa the "object of everyone's realization" according to his or her desires?
2. How is a person in Kāñëa consciousness transcendental to all divisions of human society?
3. How should one verify the standard actions of Kāñëa consciousness?
4. What is a devotee's attitude to longevity?
5. What is the purpose of the different types of sacrifices mentioned in this section?

(Ch4. Verses 34–42)

Generic 5

1. What are the three important aspects of one's relationship with a bona fide spiritual master?
2. Defeat the argument that the Lord looses His personality upon expanding throughout the creation.
3. How does one quickly attain the supreme spiritual peace?

(Ch5. Verses 1–6)

Generic 10

1. Why is Māyāvādē sannyāsa incomplete?
2. Make a list comparing the engagements of Māyāvādē sannyāsēs to those of Vaiñëava sannyāsēs as described in purport to verse 6.

(Ch5. Verses 7–19)

Generic 12 or 18

1. Why is someone absorbed in devotional service "dear to everyone"?
2. Explain the analogy of the lotus leaf.
3. What is the relationship between the soul, material nature and God in terms of action?

(Ch5. Verses 20–29)

Generic 9 or 12

1. Why do advanced transcendentalists have no desire for material sense enjoyment?
2. What is the "peace formula"?

(Ch6. Verses 1–9)

Generic 11

1. How is the *bhakti-yogi* the perfect *sannyāsi* at any stage of life?
2. Analyze the role of the mind in *yoga*.

(Ch6. Verses 10–23)

Generic 5

1. Why are the Impersonalist and the meditative yogé instructed herewith to be constantly engaged in their particular pursuits?
2. List the different principles given in these verses and purports which are different from those of popular so-called yoga societies.

(Ch6. Verses 24–33)

Generic 13

1. Explain how a yogé sees all living entities remain as the servants of God.
2. List different points from verse 33 and purport that show the impracticality of *Aññāi ga-yoga* for the present day.

(Ch6. Verses 34–47)

Generic 9 or 10

1. What are the three main paths by which self-realization is sought?
2. Explain what is *yogāc calita-mānasaù*.
3. Briefly summarize the process of gradual progression from Karma-yoga to Bhakti as given in purport to verse 6.47.

(Ch7. Verses 1–12)

Generic 17 or 19

1. What does Kāñëa imply by the words 'to know Me in full'?
2. Define *jī'āna* and *vijī'āna* according to 7.2?
3. Briefly analyze how from Kāñëa's eight separated material energies the 24 Material Elements are manifest.

(Ch7. Verses 13–19)

Generic 6 or 10

1. How does verse 14 exalt the position of *bhakti-yoga*?
2. List points from the purport describing the 4 types of *duñkātinaù*.
3. Why is the *jī'ānë* most dear to Krishna?

(Ch7. Verses 20–30)

Generic 13

1. Make a list of different points from the verses and purports of texts 20 to 23 which illustrate why Kāñëa considers demigod worshipers to be less intelligent.
2. Explain the analogy of the sun & stars covered by cloud.
3. How can one be freed from the dualities of delusion?

(Ch8. Verses 1–8)

Generic 5 or 23

1. List and explain the eight philosophical terms mentioned in texts 1-4.
2. Why is it important to cultivate remembrance of Krishna during one's life?

(Ch8. Verses 10–14)

Generic 15

1. What is the significance of the word "*yoga-balena*"?
2. What is the relationship between chanting Hare Krishna and *Om*?
3. What is the meaning of *ananya-cetäù*

(Ch8. Verses 15–28)

Generic 9

1. The Vedic literatures prescribe sacrifice for elevation to the heavenly planets, yet Krishna declares them also to be a place of misery. Why?

2. What are the auspicious and inauspicious times for leaving the body?
3. Why does a devotee not care for such formalities?

(Ch9. Verses 1–3) Generic 10

1. How does one develop faith in Krishna?
2. Briefly describe three classes of devotees.

(Ch9. Verses 4–10) Generic 11

1. Explain avyakta-mūrtinā.
2. Explain the apparent contradiction in texts 4 and 5
3. Explain udāsēna-vad āśēnam.

(Ch9. Verses 11–25) Generic 19

1. Summarize the verse and purport of text 11.
2. List the qualities and behavior of a Mahātmā.
3. Explain avidhi-pūrvakam.

