
VAISHNAVA TRAINING & EDUCATION

Course Material

STUDENT'S HANDBOOK

for *the Bhakti Śāstri Course*

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

The VTE Bhakti Sastri Course Materials
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Teachers formally facilitating the VTE Bhakti Sastri Course are permitted to copy the “Student’s Handbook” and the “Student Worksheets Book”, for distribution solely to students sitting the course.

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These materials include:

The Teachers’ Handbook	
The Students’ Handbook	
Student Worksheets Book	
Syllabus One	(Module One)
Syllabus Two	(Module Two)
Syllabus Three	(Module Three)
Syllabus Four	(Module Four)
Book of Quotes One	(Module One)
Book of Quotes Two	(Module Two)
Book of Quotes Three	(Module Three)
Instruction Manual	(CD version only)

For more information on VTE courses and materials, please contact Vaishnava Training and Education (see above). You may also contact the VTE for information on updated and hard-copy versions of this Bhakti Sastri Course.

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This book (Student’s Handbook) – not available separately
(First edition)

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DEDICATION

To

**His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

**who intended that his disciples and followers
diligently study and apply his teachings
for the welfare of all**

tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavyatī
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ñkitāni yat
śṛṅvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaḥ

On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.

(Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.11)

In this way you have to understand, by studying carefully the philosophy. We have got so many books now and I want all of my disciples to read them carefully. Soon we shall be instituting Bhakti-sastri examinations and all brahmanas will have to pass. So utilize whatever time you find to make a thorough study of my books.

(Letter from Srila Prabhupada to Upendra, 7th July 1976)

FOREWORD

I heartily welcome the publication of this new VTE Course as a significant step forward for ISKCON. Srila Prabhupada intended his society to be led by educational values, as indicated by ISKCON's first purpose:

To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real peace and unity in the world.

Srila Prabhupada not only gave priority to the publication and marketing of his books, but left specific instructions for their systematic study. Nearly thirty years later, this order remains unfulfilled. This particular course, I believe, has the potential to at last fulfill Srila Prabhupada's directives; most notable are its proposed systems for global implementation, including already-written teacher training modules that complement and extend existing VTE courses.

This curriculum has a number of other distinguishing features. Possibly it is the first to be built on sound and explicit educational principles and a well-articulated methodology. It thus goes beyond memorisation and intellectual understanding, to explicitly promote students' application of knowledge, their development of appropriate values, and, ultimately, personal realisation. This slant on conduct and character, I believe, gives it great potential in addressing our numerous individual and societal challenges. Furthermore, its detailed delineation of "the aims of sastric study" is a welcome feature at a time within ISKCON marked by lack of clear direction. I was particularly impressed by the aim of "Mood and Mission", which even today will help students appreciate Srila Prabhupada continuing presence.

Conscientious teachers will recognise how this course offers support to the less-able and yet respects the expertise and initiative of the more-experienced. For students it offers a quality of learning which is relevant, practical and enjoyable. I particularly liked the use of progressive assessment procedures, such as project-work, which free students from unnecessary pressure and promote their natural creativity.

In conclusion, I think this course will appeal to many sections of our membership. Particularly, though, I appeal to our leaders to provide concrete support for its global implementation. Co-operation between managers and educators may hold the key to a successful future, and ensure that this initiative bears fruit – happy, learned and balanced devotees, who can form the nucleus of an evolving brahminical and Krishna-conscious leadership.

My heartfelt thanks to all those devotees who, over a period of five years, have helped so far in developing this essential aspect of ISKCON's work.

Sesa das Adhikari

28th December 2000

The GBC Ministry of Education

Executive Members (December 2000)

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Bhurijana das (Surrender Unto Me)
Gauri das (NOD Study Guide)
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for their vision, support and encouragement.

Introduction

Welcome to the new VTE Bhakti Sastri Course and to your copy of the *Student's Handbook*, which you'll be using in conjunction with your *Student Worksheets*. These materials are to last the duration of the course, so please look after them, perhaps writing your name on the front.

Quite naturally, you'll supplement these two books with your own notes. The following recommendations may be helpful. This course has been structured about a set of clearly defined aims (as you'll soon learn in the orientation lessons), and the following suggestions are based upon them.

Consider keeping:

- (1) a personal journal (recording some of your innermost reflections). You could also include some "mini-action-plans", as a way to implement what we've learned.
- (2) a compilation of Krsna conscious analogies (there's already a useful list from the *Isopanisad* on page 61)
- (3) a preaching portfolio, consisting of arguments against the various non-theistic philosophies and world-views.
- (4) an anthology of verses and scriptural passages that have special significance for you.
- (5) a list of ways in which people (including sometimes our devotees) misuse sastra (relating to our Aim of "Academic Integrity")

More and more, ISKCON devotees recognise the need to not only appreciate our theology but to successfully apply it in our personal and public lives. This calls for the development of the corresponding skills and values and a deep assimilation of sastric knowledge. This new course has been designed with these purposes in mind, and with a corresponding emphasis on responsible and interactive learning. We therefore request you to not only learn from others but to actively contribute towards a dynamic learning process.

The VTE wishes to constantly improve its services to education. If you have any suggestions as to how the course can be improved, and especially the student materials, then please do get in touch. Our details are on the inside of the front cover.

Many thanks, and all best wishes for an exciting and rewarding course

Chapter One

A Concise Overview of the Bhakti Sastri Course

This Chapter offers you a brief overview of the entire course. Your tutor will provide further details regarding your schedule. It is important that you study the next two chapters, which explore the rationale behind sastric study and the purposes of the Course. Much of this material will also be covered in the opening, orientation lessons, prior to beginning study of the Bhagavad-gita.

Modules

The VTE Bhakti Sastri course is broken into four modules, as follows:

Module 1	Bhagavad-gita, Chapters 1–9
Module 2	Bhagavad-gita, Chapters 10–18
Module 3	Nectar of Devotion, Isopanisad, Nectar of Instruction
Module 4	Thematic Module, covering all four book

Some courses will offer a single module, whereas most will cover all four. With the full course, there are two main options, as follows:

Option One	4 Module Course	Thematic lessons taught separately during Module 4, towards end of course
Option Two	3 Module Course	Thematic lessons integrated into systematic lessons during Modules One to Three

In the latter case, the thematic lessons from Module Four are not neglected, but are integrated within the other three Modules. If you are not sure which of these courses you are sitting then please consult your tutor.

Materials

You should already have the following materials:

- **The Student Handbook (this book)**
- **The Student Worksheet Book**

Naturally you will also need an ample supply of pens and paper. Access to a computer is helpful, as we strongly recommend that you type coursework assignments.

Note; If you are interested in getting further materials then please ask your course teacher or contact the Bhaktivedanta Library Services in Radhadesh, Belgium (the main distributor for VTE publications.)

Number of Lessons

The following chart shows the total number of recommended lessons (1.5 hours each) for the entire course:

Lessons	
Orientation	3
Module One	38
Module Two	33
Module Three	45
Module Four	16
Total	135

The orientation lessons are normally integrated into Module 1, giving a total of 41 lessons for this 1st module. If you are sitting the Three-Module Course, then the 16 thematic lessons from Module four will be integrated into the other 3 Modules.

Time Requirements

The recommended total time of study for the entire course is **450 hours**. In addition to the 90 minutes within the classroom, students are expected to spend another one to one-and-a-half hours in self-study. The following chart shows the approximate time allocations.

Learning Exercise	Time spent (hours)
Lessons	205
Regular Self-study	135 - 205
Project Work (Assessment Papers 2 & 3)	40
Exams (Assessment Paper 1)	5 (4 x 1hr.)
Total	410 – 480 hours

Students engaged in self-study or on distance learning courses will be expected to spend 2.5 to 3 hours on each lesson (i.e. the same in total as devotees sitting the regular VTE course.)

The VTE recommends that a full time course lasts about four months. This entails a total of 26 hours of study per week. The shortest viable course is 3 months, which needs about 35 hours per week. Naturally the time you need to dedicate each week is inversely proportionate to the length of your particular course.

Formal Assessment

VTE Assessment for the Bhakti Sastri aims to combine the best of both local and central resources to ensure that cooperatively we meet the dual purposes of:

- i) helping students to improve
- ii) accurately certifying students throughout the world.

The following is an outline of the process.

1. Means of Assessment

Type of Assessment	Percentage of Marks	Corresponding Papers
Closed Book Written Examination	33%	Papers One
Written Project Work (Coursework)	67%	Papers Two & Three

N.B.: Personal interviews may occasionally be used, in the case of a marginal pass or fail and/or to check the originality of a student's work.

2. Issuing and Marking Papers

- Papers are issued centrally (currently from the VTE in Oxford):
- Local Teachers will mark the Papers.
- These are sent to an external moderator who awards the final marks and grades.

3. Marks and Grades

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Marks</u>	<u>Definition</u>
A	85+	Distinction/High-honours
B	75 - 74	Commendation/Honours
C	65 - 74	Average pass
D	55 - 64	Less than average
E	50 - 54	Marginal pass
F	45 - 49	Marginal fail
G	- 44	Fail

5. The Assessment Papers

The following chart shows the twelve papers you'll need to complete. There are four exams of one hour each; the remaining eight papers consist of brief course-work assignments, which you will have plenty of time to complete outside of the classroom.

	Paper One	Paper Two	Paper Three
Module One (Block One)	Exam	Coursework	Coursework
Module Two (Block Two)	Exam	Coursework	Coursework
Module Three (Block Three)	Exam	Coursework	Coursework
Module Four (Block Four)	Exam	Coursework	Coursework

- As shown above, each Assessment Block consists of 3 papers. They are as follows:

Paper One	Closed-book Exam (Knowledge)
Paper Two	Coursework (Understanding and Application)
Paper Three	Coursework (Values and Higher Skills)

- More details on assessment and sample papers are included in Chapter 3 of this book.
- Please note that students sitting the Three-module Course are still required to sit the fourth assessment block.

6. The Assessment Schedule

- Coursework Papers (One and Two) can be handed out (at the discretion of the teacher) at any time after the start of the corresponding module. The VTE recommends that they are circulated roughly half-way through each Module. At the very least students must have two weeks to complete these assignments. For more details, consult your course tutor.
- You will normally sit Paper One, the written exam, just after the end of each Module.
- If you are sitting a Three-module Course, then you'll get the Fourth Block coursework papers during the third and final module, and sit the exam some time after its completion (and preferably a little time after the exam for Module Three.)

7. Certification

- All students on official courses will receive a VTE Certificate upon the successful completion of all Four Assessment Blocks. All students will also receive a detailed breakdown of their achievements, highlighting their specific strengths and challenges.
- Students sitting a single module will be accredited for it, and receive detailed results, but must complete the other modules before receiving their official certificate.

Chapter Two

A Framework for Sastric Study

Introduction

Learning and teaching sastra is arguably the most important aspect of a Krishna conscious education. Srila Prabhupada's books form the foundation for ISKCON's activities and devotees hold them in the highest esteem.

Superficially at least, it appears that this admiration has often detracted devotees from considering exactly how we study and teach such sacred literature. In educational terms, validity of content hardly legitimises the entire learning process. We are not, therefore, underestimating Srila Prabhupada's books when we say that there must also be an appropriate educational discipline. Of course, the basis for such already exists, but it remains to be codified and systematically transmitted, Without this, even the teaching of scripture remains largely ineffective.

The VTE has therefore attempted to construct a framework for scriptural study. We have done this not by rigidly defining practice (which very often stifles individual initiative) but by identifying universal values and principles that can inform an evolving methodology. This then serves as the basis for good classroom practice. By these standards, VTE Bhakti Sastri teachers are trained and accredited to deliver the course,

In this chapter we touch on this methodology, which embodies what we have termed an "aims-driven approach". On this basis, and with wide consultation, we have painstakingly developed our "Twelve Aims of Sastric Study". One of these aims is to help students develop healthy and responsible study habits. To this end, we hold that it is not enough for teachers to know "where they going", but they must make the aims and objectives of any course clear to the student. This is often termed 'transparency'. This, coupled with clearly-articulated spiritual standards, helps to suitably motivate students.

We therefore request that you become actively involved with the learning process and take some time to understand and assimilate our "Twelve Aims". We anticipate your welcoming the significant emphasis given here to the practical application of knowledge and the systematic development of Vaisnava values.

What is Sastric Study?

By the term “sastric study” we refer to the study of the Vedic scriptures (sastra), and specifically the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. The importance of Srila Prabhupada’s books is encapsulated in the following excerpts from ISKCON Law:

Srila Prabhupada, the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON

Definition

To fulfill the previous *acarya*’s desire for a united worldwide preaching organisation to expand Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mission, Srila Prabhupada founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as a distinct branch of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaisnava sampradaya*. Therefore he is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is the Founder-Acarya of ISKCON. This means that he is ISKCON’s link with the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaisnava-sampradaya*, that his writings, oral teachings and exemplary actions remain the permanent and irreplaceable basis for all subsequent teachings of ISKCON. He is and will remain always the instructing spiritual master of all devotees in ISKCON. (Law Revision committee 9.6.90).

Principles

- 1) Srila Prabhupada is the foundational *siksa-guru* for all ISKCON devotees because he has realised and presented the teachings of the previous *acaryas* of the *Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaisnava-sampradaya* appropriately for the modern age.
- 2) Srila Prabhupada’s instructions are the essential teachings for every ISKCON devotee.
- 3) Srila Prabhupada’s books are the embodiment of his teachings and should be accepted as the standard by all future generations of ISKCON.

The Four Sastric Degrees

Srila Prabhupada himself presented an outline for the study of scripture, as demonstrated by the following excerpt from one of his letters:

Bombay
10 January, 1976

My Dear Svarupa Damodara,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to thank you for your letter dated December 26th, 1975, and I have noted the contents carefully.

Your plan to have the Bhaktivedanta Summer Institute in one of our farms is a very good idea. . . .

. . . . brahmana means pandita. Therefore I am suggesting examinations. Bhakti-sastri - (for all brahmanas) based on Bhagavad-gita, Sri Isopanisad, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction, and all the small paper backs. Bhakti-vaibhava - the above plus first six cantos of S.B. Bhaktivedanta - the above plus cantos 7-12 S.B. Bhakti-sarvabhauma - the above plus Caitanya-caritamrta.

These titles can correspond to entrance, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. So just consider how to organize this Institute. At Mayapur we shall finalize everything.

Hoping this meets you well.

Your ever well-wisher,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
ACBS/tkg

There are several other references Srila Prabhupada made to these degrees, with some variations. For this and other reasons, ISKCON devotees will hold different opinions as to what should be the exact nature of the four courses. The VTE respects the fact that other devotees may hold differing views. It intends and hopes that this course will be recognised by the ISKCON Ministry of Education, but also hopes that other devotee educational institutes write their own ISKCON-approved courses.*

The broad framework for the Four Degrees, largely based on this letter, is shown on the next page

**As of the date of publication (January, 2001) of this first edition, we are still awaiting approval*

Overview of the Four VTE Courses

On the basis of Srila Prabhupada's letter, the VTE has proposed:

A. Four consecutive courses, focusing on the books shown in the table below:

<p>1. Bhakti Sastri <i>Bhagavad-gita</i> <i>Nectar of Devotion</i> <i>Sri Isopanisad</i> <i>Nectar of Devotion</i></p>	<p>2. Bhakti-vaibhava The first six cantos of <i>the Srimad Bhagavatam</i></p>
<p>3. Bhaktivedanta The second six cantos of <i>the Srimad Bhagavatam</i></p>	<p>4. Bhakti-sarvabhauma The entire text of <i>the Caitanya-caritamṛta</i></p>

B. The above four courses are “nested”.

In other words, for any “degree”, the specific materials for previous degrees are also studied. For example, Bhagavad-gita is studied throughout all four courses. This suggests that from Bhakti Vaibhava onwards it will be studied in relation to the other relevant books and at progressively higher levels.

C. The Bhakti Sastri will be the equivalent of a university entry course.

(e.g. in the UK, the two-year ‘A’ level). This will determine the level and length of this course, and subsequent courses will be similarly based on Srila Prabhupada's instructions.

D. The Bhakti Sastri Course (and final assessment) should be completed at about the same time a devotee is ready for second (*brahmana*) initiation.

The VTE has ascertained that this usually occurs when a candidate has been seriously practising Krishna Consciousness for three years (though this figure appears to be progressively increasing!). Since the longest recommended term of part-time study is two years, this suggests that devotees should have been “seriously practising Krishna Consciousness” for at least one year (or the equivalent of living in the temple for one year).

These requirements should have been made clear to devotees before enrollment. If you now feel that you are insufficiently experienced, then do consult your course tutor.

The Overall Purposes of Systematic Śāstric Study

We have already touched on 'Clarity of Purpose', and three other principles expressing the broad aims of a Krishna Conscious education (pages 14-15). In following these principles, the VTE has developed an "Aims-driven" approach towards education.

Srila Prabhupada: "If you have no goal, it is simply useless. There is the example: 'A man without any purpose is like a ship without a rudder.' An airplane normally goes with an aim to land in some country. But if he flies on without any known destination, then there will be disaster. So without an aim, what is the use of practice?"

The following is the VTE's over-arching purpose in promoting the systematic study of Srila Prabhupada's books:

The Overall Purpose of Systematic Śāstric Study

To nurture the evolution of a brahminical, Krishna-conscious leadership, whose members are expert in the study and assimilation of Śāstric knowledge and are proficient in its application - in their own lives, in helping others, and in perpetuating the mission of Srila Prabhupada.

The educational Aims, to be fulfilled through the teaching process, are listed on the next page. You may wish to compare them with the overall purpose written above.

Please note:

- 1) The VTE has established that their Sastric courses themselves are equipping students only with those skills absolutely essential to Sastric study. The Bhakti Sastri course is not, for example, a general preaching course, though it is an essential part of any preacher training programme. The VTE highly recommends students to sit complementary courses (for example, the VIHE Course, "Clear Thinking and Strong Speaking").
- 2) the quote above is the precis of a passage from a conversation with Prithu Putra Prabhu. It has been edited for clarity.

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 (please refer to page 36 for more details)

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 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
4. To enhance devotees desire and ability to preach effectively.
5. To help build and maintain students' faith and conviction in:
 - (a) the process of Krishna consciousness
 - (b) the sastra as its foundation
6. 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
7. 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
8. To develop students' analytical, interpretative and evaluative skills, particularly in respect of the practical application of sastric knowledge
9. 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
10. To ensure that devotees develop moral and academic integrity in the interpretation, evaluation and application of sastric knowledge
11. 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
12. 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.

N.B. For quotes from Scripture supporting these Aims please refer to pages.

The Aims of Sastric Study in a Nutshell

Each Aim for sastric study is expressed in a few words as follows. Each of these Twelve Aims has its corresponding Objectives. It is essential that students also understand these 12 categories by referring as needed to the Aims, on the previous page, and, if possible, the corresponding Objectives on pages 28-30)

Each Aim is also denoted by a two or three letter code, as shown below and used in the Homework Questions. Students should try to memorise these codes.

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

Please note:

(1) Aim number 11 is broken down into two halves, namely:

11(a) “Taste/Appreciation/Relevance” **TAR**

11 (b) “Study Skills” **SSK**

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

(2) Aim number 12 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.

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 śruti ... 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, Janajamadhuh , Bombay, 15 November, 1975
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 Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, and it can be said that the devotee who knows Kṛṣṇa knows everything (15th Chapter). Still, the philosophical process never stops and the devotee continues to increase his knowledge, even though he knows everything.
Letter, Caturbhuji, Bombay 1972
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
3. 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
3. 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 Gosvāmis.
Lec, NOD Bombay, 73
4. 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
4. 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

5. 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, Satyabhāma, Mayapur, 1972

5. 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-gītā 8.21-22, New York, November 19, 1966

5. jñāna vijñāna āstikyam, āstikyam means “full faith in the śāstras and in God.” That is called āstikyam. If you have full faith in the revealed scriptures, then you are āstikyam. 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

6. What Krishna said forty millions of years ago, or five thousand years ago, is also correct today. That is śāstra. 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 Vṛndāvana, 30 November 1976

6. 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

7. The Bhāgavad-gītā 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 Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement;

CC Mad 19.167

7. Nor it is possible that everyone should become a brāhmana. It is not such an easy thing. But a class of brāhmanas must be maintained ... to give council to the ksatriyas.

Conv Hyderabad 22th August 1976

8. 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 param manaḥ*. 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 buddhiḥ*. 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**
8. Although Kṛṣṇa 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**
9. 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**
9. 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**
9. 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-carṅgī 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**
9. 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 *vāṇī* or *vāpū*. 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 Vṛndāvana 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**
10. 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 śāstras. 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.**
10. Somebody is misusing the words "so 'ham," and "*aham brahmāsmi*" 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**

10. But the Westerners are very expert in misinterpreting even their own Bible. We say that if you interpret any śāstra, whether the Bible or Bhagavad-gītā, then it is no longer śāstra, but simply your plaything. **MW, 2 April 1973**
10. So, on the contrary, our political leaders are misinterpreting śāstra and trying to mold it to the materialistic way of life. **Darshan, Hrishikesh, 9 May 1977**
11. All the devotees connected with this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must read all the books that have been translated (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Srimad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā 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**
11. Bhagavad-gītā or Srimad-Bhāgavatam 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 kṛṣṇa-kathā, the topics of Kṛṣṇa, 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**
11. The householder should study the Vedas every day ... **SB 11.17 Chapter Summary**
12. 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**
12. 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**
12. 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**
12. Śāstra-caksus. 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**

Making Sense of Our Twelve Aims

Our Twelve Aims are quite complex, and need some effort 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. Please note that it is not absolutely essential that students study this and the next two pages, but we do strongly recommend it.

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	Faith and Conviction	Authority
Understanding	Preaching Application	Mood & Mission	Academic & Moral Integrity
Realisation	Theological Application	Evaluation	Responsibility for Learning

Notes:

1. Students might find it a useful exercise to relate these Aims to our Overall Purposes of Sastric Study (page 16) 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 usually familiar, namely:
 - **Sadhana** (personal application)
 - **Preaching** (preaching 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). Learning is not merely an academic process. This application of knowledge 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 both *Personal Application* and to *Preaching Application*.

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

Ourselves Expectations of the Course

Use the box below to write down what you expect from the course (in terms of what you hope to achieve, rather than regarding the teaching style). Consider what you'd like to be able to do at the end of the course (something that you can't do now or would like to do better). Jot down a few notes.

My Expectations

Now consider how your responses above relate to our Aims. Perhaps compare your responses to the remarks in the table on the previous page, and use the space below to make a few notes. Ask such questions as, Are there some I have given great emphasis to? Are there some not relevant to me? Do I have any aims not included in the list?

Chapter Three

THE Bhakti Sastri Course

You have already read the first chapter giving you a concise overview of the course. Here we'll go into more details within three broad categories, namely, (1) Aims, (2) Objectives, and (3) Assessment

The Aims of the Course

- The Aims of the Bhakti Sastri Course correspond to the Twelve Aims of Sastric Study (page 17). However, for each of the four successive awards, different degrees of priority are awarded to each Aim. For example, at Bhakti Sastri level, “Knowledge” is considered important (covering 33% of the total assessment), whereas “Evaluation” is given a relatively low priority (accounting for only 4%). This does not mean that delivering the Aim of Evaluation is unimportant at this level. It is essential to consider the future and to “plant some seeds”, but relatively less time will be spent on this particular Aim.
- The various “weights” given to each Aim are reflected in the Formal Assessment Procedures, where (as we hinted above) each Aim is awarded a specific percentage of the total marks,
- For formal assessment purposes at this Bhakti Sastri level, some of our Aims are clustered together to form “Nine Assessment Groups” (NAG’s). All questions for both Examinations and Project Work (coursework) will fall under one of these NAG’s.
- Each of our NAG’s fall under one of three categories (Attainment Targets), which directly relate to our three papers, as follows:

Paper One Knowledge Attainment Target 1

Paper Two Understanding and Application Attainment Target 2

Paper Three Values and Higher Skill Attainment Target 3

- Do note that “Responsibility for Learning” is not to be formally assessed at this stage. The mood and style of the teacher, coupled with more progressive assessment procedures (e.g. coursework), should ensure that this Aim is fulfilled.
- The Nine Assessment Groups are listed overleaf. Also shown are:
 - 1) the priority given to each Aim in terms of a percentage of marks
 - 2) the corresponding Attainment Target and Paper

The Nine Assessment Groups

AT1 Paper 1	Knowledge (Memory and Recall)	33%
AT2 Paper 2	Understanding	15%
	Personal Application (+ Faith and Conviction)	10%
	Preaching Application (+ Theological Application)	10%
AT3 Paper 3	Mood and Mission	8%
	Academic Integrity	7%
	Authority	7%
	Sastra Caksus	6%
	Evaluation	4%

Note:

- 1) The Aim of 'Faith and Conviction' is at this stage included under "Personal Application" and any question will fall under this Assessment Group.
- 2) 'Theological Application' is given only elementary treatment at this stage and questions will be included under "Preaching Application" (the two go together quite naturally, as we've already discussed)
- 3) For Modules 1–3, all NAG's are assessed except for "Evaluation".
- 4) For Module Four, all NAG's are assessed except for "Sastra Caksus".
- 5) The previous two points are demonstrated in our sample Assessment Papers, shown on pages 32 – 37
- 6) Aims are of little use unless we translate them into Objectives. These tell us clearly what students are expected to do (i.e. the behaviour that indicates we are fulfilling our educational Aims). We advise students to regularly review this list (shown on the next page)

Bhakti Sastri Objectives

For each of our Aims we have identified corresponding Objectives which are specific to the Bhakti Sastri Course (for subsequent courses they will be similar but will include others at higher levels) .

Students can study these to know exactly what they should be able to do that shows that we are meeting our Aims. In other words, what is required of them in completing the corresponding Assessment Papers.

Please note that they are listed here not according to our Nine Assessment Groups, but consistent with the original list of twelve aims on page 17. In this way you can more easily cross-refer.