(Ch9. Verses 26–34) Generic 26

1. Summarize the verse and purport of text 26 in terms of Preaching & Personal Application.
2. How is a devotee purified of any accidental faults?
3. Explain the significance of the words "*sadhur eva*."

Bhagavad-gētā 10-18

(Ch10. Verses 1–7) Generic 7

1. How this knowledge is better than what Kāṇhēa has already explained.
2. Why do even the great sages and demigods misunderstand Bhagavan Sri Kāṇhēa?
3. Explain how simply by knowing Kāṇhēa as the Supreme Lord, one is freed from all sins.
4. Summarize verse 10.7 and purport.

(Ch10. Verses 8-11) Generic 9 or 10

1. Explain Lord Caitanya's analogy of a seed in the purport to text 9.
2. Why is Çrēmad-Bhāgavatam very dear to the devotees, *vaiṇēavānāḥ priyam*?

(Ch10. Verses 12-30) Generic 22

1. How does text 12 indicate clearly that the Supreme is different from the individual soul?
2. Why does Arjuna ask Krishna to explain His opulences?

(Ch10. Verses 31-42) Generic 19

1. How does devotee relate to beauty of this world?
2. Why is worship of demigods thoroughly discouraged herein?

(Ch11. Verses 1–14) Generic 11 or 22

1. State two reasons why Arjuna asked to see the universal form of the Lord.
2. Why are pure devotees unconcerned with seeing the universal form?
3. Explain the shift of relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in verse 14.

(Ch. 11. Verses 15–34) Generic 5

1. Was Arjuna the only person to see the Universal Form of Krishna?
2. What was Kāṇhēa's mission?

(Ch11. Verses 35 –49) Generic 2

1. Explain the main point of verse 42 and its purport.

2. Why did Kāñēa show His universal form to Arjuna?

(Ch11. Verses 50-55)

Generic 3 or 6

1. What analogy does Çrēla Prabhupāda give to describe unauthorized commentaries on Bhagavad-gētā?

(Ch12. Verses 1-7)

Generic 9

2. Explain the analogy of the Post Box

3. Summarize main point of verses 6-7.

(Ch12. Verses 8-12)

Generic 16

1. Summarize the progression of advancement analyzed in verses 8 to 12.

(Ch12. Verses 13-20)

Generic 8

2. How does a devotee view distress and difficulty?

3. When is impersonal meditation useful?

(Ch13. Verses 1-7)

Generic 10

1. What is the difference between the two kñetra-jī as?

2. Explain the analogy of the king and the citizen.

3. Explain the connection between *brahma puccham* & Arjuna's inquiry in text 1?

(Ch13. Verses 8-19)

Generic 2 or 7

1. If the Lord is a far distance away, how can He accept things?

2. Explain the example of the sun in terms of the Supersoul's presence.

(Ch13. Verses 20 -26)

Generic 15

1. Explain the analogy of the residential quarters.

2. Explain the position of the Supersoul in relationship with the individual soul.

(Ch13. Verses 13.27- Ch14.5)

Generic 12

1. Summarize the philosophical content of verse 30 and purport.

2. Explain the analogy of the sun in verse 34.

3. Explain the analogy of the "scorpion's eggs".

(Ch14. Verses 5-18)

Generic 11 or 15

1. Briefly explain how each of the three modes are binding.

2. Summarize Çrēla Prabhupāda's criticisms of modern society given in this section.

(Ch14. Verses 19-27)

Generic 10

1. Explain how the devotee looks upon a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye.

2. Explain the analogy of the gold and the god mine

3. Explain the analogy of the servant and the king given in purport to text 27.

(Ch15. Verses 1-6)

Generic 6

1. List the different aspects of the analogy of the banyan tree.

2. Describe the process of removing oneself from the tree.

(Ch.15. Verses 7-14)

Generic 10 or 19

1. List the ways we are dependant on Kāñēa as mentioned in verses 12-14.

(Ch15. Verses 15-20)

Generic 10

1. What are the two classes of living entities?

2. Why is Kāñēa celebrated in the Vedas as the Supreme Person?

(Ch16. Verses 1-9)

Generic 5

1. Explain *abhayam*.
2. What is the demoniac view of the creation? What does that view lead to?

(Ch16. Verses 10-18)

Generic 11

1. List different aspects of religion in 'name only'.
3. What does the demoniac person envy?

(Ch16. Verses 19-24)