1. Knowledge (Memory and Recall)

students should be able to:

- Recall and repeat important verses, facts, concepts, analogies, philosophical points etc. according to:
 - i) their location within scripture
 - ii) their relevance to specific subjects or themes

2. Understanding

students should be able to:

- Explain the content of scripture in their own words.
- Relate contents of scripture to their own experience.
- Relate and compare between the various books, chapters, etc., key concepts, philosophical points, slokas, stories, analogies, etc.
- Explain the implications of any concept/principle, or its application
- Explain by using scripture the causes of various phenomena.
- Synthesise various nuances of understanding, and draw well-balanced conclusions.
- Analyse/explain/resolve apparent contradictions,
- Present answers logically and systematically.

3. Personal application

students should be able to:

- Select material that is relevant to their personal lives and the situations they meet.
- Explain how the content of scripture applies to their own lives.
- Use scripture to identify their own level of spiritual understanding, and subsequently to select material that is relevant to them.
- Identify room for personal improvement based on scripture.
- Demonstrate a willingness to change his/her opinion/outlook/behaviour on the basis of scripture (and to avoid using scripture to reinforce existing values and worldviews).
- Take into consideration a number of relevant verses.
- Identify and express doubts.
- Express appropriate Vaishnava values.

4. Preaching Application

students should be able to:

- Select scriptural references appropriate to the topic.
- Express sastric understanding in their own words.
- Present points suitable to the audience/situation, making the topic accessible and pre-empting the audience's doubts.
- Remain faithful to sastric conclusions.
- Present sound logical arguments.
- Demonstrates the values worthy of a preacher/minister (compassion, tact, etc.).
- Demonstrate academic integrity (see Objective 10).

5. Faith & Conviction

students should be able to:

- Demonstrate faith in sastra.
- Describe how the practices and principles included in scripture work for them (and not simply everyone else).
- Reasonably explain why they are convinced.
- Demonstrate thoughtfulness and consideration in their approach towards scripture.
- Demonstrate understanding and realisation of sastra.
- Honestly express doubts, even of elementary facts and concepts.
- Express their faith/conviction/realisation in their own words.

6. Authority

students should be able to:

- Demonstrate acceptance of the authority of scripture.
- Explain with reason and logic the need to accept Vedic authority.
- Explain why they personally accept Vedic authority.
- Explain, with reference to scripture, the need for a mood of open and honest inquiry.
- Reasonably express their doubts about scriptural statements, and explain how they deal with them.
- Appropriately deal with apparently contradictory or ambivalent statements, or those that appear to contradict commonsense, modern science, etc.
- Examine and explore the content of scripture from a wide range of perspectives.

7. Theological Application

students should be able to:

- Select references appropriate to a range of moral, social, topical, personal or theological issues.
- Demonstrate how the Krishna Conscious theology, often expressed in terms of the Vedic social context, is relevant today and in a different cultural setting.
- Identify the principles and values behind Vedic and Vaishnava injunctions, and (other) context-relevant instructions and apply them according to time, place and circumstance, and specifically within the contemporary context.
- Present Krishna Conscious principles, values and conclusions in a way that is accessible to the intended audience
- Demonstrate an understanding of topic, particularly through an ability to express in their own words
- Present sound logical arguments
- Demonstrate the values worthy of a preacher/minister (compassion, tact, integrity, etc.).

8. Evaluation

students should be able to:

- Determine the merits and/or de-merits of any action or response to a particular situation.
- Demonstrate awareness of the need to consider the consequences of any action.
- Identify appropriate/relevant scriptural references.
- Consider apparently conflicting references and to still draw a conclusion (preferably) consistent with both.
- Identify the principles behind Vedic and Vaishnava injunctions and ascertain any order of priority.
- Draw on a wide range of principles in order to determine an appropriate response to any given situation.
- Examine a situation and/or response to that situation from a wide range of perspectives.
- Demonstrate values consistent with devotional life and as endorsed by scripture.

9. Mood and Mission

students should be able to:

- Explain how a verse/purport/statement relates to and/or reflects Srila Prabhupada's mood and mission.
- Explain how Srila Prabhupada's translations and purports give insight into his mission and that of ISKCON.
- Evaluate Srila Prabhupada's conduct and his attitude towards practice (rules and regulations etc.) in the light of traditional Gaudiya Vaishnava theology.
- Identify the main principles upon which Srila Prabhupada's mission is built and relate these to corresponding scriptural references.
- Apply scripture to compare and contrast attitudes and behaviour worthy of members of ISKCON with those which are inappropriate.
- Identify how Srila Prabhupada's personal qualities (as exhibited through his mood and mission) relate to scripture.
- Determine the role that Srila Prabhupada's books play in furthering his mission, and in the lives of his followers.

10. Academic Integrity

students should be able to:

- Recognise and identify use of scripture which demonstrates a lack of academic integrity (according to the common mistakes we have identified (please refer to page 95).
- List and explain the common ways of misusing scripture.
- Exercise academic integrity in the use/application of scripture.
- Differentiate between the different categories of scriptural content.

11. Responsibility for Learning

students should be able to:

- Demonstrate heart-felt appreciation of:
 - *Scriptural verses/passages*
 - *Scriptural study (especially with devotees)*
 - *The relevance of scripture to his/her personal life*
 - *The contribution that the Lord, the Parampara, Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON have made towards their lives through scripture*
- Enthusiastically relate the contents of scripture to their personal lives
- Demonstrate an ability to study by themselves, and to initiate taking guidance from, or learning with, others when needed
- Apply the skills modelled by the facilitator, and demonstrate initiative in developing their own study methods.

12. Sastra Caksus/Realisation

students should be able to:

- Recall and apply verses appropriate to situations in which they find themselves.
- Identify KC verses, stories, etc., related to the things of the world.
- Demonstrate the correct Vaishnava attitudes and perspectives towards situations.
- Demonstrate appreciation of how Krishna is working in and through the world.
- Appreciate the imminence of Krishna — how he is present with us in the world.
- Identify Krishna Conscious truths, principles, values etc. in other philosophies/theologies, and in other aspects of human culture (e.g. literature).
- Identify the Krishna Conscious truths, principles, values, etc. they perceive in the natural world.
- Explain their own realisation of sastra, relating it to their own experience and demonstrating integrity of thought, word, feeling and action.

Overview of All Papers

The following charts give an overview of each paper. The first relates to the first three Modules (systematic lessons) and the lower chart to Module Four (thematic lessons).

On subsequent pages are listed sample Assessment Papers, in this case from Module 3. If you would like to see samples for Module Four (which is somewhat different) then please ask your course tutor for copies (included in Section 8 of his or her Syllabus).

Modules 1-3 (Systematic)		
Paper 1 (One hour)	12 questions (out of 12) 4 x slokas (5 mins) 8 x others (5 mins)	(Knowledge - Memory & Recall)
Paper 2 (1,000 words)	4 questions (out of 8) 2 x 200 words 1 x 300 words 1 x 300 words	(Understanding & Application) (Understanding) (Personal Application) (Preaching Application)
Paper 3 (1,000 words)	4 questions (out of 8) 1 x 250 words 1 x 250 words 1 x 250 words 1 x 250 words	(Values and Higher Skills) Mood and Mission Academic Integrity Authority Sastra Caksus

Module 4 (Thematic)		
Paper 1 (One hour)	12 questions (out of 12) 4 x slokas (5 mins) 8 x others (5 mins)	(Knowledge - Memory & Recall)
Paper 2 (1,000 words)	3 questions (out of 6) 1 x 400 words 1 x 300 words 1 x 300 words	(Understanding & Application) (Understanding) (Personal Application) (Preaching Application)
Paper 3 (1,000 words)	3 questions (out of 6) 1 x 250 words 1 x 250 words 1 x 500 words	(Values and Higher Skills) Mood and Mission Academic Integrity + Authority Evaluation

VTE Bhakti-Sastri Course

Module Three

Assessment Paper One (Written Examination – 1 Hour)

“Knowledge (Memory and Recall)”

Note to the Local Teacher:

- Students should complete this paper without consulting books, notes or other people.
- At your discretion, ESL Students may be given more time, up to an extra 30 minutes.
- Before the exam starts, students have 5 minutes to read the paper, during which they cannot write, or talk to others (except to the supervisor for clarification on any points)

To the student:

- Please write your answers legibly in black or blue ink. Untidy or illegible papers may be returned unmarked. Clearly number all your answers.
- Please answer all the following twelve questions. Each should take about five minutes.
- For sloka questions, the English does not have to be precisely word-for-word as in Srila Prabhupada’s books. Diacritical marks are not required for Sanskrit text.
- For other questions, concise answers of no more than 60 words (and often less) are usually sufficient for obtaining full-marks. Do not supply overly-long answers, and specifically not more than any stated maximum.

Nectar of Devotion Questions

1. What is Srila Rupa Goswami’s definition, in Sanskrit and English, of pure devotional service?
2. Write out, in Sanskrit and English Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu’s verse 1.2.234, beginning with “*atah sri Krsna namadi*”
3. What are the six characteristics of pure devotional service? Give a brief sentence describing each one. In what stages of bhakti do each of them manifest?
4. a) What is the definition of *sadhana-bhakti*?
b) What are the two divisions within *sadhana-bhakti*?
c) What is the impetus to engage in each of these two types of *sadhana- bhakti*?
5. a) Name, in Sanskrit and English, the first principle in the discharge of devotional service
b) Why does Srila Rupa Goswami mention this item first?
c) List the five most potent items of devotional service.
d) Devotional activities may be divided into two categories. What are they?
6. List, in brief sentences, five reliable symptoms of one at the level of *bhava-bhakti*.

Sri Isopanisad Questions

7. Write out the Sanskrit and the English translation of the invocation to *Sri Isopanisad*, beginning with “*om purnam.*”
8. a) What is the English translation of *atma-ha*?
b) Explain what an *atma-ha* is.
c) Describe the 3 different types of *atma-ha* or ignorant people mentioned in Srila Prabhupada’s purport to verse 9.
d) What are the destinations of the *atma-ha*?
9. a) What is the Sanskrit word for the Lord in His function as the maintainer?
b) Explain Jiva Goswami’s definition of Bhagavan as given in Srila Prabhupada’s purport to mantra 16.
c) What four “things” are maintained by Bhagavan, or dependent on Him?

Nectar of Instruction Questions

10. Write out the Sanskrit and the English translation of Text 1 of the *Nectar of Instruction*, beginning with “*vaco vegam.*”
11. Explain the process of overcoming any five of the six urges, as Srila Prabhupada explains in his purports
12. Answer the following questions with reference to the purport to Text 10:
 - a) Why are *karmis* considered to be madmen?
 - b) Why are *jnanis* better than *karmis*?
 - c) What is the limitation of the *jnani*?

VTE Bhakti-Sastri Course

Module Three

Assessment Paper Two (Coursework Assignments)

“Understanding and Application”

Notes to the Local Teacher:

- This paper is to be completed within a specified time, at your discretion. These assignments can be handed out to students at any stage during the Module One Course and student papers will naturally be handed in after the course is completed. Students should be given two weeks at the very least to complete this paper.
- Students are free to consult you and other devotees/students about these assignments.

Notes to the student:

- Please write your answers legibly in black or blue ink. Untidy or illegible papers may be returned unmarked. We recommend that wherever possible you type your answers.
- Do not supply answers longer than any stated maximum. Otherwise, marks may be deducted.
- You are allowed to consult your tutor and other devotees about these assignments, but do ensure that any work you submit is original.
- Please answer two questions from Section One and one question from each of Sections Two and Three, i.e. four questions in total. Clearly number your answers.

Section One (Understanding)

Please answer two questions. Concise and accurate answers of about 200 words will be sufficient. Do not write more than 300 words.

1. In your own words explain the gradual development of *bhakti* from *sraddha* to *prema*. Briefly explain how one gets *sraddha*. Accurately assess what stage you are at currently. Give reasons for your answers.
2. Write a 100 word overview on how controlling the mind and senses as mentioned in Text one of the Nectar of Instruction could be connected to bathing in Radha-kunda as mentioned in Text Eleven of the *Nectar of Instruction*.
3. Explain in your own words what should be the mentality and attitude of a devotee at the time of death with reference to verses 15 to 18 of Sri Isopanisad.
4. Explain with reference to *Sri Isopanisad* what Srila Prabhupada means by “universities are centres of nescience”, as well as the corresponding analogy (regarding “the advancement of learning by a godless people”). Use your own words and, if possible, concisely draw on your own experience to convey your understanding.
Mantra 11 may appear be somewhat contradictory in that it appears to support the study of nescience. Resolve and explain this apparent inconsistency.

Section Two (Personal Application)

Please answer one question. Concise and accurate answers of about 300 words will be sufficient, unless otherwise stated. Do not submit more than 450 words.

5. In *Bhagavad-gita* (18.66) Krishna instructs us: "Abandon all varieties of religion and surrender unto me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."
Do you think that you personally should expect further hardship and suffering, or will life now be a "bed of roses"? Briefly explain the reasons behind your answer.
Assess your current/recent responses to suffering (in terms of attitude and/or behaviour) and compare them to what is written in the Nectar of Devotion (and possibly other scripture)
Drawing inspiration from *The Nectar of Devotion*, explain how you might more constructively respond to suffering in your life.
6. Assess your own position regarding the 6 items unfavourable to Krishna consciousness, both in terms of attitude and conduct. Now write a concise plan on how you propose to practically improve. Your plan should be realistic.

Section Three (Preaching/Theological Application)

Please answer one question. Concise and accurate answers of about 300 words will be sufficient, unless otherwise stated. Do not submit more than 450 words.

7. A young university student approaches you after her first visit to the temple, saying, "I like you Hare Krishnas as people, but I think there's something a bit hypocritical about the way you live. I mean, on the one hand you talk about being so spiritual, and giving up material attachments, but on the other hand I see you have cars, video machines, computers, and so many other material conveniences." Drawing from what you have understood from your study of *The Nectar of Devotion*, please respond to her, citing sastric verses or passages (you can include one or two from other Bhakti Sastri books besides the NOD)
8. Write a short article of about 300 words (and no more than 450) for a magazine called "Alternative Lifestyles". The article is entitled "Wealth and Poverty", and should be based on the *Isopanisad*. Try to accurately represent the Vaishnava siddhanta, presenting a balanced understanding that will be relevant and accessible to the readers.

VTE Bhakti-Sastri Course

Module Three

Assessment Paper Three (Coursework Assignments)

“Higher Skills and Values”

Notes to the Local Teacher:

- This paper is to be completed within a specified time, at your discretion. These assignments can be handed out to students at any stage during the Module One Course and student papers will naturally be handed in after the course is completed. Students should be given two weeks at the very least to complete this paper.
- Students are free to consult you and other devotees/students about these assignments.

Notes to the student:

- Please write your answers legibly in black or blue ink. Untidy or illegible papers may be returned unmarked. We recommend that wherever possible you type your answers.
- Do not supply answers longer than any stated maximum. Otherwise, marks may be deducted.
- You are allowed to consult your tutor and other devotees about these assignments, but do ensure that any work you submit is original.
- Please answer one question from each of the four Sections. Concise and accurate answers of about 250 words will be sufficient. Do not write more than 400 words at the very most.

Section One (Mood and Mission)

(Answer either #1 or #2, but not both, and clearly number your answer)

1. Choose one verse (or part of a verse) or passage from our three books (NOD, ISO, and NOI) that you feel reflects Srila Prabhupada’s “Mood and Mission”. Explain why you feel this way.

Also explain how Srila Prabhupada’s and/or ISKCON’s practices vary from those of other Vedic (Hindu) traditions based on this reference.

2. Explain one Vaishnava (or pseudo-Vaishnava) practice you have seen or heard about which you feel may be appropriate for some devotees but is not really consistent with Srila Prabhupada’s mood and mission. If possible, cite at least one verse or passage from Srila Prabhupada’s books to support your case.

(Note: This practice could be happening inside or outside of ISKCON.)

Section Two (Academic Integrity)

(Answer either #3 or #4, but not both, and clearly number your answer.)

3. Explain why it is important that devotees demonstrate academic integrity (note: do not here refer to Moral Integrity).
In your answer, include (if possible) reference to two consequences of not demonstrating academic integrity. One of these consequences should be connected to your own spiritual life and the other to your outreach/preaching activities.
4. Cite one example (real or imaginary) of how the *yukta-vairagya* principle could be misused. Where possible, draw on other references from our three books (NOD ISO, and NOI) to show how this interpretation/application of *yukta-vairagya* is wrong.

Section Three (Sastra Caksus)

(Answer either #5 or #6, but not both, and clearly number your answer)

5. Cite one verse (or part of a verse) or passage from our three books about which you have some personal realisation. Please explain, citing something from your own experience that has helped you appreciate and/or apply this verse/passage.
6. “Los Angeles News, 2 p.m. A car crash on the ring road highway just killed 20 persons and injured 50. Within 10 minutes all bodies were taken away in a helicopter, and within 20 minutes all vehicles were towed away. A special truck washed away the pool of red blood within 30 minutes. Thanks to this advanced technology and the efficiency of our governmental agencies people driving by have been spared the horrible sight of this multi-vehicle crash.”
How would you view this incident through the eyes of *Sri Isopanisad*?

Section Four (Authority)

(Answer either #7 or #8, but not both, and clearly number your answer.)

7. One guest at a Sunday lecture program asks you, “You Hare Krishna devotees have to accept the authority of the Vedas. Doesn’t this necessarily make you thoughtless?”
Please respond by keeping in mind our aim of “Authority”.
8. Explain the difference between
 - a) mental speculation and
 - b) philosophical speculation (as Srila Prabhupada defines them).How does this relate to our aim entitled “Authority”?

Chapter Four

Overview and Breakdown of Each Book

Introduction

This section is useful in a number of ways:

- it provides us with a summary of each lesson (though for logistical reasons the verses are sometimes categorised differently than in our lessons)
- it gives us a framework by which to co-ordinate our understanding, and to draw links between different verses/passages within the same or different books.
- it presents us with a broader perspective on each book and helps us to “see the big picture”(we often get tied up in the details)
- it helps us to understand the flow of the book e.g. how Krishna develops His arguments in teaching Arjuna. Our Vaisnava books were written with spiritual education in mind and although not, say, chronologically presented, there is a very logical order.
- especially for the Gita, this section can help us in writing chapter summaries

Experienced Bhakti Sastri teachers often recommend students to learn these overviews/breakdowns (though they are not explicitly assessed according to our current criteria.)

Modules One and Two

Outline, Structure and Content of the Bhagavad-gita

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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa spoke the Bhagavad Gita.

In His opening instructions in Chapter two, verse twelve², Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa'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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (*bhakti yoga*), as confirmed by the final verse of the sixth chapter. Chapter four specifically deals with the transcendental position of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and with the importance of guru and disciplic succession. Since Kṛṣṇa'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. Kṛṣṇa 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

Module One

Chapter One

Dhṛtarāṣṭra 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 Droṇa without insulting Bhīṣma and others. Bhīṣma 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 Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, which shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Kṛṣṇa as Bhakta Vatsala (21–27)

Kṛṣṇa appears as the chariot driver of Arjuna, revealing His quality as bhakta-vatsala, not as the Supreme Lord. Arjuna orders Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa chastises Arjuna for his stance of nonviolence, calling him impotent and non-Āryan. 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 Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa rebukes Arjuna for his misplaced compassion. Kṛṣṇa begins His instructions by describing the individual, eternal nature of the soul, contrasting it with the temporary nature of the body. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa now takes a different approach. Even if Arjuna identifies with his body, by fighting as a *kṣatriya* he will be happy. Kṛṣṇa thus refers to *karma-kāṇḍa* teachings to primarily defeat Arjuna's second argument (re: enjoyment). Kṛṣṇa explains that if Arjuna fights he will enjoy, but if he doesn't he'll incur sinful reaction and infamy. Kṛṣṇa 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)**

Kṛṣṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa gives a brief explanation of *buddhi-yoga* (working in devotional service without attachment to the fruits). Kṛṣṇa also shows how attachment to sense enjoyment and material opulence, as given in the *karma-kāṇḍa* 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 Kṛṣṇa thus defeats Arjuna's argument of fear of sinful reactions.

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

After hearing Kṛṣṇa's description of devotional service, Arjuna inquires how to recognise a devotee. Kṛṣṇa describes how the devotee is transcendental by body, mind and words. The devotee gives up all material desires, is equipoised, detached, and fixed on Kṛṣṇa. The devotee experiences these symptoms because he is enjoying a higher taste, feeling complete satisfaction in being Kṛṣṇa'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. Kṛṣṇa 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 sāṅkhya-yoga, buddhi-yoga, control of the senses by intelligence, and work without fruitive desire. Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna to keep all abominable activities far distant by buddhi-yoga. Taking the meaning of buddhi as intelligence, Kṛṣṇa's order would mean that Arjuna, by using his intelligence, should avoid all abominable activities and not fight. Yet, thinks Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa to clarify His previous instructions. Kṛṣṇa explains how *karma-yoga*, devotional service, is superior to renunciation of work and He also recommends sacrifice for Viṣṇu, which frees one from the bondage of work.

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

Previously Kṛṣṇa 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. As explained before, the purpose of sacrifice is to satisfy Viṣṇu. Now Kṛṣṇa will show how production of grains is dependent on sacrifice and how the origin of such sacrifice is Viṣṇu.

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

In verses 17-21 Kṛṣṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa and become free from the bondage of fruitive actions. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa what forces us to act sinfully, and Kṛṣṇa describes our eternal enemy of lust. One can conquer lust by working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with steady intelligence fixed on knowledge of one's pure identity.

Chapter 4

In Chapter Three Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa (1–10)

As the supreme authority, Kṛṣṇa spoke this knowledge earlier to Vivasvān and now again to Arjuna because he is Kṛṣṇa's devotee and friend. Although Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa and go back to Godhead at the end of this life.

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

After giving knowledge about Himself that leads to liberation, Kṛṣṇa 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 *varṇāśrama* 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, Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa explained that without sacrifice for Viṣṇu one cannot live happily in this world.

Summary of transcendental knowledge (34–42)

Having explained that all sacrifices lead to transcendental knowledge, Kṛṣṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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?” Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa.

How to perform *karma-yoga* (7–12)

After describing the superiority of devotional service, Kṛṣṇa explains how to work devotionally with detachment. One in knowledge of Kṛṣṇa understands his incompatibility with material nature and thus acts only for purification, giving the results of his work to Kṛṣṇa. 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 Kṛṣṇa conscious person enjoys unlimited pleasure within by fixing his consciousness on Kṛṣṇa. Always busy working for the welfare of all beings, he soon achieves liberation. *Yogīs* can also attain this state by practicing *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa has explained buddhi-yoga, working with consciousness fixed on Him, without fruitive desires. The Lord has also explained sāṅkhya, karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga as processes to obtain liberation, and as steppingstones to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Yoga-ruruksu and yogarudha practice (1–9)

At the end of the Fifth Chapter and continuing on to the Sixth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa explained *dhyāna-yoga*, concluding that He is the goal of meditation. Even in *aṣṭāṅga-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 *yogārūḍha*.

Stages in yoga practice (10–27)

Having described the symptoms of the stages of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa as Supersoul (28–36)

After describing the *yoga* practice of fixing the mind on the self, Kṛṣṇa explains the realisation of the *yogī*. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains: “A Kṛṣṇa conscious *yogī* is the perfect seer because he sees Kṛṣṇa situated in everyone's heart as Supersoul. He sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere and everything in Kṛṣṇa. Thus he sees all living entities equally.” Arjuna rejects the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system as impractical, because his mind appears too uncontrollable. Kṛṣṇa 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 *yogī*, but Kṛṣṇa assures him that the *yogī's* next birth will be auspicious, giving him another chance for self-realisation.

The topmost yogi (46–47)

Kṛṣṇa concludes His description of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* by comparing *yogīs* to *karmis*, *jñānis* and *tapasvīs*. The *yogī* is superior to all, and the best *yogī* is the *bhakta* who always thinks of Kṛṣṇa, 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. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa conscious person. In the beginning one takes the association of devotees, which leads to understanding one's constitutional position as servant of Kṛṣṇa. 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 Kṛṣṇa in full by hearing about Him (1–7)

In Chapter Seven, Kṛṣṇa begins to explain how to attain this state. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa as the source of both material and spiritual energies (8–12)

Kṛṣṇa describes how He is the essence of everything in verses 8–12. If Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa — 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa, 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 Kṛṣṇa. They cannot see Kṛṣṇa, who covers Himself from their vision.

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

Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa as *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, and *adhiyajna*.

Chapter 8

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

Kṛṣṇa answers Arjuna's questions (1-4)

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

Remembering Kṛṣṇa (5–9)

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

Yogamistra bhakti (10–13)

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

Pure Devotional Service (14-16)

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

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 Kṛṣṇa.

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 Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa.

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 Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Chapter Nine is most confidential because it describes pure, unalloyed devotional service. In the Eighth Chapter, Kṛṣṇa has explained that the ananya devotee surpasses both the path of light and darkness. Now Kṛṣṇa will explain how to become such an ananya devotee. The first step is hearing about Kṛṣṇa.

Hearing about Kṛṣṇa — qualifications and disqualifications (1–3)

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

Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable relationship with the material world (4–10)

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

Non-worshippers and worshippers (11–19)

Kṛṣṇa 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 *visvarupa*.

Comparing demigod worshippers and devotees (20–28)

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

The glories of directly worshipping Kṛṣṇa (27–34)

Kṛṣṇa 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). Kṛṣṇa 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.

Module Two

Chapter 10

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

Kṛṣṇa is origin of everything (1–7)

In Chapter Ten, Kṛṣṇa 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-gīta* is stated in verses 8–11. All of Kṛṣṇa’s opulences are summarised in verse 8. By knowing Kṛṣṇa’s greatness, devotees develop love for Him and engage in devotional service. Because their minds are fixed on Kṛṣṇa, the devotees always relish discussions about Kṛṣṇa and cannot maintain their lives without Him (verse 9). When Kṛṣṇa 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-gīta* Arjuna became completely free of all doubts and accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He then expressed his eagerness to hear Kṛṣṇa’s glories so he could always think of Him.