Generic 10

1. What are the three gateways to hell?
3. Explain the position of the scriptures as described in this section?

(Ch17. Verses 1-10)

Generic 12

1. Why are there different types of religion?
2. What do persons influenced by the three modes respectively worship?

(Ch17. Verses 11-19)

Generic 5

1. Explain the austerities of the speech, body and mind.

(Ch17. Verses 20-28)

Generic 11

1. Explain *oṁ tat sat*
2. Summarize the main point of verse 28 and the purport.

(Ch18. Verses 1-18)

Generic 4

1. What is the difference between sannyāsa and tyāga?
2. Explain renunciation in the mode of passion. Summarize the main point of verses 13-17

(Ch18. Verses 19-40)

Generic 11 or 12.

1. Briefly explain the proper perspective that one should have of the activities that he is performing according to verses 13-16?
2. Explain knowledge & happiness in the three modes.

(Ch18. Verses 41-54)

Generic 16

1. Why should one perform his own work rather than that of others?
3. Explain the analogy of fire covered by smoke.
3. Explain the significance of text 54 in terms of defeating Mayavada philosophy.

(Ch18. Verses 55-63)

Generic 6

1. Explain the analogy of the green bird.
2. Explain the analogy of the high –speed motorcar.
3. What is the main point of verse 63?

(Ch18. Verses 64-66)

Generic 5

1. How would you answer the claim that one can not surrender to Krishna until he is fully purified from sinful reactions (see 7.28)?
2. List the six items of surrender.

(Ch18. Verses 67-78)

Generic 26

1. To whom should one teach Bhagavad-gētā?
2. What are the results of teaching Bhagavad-gētā?
3. Summarize the main point of verse 75.

Sample exam questions

Chapter 1

1. Why was Dhrtarastra concerned that the battle was to be fought at Kuruksetra?
2. Why did Duryodhana call Dhrtadhyumna "drupada putrena"? (son of Drupada)
3. Why was Duryodhana confident of the full support of Bhishma and Dronacarya?
4. What word is used to describe the conch shells of Krsna and Arjuna. (Sanskrit or English)
5. Give Srila Prabhupada's comments on the significance of 3 of the following 4 names of Krsna: Hrsikesa; Acyuta; Govinda; Madhusudana.
6. Explain the significance of Krsna driving Arjuna's chariot.
7. Arjuna's compassion was based on ignorance; why then does Srila Prabhupada occasionally glorify it?
8. Define varna-sankara.
9. Define garbhodhana-samskara.
11. List four of Arjuna's reasons for not fighting.
12. List the six aggressors one can kill without sinful reaction. (according to Bhagavad Gita)
13. Match the following. Each item in right may be used once, more than once, or not at all.
 - (1) Arjuna's son
 - (2) Arjuna's uncle
 - (3) Arjuna's father
 - (4) Arjuna's cousin
 - (5) secretary of Dhrtarastra
 - (6) Arjuna's mother
 - (7) Arjuna's brother-in-law
 - (8) Arjuna's teacher
 - (a) Dhrtarastra
 - (b) Duryodhana
 - (c) Dronacarya
 - (d) Sanjaya
 - (e) Dhrtadhyumna
 - (f) Karna
 - (g) Bhishma
 - (h) Pandu
 - (i) Prtha
 - (j) Abhimanyu
 - (k) Bhishma
 - (l) Nakula

Chapter 2, part 1

1. Explain the analogy of the sun's three features.
2. Define "krpana".
3. Krsna states, "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." Srila Prabhupada then explains how this verse defeats Mayavada philosophy: Krsna is stressing individuality, both past and future. However mayavadi's may counter that the individuality Krsna is speaking of is not spiritual but material. Prabhupada in turn defeats this counter argument in two ways. Give both of them.
4. Use the example of the sun covered by clouds to explain the presence of the soul in the body.
5. List the six transformations of the material body.
6. Explain the analogy of the judges immunity from the "violence" he orders.