Kṛṣṇa’s opulences (19–42)

In response to Arjuna’s request, Kṛṣṇa describes the most prominent among His limitless, all-pervading opulences. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa’s description of His universal form (1–8)

After hearing Kṛṣṇa say that He pervades and supports the entire universe, Arjuna wishes to see that all-pervasive form of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa’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 Kṛṣṇa’s frightening, all-destructive *kāla-rūpa* (form of time) which is eating all the soldiers on both sides. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa, “Who are you? What is your mission?”

Kṛṣṇa's instructions to become an instrument (32–34)

Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa's forgiveness for having previously and in ignorance treated the Lord as his friend.

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

In answer to Arjuna's fearful prayers, Kṛṣṇa shows His four-armed form before again returning to His original two-armed form. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa discussing bhakti and Arjuna wants it to end in the same way.

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

Bhakti over impersonalism (1–7)

Arjuna asks which is superior - worshipping Kṛṣṇa through devotional service or worshipping His impersonal feature. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa. The path of devotion is easier, and Kṛṣṇa personally delivers His devotee from material life.

Progressive stages of devotion (8–12)

Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa. 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 Kṛṣṇa (13–30)

Having described the stages of devotion, Kṛṣṇa now enumerates the transcendental qualities automatically achieved by a *bhakti-yogi*, which endear the devotee to Kṛṣṇa. Pointing out these qualities further substantiates the theme of Chapter 12: that bhakti is the best method of spiritual advancement. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa discussed how karma-yoga, action on the platform of knowledge, leads to bhakti. In the second six chapters, Kṛṣṇa spoke directly of Himself and the glories of devotional service. In the third six chapters, Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa to explain six topics: *prakṛti*, *purusa*, *ksetra*, *ksetra-jna*, *jnana*, and *jneya*. Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa and attain the supreme destination.

Prakṛti, purusa and their union (20–26)

Having described *jneya* as the self and the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa now explains the soul and Supersoul as *purusa*, in terms of their connection with material nature. One who understands *prakṛti*, *purusa* 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, Kṛṣṇa informs us how to attain freedom from these modes.

Conditioning of the modes (1–9)

After glorifying the knowledge that He will now speak, Kṛṣṇa 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)

Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa's activities are transcendental to the modes. One who engages in undeviating devotional service comes to the level of Brahman, of which Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa, 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 Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa describes *purusottama-yoga*.

Transmigration (6–11)

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

Kṛṣṇa as maintainer (12–15)

Knowing Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jnana*), and are also sometimes referred to as the *tri-sloki Gita*. Kṛṣṇa, 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, Kṛṣṇa explains the divine qualities that elevate one within the tree and lead to ultimate liberation.

Transcendental and demoniac qualities (1–9)

Kṛṣṇa 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, Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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)

Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa'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 Kṛṣṇa, the essence of the previous chapters is taught in this, the final chapter. Here Kṛṣṇa 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)

Kṛṣṇa 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*, Kṛṣṇa 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. Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa 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 Kṛṣṇa (56–66)

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

Module Three

Nectar of Devotion Overview

Contents of the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

An ocean is divided into four sides: eastern, southern, western, northern. Each ocean has subdivisions, called “waves”. The first division, “Eastern,” has four waves:

- | | |
|---|---|
| The 1st wave, <i>samanya-bhakti</i>, | is a general description of devotional service. This includes the Introduction and Chapter 1. |
| The 2nd wave, <i>sadhana-bhakti</i>, | is devotional service in practice. This includes Chapters 2–16. |
| The 3rd wave, <i>bhava-bhakti</i>, | is devotional service in ecstasy. This includes Chapters 17–18. |
| The 4th wave, <i>prema bhakti</i>, | is devotional service in pure love of God. This includes Chapter 19. |

1. *Samanya bhakti* (Preface and Introduction) – a general description of devotional service

Preface – *Bhakti rasa*

Srila Prabhupada gives us a history of the Nectar of Devotion and describes its purpose — to educate and elevate everyone to the position of pure devotee and to explain the concept of *bhakti-rasa*. *Bhakti-rasa* is the spiritual pleasure of devotional service which one can taste by being trained in the science of devotional service.

Introduction – *mangalacarana and definition of pure devotional service*

The author invokes auspiciousness by establishing Kṛṣṇa as the objective of the book, by offering obeisances to the Lord, his guru, and the Vaisnavas, and by offering benedictions. After giving an overview of the whole book, he gives the definition of pure devotional service which is the thesis statement upon which the entire Nectar of Devotion expands.

Chapter 1 – *characteristics of pure devotional service*

Pure devotional service is so sublime and satisfying that devotees engaged in Kṛṣṇa 's service don't want anything besides that service — not even the liberation of *salokya*.

2. *Sadhana bhakti* (Chapters 2–16) – devotional service in practice

Note: this wave is divided into two parts as follows:

Part One (Chapters 2–14) – *Vaidhi-sadhana bhakti*

Following the rules and regulations according to the guru's instructions

Part Two (Chapters 15–16) – *Raganuga-sadhana bhakti*

Spontaneous devotional practice

Chapter 2 – principles of sadhana bhakti

The three categories of devotional service are described, with particular emphasis on *sadhana bhakti*. One's eligibility for practising *sadhana bhakti* is attraction to pleasing Kṛṣṇa, and the most important part of this process is to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him.

Chapter 3 – eligibility for accepting devotional service

The prerequisite for beginning devotional service is attraction, which is obtained by the mercy of a devotee. Advancement in *vaidhi-sādhana-bhakti* depends on one's level of faith and knowledge of the scriptures. When one is free from the bodily concept of life while having the exclusive desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, he is qualified to practice pure devotional service.

Chapter 4 – pure devotional service free from desire for liberation and sense gratification

Further evidence is given in support of the statement that devotees are free from the desire for *bhukti* and *mukti*. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndavana reject the desire for all liberation, even personal liberation to Vaikuntha.

Chapter 5 – pure devotional service is self-sufficient and independent

Generally, to practise self-realisation one must have a great deal of preliminary qualification, such as pious birth, purification through Vedic rituals and following *varnasrama dharma*. *Bhakti* is not dependent upon any of the above three prerequisites. Devotional service is the constitutional position of the living entity. Therefore, both the process of *bhakti* and eligibility for *bhakti* are independent of considerations of birth, caste, community and other processes.

Chapter 6 – ways to practise devotional service

Srila Rupa Gosvami basically lists the 64 items of devotional service.

Chapter 7– evidence regarding devotional principles

Here the first eighteen items of devotional service: the ten *pravrttis* (do's) and the first eight *nivrttis* (don'ts) are further explained.

Chapter 8 – offences to avoid

Here the 19th item of devotional service: "carefully avoiding the various offences in chanting the holy name of the Lord or in worshipping the Deity in the temple." is described. Thirty-two offences are listed from the supplementary Vedic literature, and others from the Varaha-Purana. The ten offences against the holy name, as found in the Padma Purana, are described here.

Chapter 9 – ways to practise pure devotional service

Scriptural evidence is given for items 20–42 of the 64 angas of *bhakti* with emphasis on Deity worship, chanting and prayer.

Chapter 10 – ways to practice pure devotional service

Scriptural evidence is given for items no. 43–46 of the 64 angas of *bhakti* with emphasis on hearing and remembering.

Chapter 11– *ways to practise pure devotional service*

Evidence is given for items 47–53 of the 64 angas of *bhakti* with emphasis on servitude, friendship and surrender.

Chapter 12 – *ways to practise pure devotional service*

Scriptural evidence is given for items 54–64 of the 64 angas of *bhakti*, five of which are considered to be most potent forms of devotional service with emphasis on festivals and the five most potent forms of devotional service.

Chapter 13 – *the five most potent practices of devotional service*

This chapter completes the discussion on the 64 items of devotional service; elaborates on the wonderful effects of performing the five potent forms of devotional service described in Chapter Twelve; and begins to discuss some items wrongly considered to be angas of *bhakti*.

Chapter 14 – *the relation of devotional service to other spiritual practices*

Srila Rupa Goswami continues to explain why certain items commonly thought to be angas of *bhakti* cannot be accepted as such.

Chapter 15 – *spontaneous devotional service – ragatmika*

This chapter describes *ragatmika-bhakti*, the spontaneous devotional service of the eternal residents of Vrindavana.

Chapter 16 – *spontaneous devotional service in practice*

The process of *raganuga-bhakti*, spontaneous devotional service in practice is described.

3. Bhava-bhakti – devotional service in ecstatic love

Chapter 17– *definition and attainment of bhava-bhakti*

This chapter describes the ways and means of rising to the platform of *bhava-bhakti*, ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa .

Chapter 18 – *symptoms of bhava-bhakti*

This important chapter examines the characteristics of a person who has developed ecstatic love. By studying them carefully, one will understand the difference between the ecstatic love of a genuine devotee and the so-called ecstatic symptoms of a pretender.

4. Prema-bhakti – devotional service in pure love of God

Chapter 19 – *prema-bhakti*

In this chapter the definition and attainment of *prema-bhakti* is described. The development of *prema* is a gradual evolution beginning with *śraddha*.

Sri Isopanisad Overview

The Sri Isopanisad can be divided onto six broad divisions, as shown below:

1. Introduction The Importance of Vedic knowledge

In the introduction, Srila Prabhupada establishes the definition of Veda, and the need to take guidance from the Vedas. *Sri Isopanisad* is directly Vedic literature, being part of the *sruti*.

2. Invocation to Mantra Three The perfect relationship between the Lord, the living entities and His creation

The Invocation

The Invocation describes the objective of the book: the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. By repeated recognition of His various types of completeness, the *Isopanisad* establishes the supreme position of the Personality of Godhead.

Mantra 1

The Invocation explained that the Personality of Godhead is perfectly complete, as are His energies. Srila Prabhupada comments that, "all forms of incompleteness are due to incomplete knowledge of the Complete Whole." Mantra 1 describes how the living entities can again regain their sense of completeness by acting in relationship with Kṛṣṇa . This action is called *isavasya* consciousness.

Mantra 2

Mantra 2 explains the benefit of working in the *isavasya* conception: one becomes free from karmic reaction and acts on the liberated platform. Such activities are the *only* method for freedom.

Mantra 3

Mantra 3 explains the fate of those who fail to recognise the Lord's proprietorship and therefore act in a vikarmic way.

3. **Mantras 4–8**
The inconceivable Lord can only be known by the *maha-bhagavata*

Mantra 4

Mantra 4 explains why such people are unable to understand the Lord's position: He is beyond material calculations and is thus known only when he reveals Himself to the sincere.

Mantra 5

Mantra 5 continues this discussion describing that the Lord has inconceivable potencies which render Him unknowable to those whom He does not favour.

Mantra 6

Mantra 6 describes the vision of one who can see Kṛṣṇa everywhere, the *maha-bhagavata*.

Mantra 7

Mantra 7 continues describing the consciousness of the *maha-bhagavata*, which was introduced Mantra 6.

Mantra 8

Mantra 8 describes some qualities of the Lord as he is known by the *maha-bhagavata* described in mantras 6 and 7.

4. **Mantras 9–11**
Comparing the cultivation of knowledge and nescience

Mantra 9

The previous three mantras have described the *maha-bhagavata*, and his vision of Kṛṣṇa . Mantra 9 discusses two kinds of people who lack knowledge of Kṛṣṇa : those who are simply ignorant and those who are followers of material scholarship, thinking it the end-all of knowledge. Both kinds of people disregard the Lord's proprietorship and consequently are degraded into the "darkest regions of ignorance."

Mantra 10

Mantra 9 described the results of cultivating ignorance and false knowledge. Mantra 10 explains that true knowledge brings a different result than either of these. It also emphasises the need to take guidance from a *dhira* in the act of discriminating between real and illusory knowledge.

Mantra 11

The previous two mantras have explained that ignorance and false knowledge bind one and are in contrast to true knowledge. Mantra 11 describes how one must know the relative positions of material and spiritual knowledge to transcend the material energy and attain deathlessness.

5. **Mantras 12–14**
Comparing worship of the Absolute to worship of the relative.

Mantra 12

Just as verses 9–11 compared knowledge and nescience, and the respective destinations for the followers of each, verses 12–14 explain the worship of the relative and the Absolute. Just as cultivation of the wrong knowledge can be binding, so too can improper conceptions of the Absolute Truth.

Mantra 13

Mantra 12 explained that both worship of the dependent (the demigods) and the Absolute (impersonal Brahman) can lead to bondage. Mantra 13 explains that one achieves a different result when his understanding of the absolute is guided by a *dhira*.

Mantra 14

Mantras 12 and 13 explained that one who conducts worship of the improper object or with the improper conception will not achieve spiritual emancipation. Mantra 14 states that one must know the spiritual and material energies properly, in their respective positions, to achieve liberation.

6. **Mantras 15–18**
Prayers for revelation of the Lord's spiritual form

Mantra 15

Mantras 12–14 described the necessity of understanding Kṛṣṇa in relationship with His material energies. Mantra 15 explains that one must also understand Kṛṣṇa's relationship with His spiritual potency, the *brahmajyoti*, in order to achieve realisation of Him.

Mantra 16

This mantra continues the prayer of Mantra 15 for the Lord to reveal His spiritual form.