7. Explain the example of the surgeon operating on a patient.
8. Explain the analogy of two birds in a tree.
9. Explain the analogy of accepting the mother's authority to know one's father.
10. According to Krsna, what is worse for a ksatriya than death?
11. Explain the two sva-dharmas. (specific duties)

Chapter 2, part 2

1. Briefly define sankhya.
2. Buddhi-yoga is a combination of karma and jnana. Explain.
3. How is "vyavasayatmika" intelligence defined in the purport?
4. Explain the analogy of watering the root of the tree and serving Krsna.
5. How does Krsna describe the main subject of the Vedas?
6. Krsna gives an analogy which begins, "All purposes served by a small well can at once be served by a large reservoir of water." Complete it.
7. What does Srila Prabhupada say of both a Krsna conscious person and a fool?
8. Explain the comparison of a yogi to a snake charmer.
9. Briefly explain what we are to learn about sense control from the stories of Visvamisra muni and Haridas Thakur.
10. Describe how one falls down from spiritual life.
11. Explain the analogy comparing a man's intelligence to a boat on water.
12. Explain the analogy of the rivers entering into the ocean.
13. List three basic philosophical points that Krsna makes in chapter two.

Chapter 3

1. Based on Arjuna's question in 3.1, what was his understanding of Buddhi-yoga?
2. "The spirit soul has to be engaged in the good works of Krsna consciousness, otherwise it will be engaged in occupations dictated by the illusory energy." Explain.
3. Who does Krsna call a pretender (mithyacara)?
4. What two benefits does Krsna say come to one who performs yajna?
5. Complete: "Food grains are produced from _____, which are produced by _____, which is born of prescribed duties."
6. A self realized person has no duty. Why does Krsna recommend that one perform duties anyway?
7. Who does Krsna give as an example of having attained perfection by performing prescribed duties?
8. While speaking about regulated sense enjoyment Srila Prabhupada writes, "There is always the chance of an accident even on the royal roads." What are we being warned about?
9. What example is used to describe the way love of Krsna is transformed into lust?
10. List the three degrees of covering of the soul by lust.
11. Where, according to Krsna does lust sit?

Chapter 4

1. What was Arjuna's question in the beginning of Chapter four and why did he ask it?
2. Both Krsna and the living entities have "taken birth" in this world many times. What does Krsna say is the difference between them?
3. Explain the analogy of the rising and setting of the sun in relation to Krsna's appearance in this world.
4. What is the main reason for the descent of the "Krsna avatar."
5. In 4.10 Krsna says that we must overcome attachment, fear, and anger. Give a short explanation of each.

6. Define karma, akarma, and vikarma.
7. Explain the example comparing a "patient suffering from a disorder of the bowels" to a conditioned soul.
8. What do Krsna and Srila Prabhupada say is the basic principle of sacrifice for a brahmacari? For a householder.
9. List three (other than the above two) types of sacrifices mentioned in chapter four.
10. What does Srila Prabhupada say is "the secret of advancement in spiritual life"?
11. Complete Krsna's statement: "- As a hazing fire turns firewood to ashes,!?!".
12. Krsna says, "For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this life nor in the next." If we have doubts what does Krsna recommend we do?

Chapter 5

1. What was Arjuna's question at the beginning of chapter five?
2. In 5.4 Krsna says, "Only the ignorant speak of devotional service [karma-yoga] as being different from the analytical study of the material world [sankhya-yoga]." What is Krsna's explanation of this statement?
3. Explain the analogy of the lotus leaf.
4. When I lift my arm, I am not really lifting it. Explain.
5. What does Krsna say are "the sources of misery?"
6. Explain the analogy beginning with the quote, "By vision, by meditation, and by touch only do the fish, the tortoise and the birds maintain their offspring."
7. List the eight stages of Patanjali's yoga system.

Chapter 6

1. List the names of the first six chapters of the Gita.
2. Krsna says that renunciation (sannyasa) is the same as yoga. What is His explanation of this?
3. "He [the yogi] sees everything - whether it be pebbles, stones or gold - as the same." Who does Krsna say is more advanced than this?
4. Explain the example of a lamp in a windless place.
5. What is the moral of the story of the sparrow who lost her eggs?
6. Explain the example in which a chariot is compared to the body.
7. Arjuna says that to control the mind is more difficult than controlling the wind. What is Krsna's response?
8. What is compared to trying to ignite a fire while pouring water on it?
9. Explain the example of a riven cloud.
10. What two examples does Srila Prabhupada give of devotees who took birth in "acarya" families?
11. According to Krsna, if after a long practice of yoga one deviates, what will happen to him? After a short practice?
12. How does Srila Prabhupada define 'bhajate'?