Mantra 17

The prayers of the devotee continue from mantras 15 and 16. At mantra 17, the prayer has an emphasis of understanding Kṛṣṇa at the time of death.

Mantra 18

Mantra 18 is the concluding prayer of the devotee, who desires to achieve Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

Sri Isopanisad - Analogies & Examples

- **Mahatma Gandhi & Kennedy**: one of the four defects is to make mistakes
- **Own hands in a dark room**: you cannot see them, the senses are imperfect
- **Cow dung**: Vedic principles sometimes appear contradictory
- **Indian social norms** (Asking “Is this a Vedic injunction?”): Vedic injunctions cannot be neglected
- **Sruti** is like a mother: only the mother can say who the father is
- **Radio programme**: perfect knowledge, sabda
- **Hand severed from the body**: we are parts and parcels of the complete whole
- **The milk-giving cow** only eats grass and grain: milk is part of the quota given to humans by Kṛṣṇa
- **A house made of earth, wood, etc**: the builder is not the proprietor; bringing ingredients together does not transfer ownership
- **Stolen bread**: both capitalists and communists fail to see that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa
- **A tree** lives for hundreds of years, *bellows* breathe, etc. Therefore live in the spirit of *isavasya*, not uselessly
- **The human body is a boat**: to cross over the *ocean* of material existence, *sastra* and *acaryas* are the *expert boatmen*, facilities of the body are the *favourable* breezes
- **Heat and light emanate from a fire**: (*Visnu Purana*) a fire in one place distributes heat and light. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is fixed in Goloka Vrindavana but has His energies
- **Prahlada Maharaja**: knew the God was everywhere, even in the pillar
- **Sparks in the fire**: living entities are qualitatively one with the Lord, yet not equal quantitatively; amount of heat and light in the sparks not equal to fire
- **Heat, light, and fire**: no meaning to “fire” without heat and light; they are different, but in synthesis the same; no difference between the energy and the energetic; everything is the energy of the Lord
- **Salt in a drop of sea water**: the quantity of salt in a drop is never equal to that within the complete ocean
- **Family & nation**: the interest is one, but the members are individuals
- **Father creates and maintains children**: Kṛṣṇa wants pleasure from His children; obedience gives oneness and pleasure
- **A cobra decorated with a jewel**: dangerous, represents Godless education
- **Decoration of a dead body**: modern civilisation devoid of spiritual education
- **An ass**: modern man is being converted into, by “advancement of knowledge”
- **Hiranyakasipu**: even the greatest materialists fail, unable to stop death
- **Fever**: – materialism should not be increased
 - temperature cannot be wiped out altogether, there is a normal condition = balanced programme of spiritual and material knowledge
- **Coconut covered by a husk**: the universe is covered by the material elements, thus is dark and airtight and needs the sun and moon
- **A ticket to Calcutta** doesn’t take you to Bombay: different destinations according to mode of worship
- **Watering a tree**: water the root not the leaves. Similarly, philanthropic activities don’t water the root, the soul
- **The sun & its rays**:
 - compared to the Lord and the *jivas*, i.e. same in quality
 - sun rays are innumerable
 - sun has varieties of energy, ultimate source is the sun-god

Śrī Īsopaniṣad – Key Terms

śruti	knowledge acquired by hearing
pratyakṣa	sense perception
anumana	induction
śabda	received by aural reception
sat-cit-ananda-vigraha	the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss
karma, akarma, vikarma	pious, transcendental and impious activity respectively
pūrṇam	complete, or all-perfect
apauruṣeya	words spoken by the Lord, not by mundane person
para prakṛti	superior energy
apara prakṛti	inferior, or material, energy
atma-ha	a killer of the soul (Mantra three)
saguṇa	with qualities
nirguṇa	without qualities
anupaśyati	observing by hearing from the acarya (Mantra six)
ekatvam	oneness in quality (Mantra seven)
paribhūḥ	the greatest of all (Mantra eight)
śuddham	antiseptic (Mantra eight)
apapa-viddham	prophylactic (Mantra eight)
avidya	nescience, ignorance (Mantras 9,10,11)
vidya	knowledge (Mantras 9,10,11)
veda-vada-rata	misunderstand the Vedas, not in parampara (also called vidya-rata)
mayayapahr̥ta-jnana	self-made “gods”
dhīra	the sober (Mantras 10 & 13)
asambhūtim	that which is not supreme or independent, demigods, etc.
sambhūtim	the Absolute Personality of Godhead (Mantras 12, 13 & 14; also called sambhavat & asambhavat)
pūṣan	sustainer, maintainer (Mantras 15 & 16)
muhkam	the face (Mantra 15)
hiraṇmaya-patra	dazzling effulgence (Mantra 15)
so’ ham asmi	I am that, “like unto the sun, as am I” (Mantra 16)
agne	“O my Lord, powerful like the fire” (Mantra 18)

Nectar of Instruction Overview

The Nectar of Instruction can be broken down into three sections as follows:

Verses 1–7:	<i>vaidhi-sadhana bhakti</i>
Verse 8:	<i>raganuga-sadhana</i>
Verses 9–11:	<i>bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti</i>

1. **Vaidhi-sadhana bhakti –Texts 1–7**

Preface – *the goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the means to attain it*

To reach perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one must follow the instructions of the Six Goswamis of Vrindavana by controlling the mind and senses as instructed by Srila Rupa Goswami in the Upadesamrita.

Text 1 – *controlling the six urges*

This verse elaborates on the prerequisites for spiritual life described in the third main point of the Preface — the necessity of controlling the mind and senses. A person who has mastered these prerequisites is fit to be a guru.

Text 2 – *obstacles to devotional service*

Text Two describes the implications of not controlling the mind and senses. By his own choice, the conditioned soul has fallen under the jurisdiction of the material energy of the Lord. Under its influence, he has to meet the demands of the body, which is a product of this energy. Text Two further explains how to meet these basic demands in a way that fosters spiritual progress rather than material entanglement.

Text 3 – *principles that aid devotional service*

Six principles are given that help us progress on the path of pure devotional service. But before discussing them, Srila Rupa Goswami explains exactly what pure devotional service is.

Text 4 – *six loving exchanges*

In previous lessons we mentioned that one's desires and ambitions develop according to the company one keeps — *saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ*. Therefore, if we want to progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we have to associate with devotees. Text 4 explains what association consists of. It also begins to explain how one should associate with devotees. Further instructions on how to associate with different types of devotees are found in texts 5 and 6.

Text 5 – *association according to levels of advancement*

In order to properly apply the six loving exchanges described in the previous verse, one must select proper persons with whom to reciprocate. What kind of Vaisnava should be selected as a friend and how one should deal with different kinds of Vaisnavas is the subject matter of this verse. All devotees should be respected, but in order to make spiritual advancement we must associate with serious devotees and distance ourselves from casual association.

Text 6 – *associating with the pure devotee*

Text 6 discusses further how we should associate with devotees - especially with the spiritual master, who is understood to be transcendently situated.

Text 7 – *chanting the holy name*

In order to come to the platform of *uttama-bhakti*, we must first cleanse our consciousness of the materialistic contamination that covers the mirror of the heart. By carefully chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra every day, we gradually become cured from the jaundice of ignorance and revive knowledge of our blissful constitutional position as Kṛṣṇa 's servant.

2. Raganuga-sadhana-bhakti – Text 8

Text 8 – *spontaneous devotional service in practice*

In this verse, Srila Rupa Goswami gives the essence of all advice: to fix one's mind on Kṛṣṇa without deviation by constantly hearing and chanting about Him and remembering His pastimes.

3. Bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti – Texts 9–11

Text 9 – *the hierarchy of the material and spiritual worlds*

Text nine describes the hierarchy of the different regions of the Lord's creations with Radha -kunda as the topmost place.

Text 10 – *the hierarchy of different types of human beings*

Text ten describes the hierarchy of the different types of human beings within the creation and Radha-kunda is the place of residence for the topmost human beings.

Text 11– *the glories of Radha-kunda*

Text eleven perfectly illustrates the point that the cultivation of spiritual life is a gradual process. In the same way as one is meant to read the first nine cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam before approaching the Tenth Canto, one must assimilate the first ten verses of Nectar of Instruction before approaching Radha-kunda. If one fails to do so, one is sure to misunderstand the instructions given herein and ruin one's spiritual life.

Chapter Five

Themes and Key Verses

This Chapter includes information on two broad subjects, namely:

1. **Major Themes** as they run through each of the four books. There are the following numbers:

Bhagavad-gita	16	(12, but with 4 subdivided)
NOD	7	
ISO	7	
NOI	7	
Total	37	

2. **Key Verses**, which include:

- (i) **Key Memory Verses (KMV's)**

Bhagavad-gita	36
NOD	4
ISO	2
NOI	3
Total	36

- (ii) **Key Thematic Verses (KTV's)**

Bhagavad-gita	150
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There are no specified KTV's for the other books, but important passages (including some verses) are highlighted in the form of charts. Do note that for the NOD you'll need to consult your Worksheets for summaries of the passages that are indicated by the lettering codes (A, B, C, etc.)

Also, note that the references for the ISO, NOD and NOI refer to page numbers. This will be accurate only for standard English editions.

Please also note:

- KMV' will be assessed in Sanskrit and English during the exam (Paper One) of the respective Modules (One to Three) and then again all 36 will be tested during the Module Four (Block 4) written exam. This helps to promote longer-term memory, and also helps thematic learning, since you will be not required to quote a specified text, but any one connected either with a given Major Theme, or a particular subject.
- All Block Four Assessment Papers will focus on a 'thematic' approach. This means that they will either relate to our 'Major Themes' or will begin with topics, issues, real-life situations, etc. For more details, we recommend that you ask your course tutor for a copy of the Module Four Assessment Papers for (Section 8 of the Syllabus)
- You are not required to memorise the 150 KTV's, but it will be useful to have a good general knowledge of them.

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

Nectar of Devotion

7 Themes

1. Purity of Devotional Service
2. Transcendental Devotional Service
3. Yukta-Vairagya
4. Parampara
5. Eligibility
6. Happiness
7. Sadhu-sanga

Śrī Iṣopaniṣad

1. Knowledge
2. The Living Entities
3. Materialism
4. Defeating Impersonalism
5. Bhakti
6. The Absolute Truth
7. *Isavasya*

7 Themes

Nectar of Instruction

1. Mind and Sense Control
2. Attitude
3. Guru and Disciple
4. ISKCON's Purpose
5. Sadhu-sanga
6. Devotees
(types, behaviour, qualifications)
7. Bhakti
(stages and development)

7 Themes

Bhagavad-gita – 150 Key Thematic 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 (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														
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				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

Major Themes in Nectar of Devotion

	Pref	Intro	Ch.1	Ch.3	Ch.4	Ch.5	Ch.6	Ch.7	Ch.8	Ch.9	Ch.10	Ch.11	Ch.12	Ch.13	Ch.14	Ch.15	Ch.16	Ch.17	Ch.18	Ch.19
Purity of Devotional Service		A	B	C D E	F	G									H					
Transcendental Devotional service	A	B	C D E			F G H I J						K			L M N					
Yukta-vairagya															A					
Parampara	A	B		C			DE	F					G		H					
Eligibility																		I J K		N O P
Happiness	A	B	C D E F G					S					T							U
Sadhu-sanga			A	B	C D								EF						GH	I

The letters above indicate references to the corresponding Major Theme.
The details of specific content can be found on in the corresponding Student Worksheets

Themes in Sri Isopanisad

Key: = Main verse or passage
 = other verse/passage
VS = Verse
P = page PP = pages

	INTP	INTV	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18	
Knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P1-10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P25		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P36		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P45-46	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P53		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P64-65	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P64-71	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P80-82	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P84	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P84	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P84	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P115-116	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P122	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P126	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P137	
The Living Entities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P15-16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P18-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P24-25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P30-32	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P34-36		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P45	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P51	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P64					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P102-106	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P121	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P121-125			
Materialism		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P31-32		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P39	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P45	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P52	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P57-59	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P64-65	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P71-74	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P76-80	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P85-89	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P97-98	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P103-107			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P127		
Defeating impersonalism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P22		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P34-35	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P37-40		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P50	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P56-59				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P88	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P94-97		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P115	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P119-121	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P124		
Bhakti	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P22	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P27		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P34	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P39	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P44	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P53	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P57	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P66	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P99-100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P106	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P129-130	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS		
The Absolute Truth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P8-11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P14-16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P18			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P34	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P40-42		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P50-52	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P56-60			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P78	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P83-85	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P97	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P103-105	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P111-112	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P119		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P135-136	
Isavasya			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS All PP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS P26	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VS				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P52		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P64			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P106						