Chapter 7

1. What does Krsna and Srila Prabhupada stress in 7.1 as the best process to understand the science of Krsna?
2. Name and describe the functions of the 3 Purusa incarnations.
3. Krsna speaks four verses explaining how He is all pervasive by His material and spiritual energies. List six of the items mentioned.
4. Krsna says that the whole world does not know Him. What reason does He give for this?

5. The Jiva is Krsna's superior energy. Why then is it so difficult for the living entity to overcome the influence of the inferior material energy?
6. Give short definitions of the four types of men who do not surrender to Krsna.
7. Give short definitions of the four types of men who approach Krsna.
8. Krsna glorifies one of the four types of "pious" men. Who is he and why, according to Srila Prabhupada, is he special?
9. Explain the analogy comparing demigod worship to the attempt to feed the body by supplying food to the ears, or eyes, etc.
10. Krsna discusses worshipping demigods for material benefits. What two things in this process does Krsna say come from Him?
11. Even when Krsna was present on the earth five thousand years ago, some people could not understand who He was. What is Krsna's explanation of this?
12. Who does Krsna say is able to engage in His service with determination?

Chapter 8

1. Give Krsna's definition (in 8.3) of the following: Brahman, Adyatma, Karma.
2. Give Krsna's definition (in 8.4) of the following: Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva, Adiyajna.
3. Why did Maharaja Kulasekhara pray that he die immediately?
4. Krsna tells Arjuna to "always think of Me and at the same time _____." Complete the statement.
5. What is the significance of "yoga-balena" (by the strength of yoga practice) in relation to the main theme of chapter eight?
6. In human years, how long is a day of Brahma?
7. Why does a devotee not have to worry about the different yogic paths at the time of death?

Chapter 9

1. In 9.1 Srila Prabhupada discusses confidential knowledge, more confidential knowledge, even more confidential knowledge, and most confidential knowledge. Give his explanation of them.
2. Why is this most confidential knowledge called pavitram (the purest)?
3. Krsna says 'mat sthani sarva bhutani.' all living beings are in Me. Then he says. "na ca mat sthani bhutani," all creation does not rest in Me. Explain briefly.
4. Explain the analogy of the wind and the sky.
5. Explain the analogy comparing a man smelling the aroma of a flower to Krsna's connection to this world.
6. Krsna speaks two verses describing a mahatma; give four of His descriptions therein.
7. Explain how Krsna is equal to everyone but partial to His devotees.
8. Krsna says that His devotee should not be criticized for an accidental falldown. What reason does He give for this?

Chapter 10

1. According to Parasara Muni, what does "bhagavan" mean?
2. In 10.4-5 Krsna lists various qualities of living beings, Choose three of the following five and give Srila Prabhupada's explanation of them.
Intelligence; knowledge; truthfulness; control of the mind; non-violence.
3. What three groups of patriarchs does Krsna say are born from His mind?
4. Why should one not neglect to fully understand how great Krsna is."
5. Give two reasons why Arjuna asks Krsna to describe His opulences.
6. Complete Krsna's statements:
Among men I am _____.

Of mountains I am _____.
Of sacrifices I am _____.
Among perfected beings I am _____.
Of poetry I am _____.
Among great thinkers I am _____.
Of those who seek victory I am _____.

Chapter 11

1. Give two reasons why Arjuna wanted to see Krsna's Universal form.
2. Why do pure devotees not care to see the universal form.
3. Upon seeing the universal form, Arjuna's rasa with Krsna charged. Later (before returning to it's original) it changed again. What were these two changes?
4. List eight of Arjuna's descriptions of the Universal form.
5. Srila Prabhupada writes that there is a specific plan being carried out in this material world. What is this plan?
6. Why did Arjuna apologize to Krsna?
7. Srila Prabhupada gives a third reason (besides above two) why Krsna showed Arjuna the Universal form, What is it?

Chapter 12

1. List the names of chapters seven to twelve.
2. What is Arjuna's question at the beginning of this chapter?
3. Give and explain Krsna's answer to Arjuna's question at the beginning of this chapter.
4. Explain the comparison of the mailbox to deity worship.
5. Krsna gives a sequence of recommendations to Arjuna. Give the first four. (Do this; if you can't, do this; etc)
6. List eight qualities of a devotee mentioned by Krsna that endear the devotee to Krsna.

Chapter 13

1. How does Krsna define the field of activity (ksetra)?
2. How does Krsna define the knower of the field (ksetra-jna)?
3. Where does Krsna say one can find further knowledge of the field of activities and it's knower?
4. Give the Sanskrit and English explanation of the five stages of Brahman realization. (beginning with anna-maya)
5. List the twenty-four elements of the field of activity.
6. List twelve items of the process of knowledge.
7. Which two items in the process of knowledge does Srila Prabhupada say are most important?
8. What in particular does Krsna say occurs from association with the modes of nature?
9. Explain the analogy comparing the souls subtle nature to the sky's subtle nature.
10. Explain the analogy comparing the soul in the body to the sun, in the universe.

Chapter 14

1. What does the example of the scorpion laying it's eggs in rice illustrate?
2. Give two of Krsna's descriptions of the man in the mode of goodness.
3. Give two of Krsna's descriptions of the man in the mode of passion.
4. Give two of Krsna's descriptions of the man in the mode of ignorance.
5. What does Krsna say about the three modes that indicates that it is not possible to be permanently situated in any one of them?

6. What is the destination of one who dies in the mode of goodness; passion; ignorance?
7. Arjuna asks three questions: "What are the symptoms of one who has transcended the modes? What is his behavior? How does one transcend the modes? Answer one of them.

Chapter 15

1. What does Krsna compare to a banyan tree.
2. In the verses and purports the analogy of the banyan tree is discussed in detail. List four descriptions of this "tree."
3. With what weapon should one cut down the banyan tree?
4. Explain the example of the "air carrying aromas."

Chapter 16

1. Which of the following does Srila Prabhupada say are especially meant for sannyasis?
Study of the Vedas; Purification of existence; fearlessness; self control; austerity; cultivation of spiritual knowledge.
2. Which of the following does Srila Prabhupada say are especially meant for grhasthas?
Austerity; self-control; cleanliness; charity; aversion to faultfinding; performance of sacrifice.
3. Give four of the six demoniac qualities that Krsna mentions.
4. What Vedic injunction does Srila Prabhupada criticize modern society for breaking in regards to women?
5. List six of Krsna's descriptions of the demons.
6. What does Krsna do with the envious and mischievous?
7. What are the three gates to hell.
8. According to Krsna, what is the basic difference between the activities of those who are divine and those who are demoniac.

Chapter 17

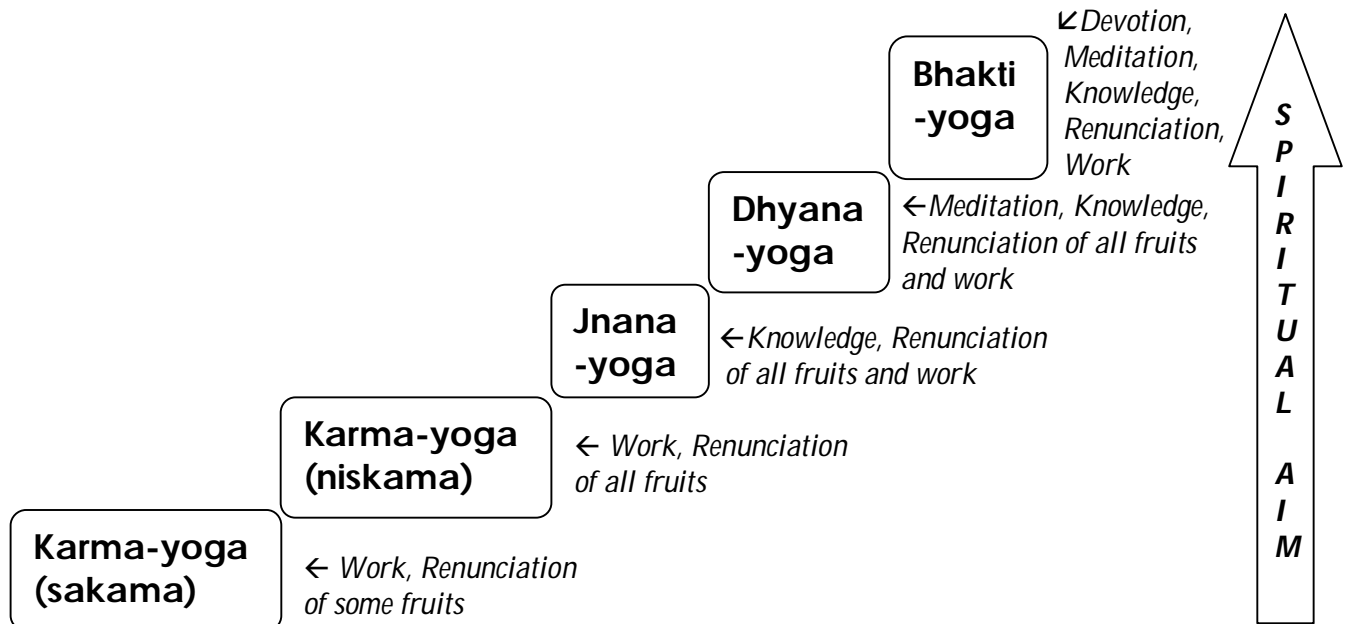
1. What was Arjuna's question in the beginning of Chapter 17?
2. What does Krsna say are the different objects of worship for people in the three modes?
3. List five characteristics of food in the mode of goodness.
4. List five characteristics of food in the mode of passion.
5. List three characteristics of food in the mode of ignorance.
6. List two characteristics of sacrifice in the mode of goodness.
7. Give one characteristic of sacrifice in the mode of passion.
8. List three characteristics of sacrifice in the mode of ignorance.
9. List five characteristics of austerity of the body.
10. List four characteristics of austerity of speech.
11. List three characteristics of austerity of the mind.
12. List three characteristics of charity in the mode of goodness.
13. Give two characteristics of charity in the mode of passion.
14. List three characteristics of charity in the mode of ignorance.
15. Briefly explain the meaning of "om tat sat"
16. What does Krsna say about activities performed without faith in the supreme?