KEY: ♦ Major Reference ♦ Minor Reference
Digits denote page numbers

Major Themes in the Nectar of Instruction

	Mind & Sense Control	Attitude	ISKCON's Purpose	Guru and Disciple	Sadhu-sanga	Devotees (Kinds, Behavior & qualifications)	Bhakti (Stages & Development)
Pref.	♦ -First duty -Goodness first, then transcendence ♦-6 urges: - Tolerating -Engaging	♦ -Determines the progress ♦-Tolerance		♦ Guru: Follower of Srila Rupa Goswami ♦ Quality of guru: self-controlled		♦ -Goswamis ♦-Goswamis	♦-The goal of DS in Lord Caitanya's line: Entering Krsna's conjugal pastimes
1	♦ -6 faults due to no sense-control- Mahatma & duratma	♦ -Simplicity (simple living) -Broad-mindedness, devotion -Principle-based	♦ -21: Sat-sanga & awakening of love of God -26: Systematic education & peace		♦-21: Def. of asat-sanga-Purpose of sat-sanga-23: 3 types of persons whose association is asat		
2		♦ -Enthusiasm- Confidence, -Determination- Patience-Favorable attitude- Sincerity- Callousness toward karma, jnana & yoga	♦-30: Allows hearing from pure devotee & engagement in DS		♦-33: Asat-sanga tyaga	♦ -6 favorable principles	♦-27: Uttama bhakti defined-28: 9 angas - 30: Eligibility-6 favorable principles- 36: Success is assured
3							
4		♦ -Give and take mentality- Inquisitiveness -Loving attitude	♦ -40: To facilitate 6 loving exchanges -44: Teaches love of God		♦-39: 6 types of exchanges-45: Asat-sanga	♦ 6 loving dealings	♦-41: Natural awakening -42: Nama as means to cultivate bhakti
5		♦ -Respect -Service attitude -Non-critical mentality		♦ -51: Eligibility for diksa -58: Grades of gurus	♦-48: Sat-sanga according to levels of devotees	♦ 3 types of devotees	♦-51: Diksa

	Mind & Sense Control	Attitude	ISKCON's Purpose	Guru and Disciple	Sadhu-sanga	Devotees	Bhakti
6		◆ Non-jealousness	◆ -63: Meant for parama-hansas free from jealousy	◆ -How to relate with guru -65: Guru is not obliged to others	◆ -Association with the pure devotee	◆ -Qualities of pure devotees -62:Goswami, not by birth	◆-60: Suddha-bhakti-63,65: Falldown from bhakti by offenses
7		◆ -Seriousness, attentiveness	◆ -68: To dispell avidya, ignorance -70:Facilitates chanting the holy name	◆ -70:Eligibility for diksa -70: Diksa as bhajana kriya			◆-VS: Anartha-nivrtti; Ruci-69:Cleansing by chanting-70: Sraddha to prema-71: Bhava-bhakti
8	◆73: Mind is friend or enemy 74: Change of body	◆-Surrender, dependence	◆ -73: To train the mind to think of Krsna	◆ -74: Taking shelter of an advanced devotee -75:Achieving the eternal guidance of a ragatmika			◆ -Raganuga bhakti-76: Stages of self-realization in bhakti-77: 5 bhakti rasas
9							◆-Bhajan in Radha-Kunda -Prema-bhakti
10		◆-Eagerness				◆-Gradations of devotees -The topmost devotee--Sri Radhika	◆-Prema-bhakti-Astakaliya bhajan-Developing a spiritual body surcharged with ecstasy-Vipralambhaseva
11							◆-Perfection of DS: serving Sri Radha-Kunda / Becoming an assistant of Sri Radha under the guidance of the gopis

Key Verses

There are two sets of verses, with which a student should be familiar:

1. Key Memory Verses (KMVs)

27 essential verses tested throughout the exams
(Modules 1, 2 & 4)

Students should know by heart in both Sanskrit and English.

2. Key Thematic Verses (KTVs)

150 important verses in connection with one or more Theme
Students should know them in English or at least be able to
locate them in the Gita.

- *The following pages show:*
 1. A complete list of all 27 KMV's and 150 KTV's.
 2. Key Memory Verses for the other three book (NOD, ISO and NOI)
- Tables showing:
 - (1) all the verses that relate to the Sixteen Themes.
 - (2) how the KTV's relate to the 16 Themesare shown on previous pages (68 and 69 respectively)
- The Module Four Student Worksheets also list the Key Thematic Verses for the Gita, but with more detailed information. (See your Students Worksheet Book).

List of Key Verses (Bhagavad-Gita)

The following verses are the **Key Thematic Verses** (see page 68 for details of the Major Themes to which they relate). Students are expected to know in English (if not by heart, at least sufficiently well to be able to locate) many of these verses, particularly for the Module Four assessment papers which focus significantly on our Sixteen Bhagavad-gita Themes, and the 21 Themes from the other three books.

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 & 4). 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

Key Memorisation Verses (NOD, ISO, NOI)

Students should commit to memory, in English and Sanskrit all Key Memory Verses. There are a total of 9 KMV's for Module Three, as follows:

Nectar of Devotion (4 verses)

1.1.11 anyabilasita-sunyam

1.1.12 sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam

1.2.234 atah sri Kṛṣṇa-namadi

1.2.255 anasaktasya visayan

Sri Isopanisad (2 mantras)

Invocation

Mantra 1

Nectar of Instruction (3 texts)

Text One

Text Two

Text Three

NOD verses are listed below.
Please consult the relevant
texts for others

1.1.11 Definition of Pure Devotional Service (Uttama-Bhakti)

*anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsmanu-
silanan bhaktir uttama*

'Pure devotional service is:
Uninterrupted, unmotivated activities
intended to please Krishna.'

1.1.12 Narada Pancaratna's Definition of Pure Devotional Service

*sarvo padhi-vinirmuktam
tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa-
sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

'One should be free from all material designations and, by Krishna consciousness, must be cleansed of all material contamination. He should be restored to his pure identity, in which he engages his senses in the service of the proprietor of the senses.'

1.2.234 Only Purified Senses Can Fully Realise the Holy Name

*astah sri-krsna-namadi
na bhaved grahyam vidriyaih
sevonmukhe hi jihvadau
svayam eva sphurty adah*

'Therefore material senses cannot appreciate Krishna's holy name, form, qualities and pastimes. When a conditioned soul is awakened to Krishna consciousness and renders service by using his tongue to chant the Lord's holy name and taste the remnants of the Lord's food, the tongue is purified, and one comes to gradually understand who Krishna really is.'

1.2.255 Devotional Renunciation

*anasaktasya visayan
yatharham upayunjatah
nirbandhah krsna-sambandhe
yuktam-vairagyam ucyate*

'Things should be accepted for the Lord's service and not for one's personal sense gratification. If one accepts something without attachments and accepts it because it is related to Krishna, one's renunciation is called yukta-vairagya.'

Chapter Six

Homework Questions

Introduction

These homework assignments are designed for several purposes:

- to promote our active reading of scriptural texts
- to prepare us for future lessons (if our teacher uses this method)
- to help promote learning in line with our Aims
- to help prepare us for our formal assessment papers
- to nurture our ability for independent and meaningful study

There are two categories of question, namely:

Content-specific questions - these relate almost entirely to our Aim of “Knowledge – Memory and Recall” (Even where questions ask for explanation, answers can almost always be found in the text itself). These questions are fixed for each lesson and the tutor has access to standard answers.

These content-specific questions are found in Part Two of each section.

Generic Questions – for any lesson these can be selected (from Part One of the section for that specific Module). They tend to concentrate on other Aims (as indicated by the code at the end of each, e.g. PeA indicates that the question is related to “Personal Application” – see page 18 for the complete list of codes)

In most cases your teacher will select questions for you, and we have recommended one from each part for each lesson. You can also use them to enhance your own self-study – and may even add to the list of useful questions.

Please note: these questions are not designed to simply to “get you to do the required reading”, nor are they a rigid form of assessment. As far as possible, they should be performed in a mood of creativity and exploration, and in a way that enhances both your study skills and your taste for reading Srila Prabhupada’s books.

Part One (Generic Questions)

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

Teachers are recommended to select for students an equal number of questions from here (Part One) and from Part Two (content-specific questions). Naturally if you are sitting an official course, then follow the advice of your facilitator. Homework questions are best completed as you read sections prior to the corresponding lesson.

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) From this section, choose two points/instructions that appear to be contradictory or are held in tension. Alternatively, draw one point from this section and the other from elsewhere in scripture. Explore and draw a conclusion. (Und)
- 4) Choose one verse/passage which you feel you understand/grasp quite well. Now, come up with three possible arguments to disprove it, backing them up as far as possible with sastra. (Optionally, now refute these arguments). (Und, Aut)
- 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 the 1/2/3 (specify) 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)

Part One (Generic Questions)

Module Four

Do keep in mind to answer these questions in a mood of positive and creative inquiry. They are not a form of rigidly testing you, nor should you get into anxiety about them. Nonetheless, one benefit of these exercises is that they are purposefully designed to prepare you for the formal assessment papers).

1. Write a brief summary of the Major Theme (specify), drawing where appropriate on references from all Bhakti Sastri books.
2. Write a brief summary of the Major Theme (specify: e.g. “Demigod Worship”), focusing on an apparent contradiction or dialectic (specify: e.g. Lord Krishna appearing to both support [3.11] and condemn [7.20] this practice).
3. Write a brief summary of the Major Theme (specify: e.g. “Impersonalism”) in response to the question (specify: e.g. “Why do you think that Srila Prabhupada argues so strongly in his books against Mayavada philosophy?”).
4. Write a brief summary of the Major Theme, focusing on how it relates to one of the following Aims (specify two or more, or ask students to select themselves).
5. Identify and write down at least 1/2/3 (specify) arguments against the concept of (specify, e.g. reincarnation) and, drawing from the Bhakti Sastri texts, write down counter-arguments.
7. Write a brief summary of the Major Theme (specify: e.g. the relationship between Jiva, Isvara and Prakrti) and explore how it is relevant to you. How could you practically apply some of these verses to improve your spiritual life?
8. Drawing from experience, write a paragraph or two entitled “The qualities I most admire in the devotees of the Lord”. Make appropriate reference to the Bhakti Sastri books.
9. Which of our Major Themes appears to be most relevant to our Aim of “Mood & Mission” (or specify another Aim).
10. You’ve been asked to appear on radio to present the Krishna conscious perspective on a current issue.
e.g. i) the environment
ii) gay rights
iii) mad-cow disease

Write down the three main points you’d like to get across and identify verses etc. that could support your case.

11. Write a rough sketch for a short essay, “Why it’s important to demonstrate ‘Moral and Academic Integrity’ in the interpretation and application of scripture”.
12. Write a concise essay entitled, “Appropriate and inappropriate attitude towards scripture.”
12. Write a short essay “What I have learned to appreciate about Srila Prabhupada and his mission by studying his books”.

13. Focusing on one of our Themes, write a paragraph entitled “What I’ve realised about the practice of Krishna consciousness during the Bhakti Sastri Course”.

14. Identify one of the following (specify):

- the verse or passage you have most difficulty understanding
- an apparent contradiction within scripture that you’ve not yet fully resolved
- a personal spiritual challenge in regard to your behaviour
- a personal internal struggle that you go through
- a common argument you hear against Krishna consciousness (and preferably one you have difficulty answering)
- a question you are often asked by other devotees, or juniors
- a current topical issue outside of ISKCON
- a current topical or controversial issue within ISKCON
- a passage within scripture that you have difficulty accepting (e.g. it seems illogical, exaggerated, etc.)
- from your own experience, a way in which scripture is commonly misused
- an aspect of Srila Prabhupada’s mission that makes it unique (and features that it shares in common with most other major religions)
- a really difficult dilemma you often have (or have had in the past)

Optionally, write down verses or scriptural passages relevant to this subject.

15. In response to one of the above (*see previous question*), write an answer or possible solution based on your understanding and realisation of the Bhakti Sastri texts.

Part Two – Content-specific Questions

Module One - Bhagavad-gita 1-9

Course teachers have answers to these questions, which focus almost exclusively on memorisation.

Lesson 1 (Ch1. Verses 1–13)

1. Why is the Bhagavad-gita the perfect theistic science?
2. Why is Dhrtarastra fearful about the outcome of the battle?

Lesson 2 (Ch1. Verses 14–23)

1. State any three signs that point to a victory for the Pandavas.
2. Explain the significance of Krishna’s name Hrsikesa in verse 15.

Lesson 3 (Ch1. Verses 24–36)

1. Explain the significance of Arjuna’s addressing Krishna as Hrsikesa in verse 24.
2. Explain the significance of Arjuna’s addressing Krishna as Govinda in verse 32.

Lesson 4 (Ch1. Verses 37–46)

1. What is the significance of the word *varna-sankara*?
2. Summarise Arjuna’s arguments for not fighting so far.

Lesson 5 (Ch2. Verses 1–10)

1. What words does Krishna use to describe Arjuna’s compassion?
2. Summarise the main point of the purport to verse 2.7.

Lesson 6 (Ch2. Verses 11–19)

1. What exactly does a *pandita* not lament for? How would a devotee react to death in the family?
2. Summarise Srila Prabhupada’s arguments against Mayavada philosophy in the purports to 2.12–13.

Lesson 7 (Ch2. Verses 20–30)

1. Explain the analogies of the “the surgeon” and “the justice of the peace”.
2. Why is the soul described as amazing?

Lesson 8 (Ch2. Verses 31–38)

1. Why does battle bring pleasure to a *ksatriya*?
2. What are the two types of “*sva-dharma*”? What are their purposes?

Lesson 9 (Ch2. Verses 39–49)

1. What is “*vyavasayatmika* intelligence”?
2. What is the relationship between the Vedas and Krishna consciousness?

Lesson 10 (Ch2. Verses 50–59)

1. Explain from memory the analogy of the tortoise, drawing as many similarities as possible between the metaphor and that which it explains.
2. To what is restriction from sense-gratification by rules and regulations compared in the purport to the 'higher taste' verse? For whom are such restrictions useful?