Chapter 18

1. Give each of the names of chapters 13-18.
2. What is Krsna's conclusion about sannyasa (the renounced order of life) and tyaga (renunciation)?

3. What does Krsna say is renunciation in the mode of ignorance?
4. What does Krsna say is renunciation in the mode of passion?
5. What does Krsna say is renunciation in the mode of goodness?
6. List the five factors of action?
7. What is Krsna's definition of knowledge in the mode of goodness?
8. What is Krsna's definition of knowledge in the mode of passion?
9. What is Krsna's definition of knowledge in the mode of ignorance?
10. How does Krsna define action in the mode of goodness? (give 2 of 4 items)
11. How does Krsna define action in the mode of passion?
12. How does Krsna define action in the mode of ignorance? (give 2 of 3 items)
13. How does Krsna define understanding in the mode of goodness? (give 4 of 6 items)
14. How does Krsna define understanding in the mode of passion? (give 4 of 4 items)
15. How does Krsna define understanding in the mode of ignorance? (give 2 of 2 items)
16. How does Krsna define determination in the mode of goodness? (give 2 of 3 items)
17. How does Krsna define determination in the mode of passion?
18. How does Krsna define determination in the mode of ignorance? (give 3 of 5 items)
19. How does Krsna define happiness in the mode of goodness?
20. How does Krsna define happiness in the mode of passion?
21. How does Krsna define happiness in the mode of ignorance?
22. Krsna gives nine qualities of a brahmana. List six.
23. Krsna gives seven natural qualities of ksatriyas. List five.
24. Krsna gives three types of work for vaisyas. List all of them.
25. "By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect." How does Krsna say this can be done?
26. Explain the analogy comparing entering the Lord's abode to a green bird entering a green tree.
27. Krsna tells Arjuna that "if you do not fight under My direction, you will fight in some other situation." Why is this?
28. Who does Krsna say is most dear to Him?

Yoga Ladder

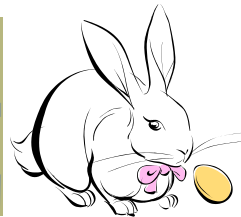


Karma-kanda



Regulated sense gratification

Animal life
(two-legged)



Unregulated sense gratification

The Yoga Ladder

The word “*Yoga*” means to link. Linking of our consciousness with the Supreme Absolute Truth. There are different types of yoga systems described which are named differently according to the particular method adopted. When the linking process is predominantly in fruitive activities it is called *karma-yoga*, when it is empirical it is called *Jnana Yoga* when it is predominantly in a devotional relationship with the Supreme Lord it is called *Bhakti-Yoga*, which is the ultimate perfection of all yogas (B.G.6.46)

The material world is meant for the gradual purification of the conditioned souls, through the process of sacrifice. By this process, the conditioned souls can re-awaken their spiritual consciousness, which they have forgotten. The Yoga Ladder is the Supreme Lord’s system for facilitating this.

1. KARMA-KANDA: (No spiritual objective). This is the first step in the elevation of a conditioned spirit soul. By encouraging regulated sense gratification, it brings animalistic people to a platform of religiosity. *Karma-kanda* purifies the practitioner in many ways.

- A. It makes him practice some regulations, which brings detachment. Detachment fosters knowledge.
- B. It brings him to the *Vedas*, which also contain *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Upasana* (worship) sections.
- C. By practicing *yajnas* (sacrifice) and getting results, it gives him faith in *sastra* (scriptures).
- D. It makes him associate with Brahmanas (those who are engaged in the cultivation of spiritual knowledge) who can give him knowledge.
- E. After bringing one to the Vedic path and giving one faith, it will naturally lead him to examine the *Jnana* (knowledge) sections and *Upasana* (worship) sections, because the sense gratification of *karma-kanda* inevitably leads to frustration.

2. KARMA-YOGA: The practice of *karma-kanda* leads one to the next step, *karma-yoga*. Here one is frustrated with living for sense gratification and wants to advance spiritually, but is still too attached to completely stop working for himself. Therefore, one starts *karma-yoga* on the *sakama* (with desire) stage.

2a. SAKAMA STAGE OF KARMA-YOGA: (Spiritual objective with material desires). Here one will work in the world, but will still be attached to some of the fruits for himself. Out of a desire for purification, he will give up more and more fruits of his labor. This practice leads one to the stage where he is completely detached to the fruits of his activities (*nishkama-karma-yoga*)

2b. NISHKAMA-KARMA-YOGA: (Spiritual objective) Here one has some fixedness in transcendental knowledge. Generally one at this stage is detached from the fruit of his labor, but is still attached to the work itself.

3. JNANA-YOGA: (Spiritual objective) Can be equated to giving up all social obligations in pursuit of spiritual advancement. This is not recommended by Krishna because one must be highly qualified to fully give up work.

4. ASTANGA-YOGA: (Spiritual objective) This is a yoga system which helps one to achieve just as that obtained by *nishkama-karma-yoga*.

There are two stages in *astanga-yoga*. *Yogaruruksu* (the beginning stage) and *Yogarudha* (the advanced stage). These are further divided in to eight steps (*asta* means “eight”, and *anga* means “parts”).

Of the eight steps in *astanga-yoga*, the first two are *yama* and *niyama* i.e., following the prohibitions and regulations. After one learns to strictly follow the rules and regulations, he begins to practice *asanas*, sitting postures (what people commonly call *hatha-yoga*). While the *asanas* are being mastered, one begins *pranayama*, breathing exercises. The breath is intimately connected with the mind. Therefore *pranayama* helps to control the mind. When his mind is controlled, the aspiring yogi advances to the practice of *pratyahara*, withdrawing his senses from their objects. When he becomes detached, he practices first *dharana*, then *dhyana*, different intensities of meditation. Such meditation leads to the final stage, *samadhi*.

Different transcendentalists attain distinct kinds of *samadhi*. In *samadhi*, the mind and consciousness are fully focused on the Absolute. The *jnani* focuses on the *Brahman* (the impersonal, all pervading aspect of the supreme) the *Patanjali yogi* on *paramatma* (the localized aspect of the Supreme who is situated within the heart) and the *bhakti yogi* on *Krishna* (the Supreme Lord with all His opulances, one who has a spiritual form composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss).

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura explains that in the *yogaruruksu* (beginning) stage, one works in *nishkama-karma-yoga* while simultaneously practicing *astanga-yoga*. That purifies his heart. When the aspiring yogi becomes elevated in his practice to the point of *yogarudha*, he gives up *nishkama-karma-yoga*. Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana adds that the *yogarudha* stage begins at *dhyana* (intense meditation on the Supreme Absolute Truth, Krishna).

5. BHAKTI-YOGA: Is a quality that can permeate any of the stages that involve a spiritual objective, but generally, it is only fully entered into after the *jnana* stage.