Lesson 11 (Ch2. Verses 60–72)

1. How does one avoid the sequence of falldown in verses 2.62-3?
2. What does it mean to become desireless?

Lesson 12 (Ch3. Verses 1–9)

1. Explain the relationship between *buddhi-yoga* and *sankhya-yoga*.
2. Explain the term "*mithyacara*".

Lesson 13 (Ch3. Verses 10–21)

1. What is the function of the demigods? Why are they worshipped?
2. How is the ritual of "*yajna*" an indirect practice of Krishna consciousness?

Lesson 14 (Ch3. Verses 22–32)

1. Why does Krishna strictly perform prescribed duties of *varnasrama-dharma*?
2. Briefly explain the consciousness of one who acts under false ego.

Lesson 15 (Ch3. Verses 33–43)

1. Explain the analogy of the "milk".
2. How can an aspiring transcendentalist conquer lust?

Lesson 16 (Ch4. Verses 1–10)

1. Explain the significance of *parampara*.
2. Why does Krishna appear on Earth? In what different ways does he accomplish His mission?

Lesson 17 (Ch4. Verses 11–24)

1. How is Krishna the "object of everyone's realisation" according to their desires?
2. How does one become free from reactions while performing activities?

Lesson 18 (Ch4. Verses 25–33)

1. What is the purpose of sacrifice?
2. What is the difference between the sacrifice of material possessions and the sacrifice of transcendental knowledge?

Lesson 19 (Ch4. Verses 34–42)

1. What are the three important aspects of one's relationship with a bona fide spiritual master?
2. Describe the fate of the faithful person and the doubter.

Lesson 20 (Ch5. Verses 1–9)

1. What is the difference between Vaisnava and Mayavadi *sannyasis*? Why is this distinction relevant to the section?
2. Why is someone absorbed in devotional service "dear to everyone"?

Lesson 21 (Ch5. Verses 10–16)

1. Explain the analogy of the lotus leaf.
2. What is the relationship between the soul, material nature and God in terms of action?

Lesson 22 (Ch5. Verses 7–29)

1. Give two reasons from this sections why advanced transcendentalists have no desire for material sense enjoyment?
2. What is the “peace formula”?

Lesson 23 (Ch6. Verses 1–9)

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

Lesson 24 (Ch6. Verses 10–24)

1. Describe the importance of regulation in spiritual practice.
2. Explain the analogy of the lamp.

Lesson 25 (Ch6. Verses 25–36)

1. Summarise the main point of verse 6.30 and purport.
2. How is Arjuna’s difficulty controlling the mind a statement on the practicality of *astanga-yoga*?

Lesson 26 (Ch6. Verses 37–47)

1. What happens to a *yogi* who falls down after short practice? After long practice?
2. Summarise the purport to verse 6.47.

Lesson 27 (Ch7. Verses 1–7)

1. What is *jnana* and *vijnana* according to 7.2?
2. What are Krishna’s two energies?

Lesson 28 (Ch7. Verses 8–14)

1. Give some examples how Krishna can be known through His various energies.
2. How does verse 14 exalt the position of *bhakti-yoga*?

Lesson 29 (Ch7. Verses 15–23)

1. List the four pious men. (Sanskrit and English)
2. Why is the *jnani* most dear to Krishna?

Lesson 30 (Ch7. Verses 24–30)

1. According to the purport to verse 24, how can one understand Krishna’s personal form?
2. Summarise the main point and purport of verse 27.

Lesson 31 (Ch8. Verses 1–6)

1. Mention and explain four of the philosophical terms mentioned by Arjuna and Krishna.
2. Why is it important to cultivate remembrance of Krishna during one’s life?

Lesson 32 (Ch8. Verses 7–13)

1. What is the significance of the word “*yoga-balena*”?
2. What is the relationship between chanting Hare Krishna and *Om*?

Lesson 33 (Ch8. Verses 14–19)

1. How does Krishna’s description of the material world in verses 15–19 inspire one to take to Krishna consciousness more seriously?
2. The Vedic literatures prescribe sacrifice for elevation to the heavenly planets, yet Krishna declares them also to be a place of misery. Why?

Lesson 34 (Ch8. Verses 20–28)

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

Lesson 35 (Ch9. Verses 1–10)

1. How does one develop faith in Krishna?
2. Explain the answer to the apparent contradiction in verse 4 and 5, “and yet everything that is created does not rest in me ...”

Lesson 36 (Ch9. Verses 11–19)

1. Explain the qualities of a *mahatma*.
2. How is it that one engaged in devotional service to Krishna has already performed all sacrifices?

Lesson 37 (Ch9. Verses 20–26)

1. What are the main differences between demigod worship and *bhakti-yoga* in practice and results?
2. Summarise the main point of verse 26 and the purport concerning the practice of devotional service.

Lesson 38 (Ch9. Verses 27–34)

1. Explain the significance of the words “*sadhur eva*.”
2. How is a devotee purified of any accidental faults?

Part Two – Content-specific Questions

Module Two - Bhagavad-gita 10-18

Lesson 1 (Ch10. Verses 1–7)

1. Why is Bhagavan Sri Krishna misunderstood even by the great sages and demigods?
2. Summarise verse 10.7 and purport.

Lesson 2 (Ch10. Verses 8–11)

1. Explain Lord Caitanya’s analogy of a seed in the purport to text 9.
2. Define and describe “*buddhi-yoga*” as Srila Prabhupada describes it in the purport to text 10.

Lesson 3 (Ch10. Verses 12–30)

1. Why does Arjuna ask Krishna to explain His opulences?
2. How is Krishna the “beginning, middle and end of all beings”?

Lesson 14 (Ch10. Verses 31–42)

1. How does a devotee relate to the beautiful things of this world?
2. Explain the word “*asamaurdva*”.

Lesson 5 (Ch11. Verses 1–13)

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?

Lesson 6 (Ch. 11. Verses 14–31)

1. Explain the shift of relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in verse 14.
2. Was Arjuna the only person to see the Universal Form of Krishna?

Lesson 7 (Ch11. Verses 32–44)

1. What is the specific plan of Krishna that is being carried out in the material world?
2. Explain the main point of verse 42 and its purport.

Lesson 8 (Ch11. Verses 45–55)

1. Why are the many Vedic processes not useful in gaining *darsana* of the Lord’s form?
2. How is Krishna’s two handed form a more confidential revelation than the Universal Form?

Lesson 9 (Ch12. Verses 1–7)

1. Compare the processes of impersonal and personal worship?
2. Explain the importance of Krishna’s statement in verse 7, “I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.” and how it relates to faith in Krishna consciousness.

Lesson 10 (Ch12. Verses 8–12)

1. How are the activities of a pure devotee transcendental according to text 8.
2. What does it mean to “work for Krishna” in verse 10? How does this differ from the instruction in verse 9?

Lesson 11 (Ch12. Verses 13–20)

1. How does a devotee rise above the frustrations that arise due to material disturbances?
2. When is impersonal meditation useful? When should it be dropped?

Lesson 12 (Ch13. Verses 1–7)

1. Define ‘*Ksetra*’ and “*ksetra-jna*.” How can one detect the difference of the two?
2. What is the difference between Krishna as the “*ksetra-jna*” and the *jiva* as “*ksetra-jna*”?

Lesson 13 (Ch13. Verses 8–19)

1. Analyse humility, non-violence, and simplicity as items of knowledge.
2. Explain the example of the sun in terms of the Suppressor’s presence.

Lesson 14 (Ch13. Verses 20–26)

1. Explain the analogy of the residential quarters.
2. Explain the position of the Supersoul in relationship with the individual soul.

Lesson 15 (Ch13. Verses 27–35)

1. Summarise the philosophical content of verse 30 and purport.
2. Explain the analogy of the sun in verse 34.

Lesson 16 (Ch14. Verses 1–9)

1. Explain the analogy of the “scorpion’s eggs”.
2. Briefly explain how each of the three modes are binding.

Lesson 17 (Ch14.10–1)

1. Explain the destination of one in each mode.
2. Summarise Srila Prabhupada’s social criticisms of modern society given in this section.

Lesson 18 (Ch14. Verses 19–27)

1. Summarise the means for transcending the three modes, given in verses 26 and 27.
2. Explain the relationship between Brahman and Bhagavan.

Lesson 19 (Ch15. Verses 1–7)

1. Explain the analogy of the banyan tree.
2. Describe the process of removing oneself from the tree.

Lesson 20 (Ch.15. Verses 8–15)

1. Summarise the process of transmigration.
2. Explain how the description in verses 12–15 serve to remind one of his dependence on Krishna.

Lesson 21 (Ch15. Verses 16–20)

1. What are the two classes of living entities?
2. Why is Krishna celebrated in the Vedas as the Supreme Person?

Lesson 22 (Ch16. Verses 1–9)

1. Give some symptoms of one in the demoniac nature.
2. What is the demoniac view of the creation? What does that view lead to?

Lesson 23 (Ch16.Verses 10–18)

1. Explain the religious life of the demoniac.
2. Explain the significance of the words “*avidhi purvakam*”.

Lesson 24 (Ch16.Verses 19–24)

1. What are the three gateways to hell?
2. Explain the position of the scriptures as described in the final verses and purports.

Lesson 25 (Ch17. Verses 1–10)

1. What are the three kinds of faith? How does one elevate his faith?
2. In what do men in the three modes repose their faith? Give examples from scripture or experience.

Lesson 26 (C17.11–19)

1. Explain the types of sacrifice according to the three modes.
2. Explain the austerities of the speech, body and mind.

Lesson 27 (Ch17. Verses 20–28)

1. Explain the words “*om tat sat*.”
2. Summarise the main point of verse 28 and the purport.

Lesson 28 (Ch18. Verses 1–12)

1. What is the difference between *sannyasa* and *tyaga*?
2. What is the “highest criterion of religion”?

Lesson 29 (Ch18. Verses 13–25)

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 in the three modes.

Lesson 30 (Ch18. Verses 26–40)

1. Describe the action, work, understanding, determination and happiness of one in goodness.
2. Do the same for one in passion.

Lesson 31 (Ch18. Verses 41–55)

1. Why should one perform his own work rather than that of others?
2. How is a person in Krishna consciousness automatically a *sannyasi*?

Lesson 32 (Ch18. Verses 56–66)

1. Explain the significance of text 54 in terms of defeating Mayavada philosophy.
2. How would you answer the claim, “One can not surrender to Krishna until he is fully purified from sinful reactions (see 7.28). Therefore, I should perform *jnana-yoga* until I am pure enough to worship Krishna?”

Lesson 33 (Ch18. Verses 67–78)

1. To whom should one not teach *Bhagavad-gita*?
2. What is the result of teaching and learning *Bhagavad-gita*?

Part Two – Content-specific Questions

Module Three- NOD, ISO, NOI

NOD Questions

Lesson One (Preface)

1. Why is love of Kṛṣṇa natural for the living entity?

Lesson Two (Introduction)

1. What are the four sides of the ocean and what do they correspond to?
2. What is the definition of pure devotional service?

Lesson Three (Chapter One)

1. What are the two results of *pāpam*?
2. List and describe the eight mystic *siddhis*.

Lesson Four (Chapter Two)

1. Describe briefly the three categories of devotional service and their characteristics.
2. What is the qualification for practicing devotional service?

Lesson Five (Chapter Three)

1. Describe the three levels of eligibility for *vaidhi-bhakti*.

Lesson Six (Chapter Four)

1. Prove that devotional service is beyond liberation.
2. Prove that the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are the topmost of all devotees.

Lesson Seven (Chapter Five)

1. Explain how Srila Prabhupada is following in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Gosvami in establishing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world.
2. Why is devotional service open for all without any distinction?

Lesson Eight (Chapter Six)

2. Find a definition for principles from what Srīla Prabhupāda has written in this chapter and give an example.
3. Write down, as described in this chapter, the number of:
 - (a) primary principles
 - (b) secondary principle
 - (c) 'other' principles

Lesson Nine (Chapter Seven)

1. Describe the different symptoms of bona fide and bogus spiritual masters. Explain the status of spiritual master in relation to a) Kṛṣṇa and b) his disciples. (Ch. 7)
2. List down some of the reasons for Lord Buddha's appearance

Lesson Ten (Chapter Eight)

1. How can an offender to Kṛṣṇa be delivered?
2. What is the seriousness of offences against the holy name?

Lesson Eleven (Chapter Nine)

1. For a humble Vaiṣṇava what is the principle of not tolerating blasphemy?
3. What is the regulative principle on seeing the Deities?

Lesson Twelve (Chapter Ten)

1. Why should a devotee not expect immediate relief from the reactions of his past misdeeds?
2. Define the following: a) *sravanam*, b) remembrance c) meditation

Lesson Thirteen (Chapter Eleven)

1. What is the difference between the devotees defined in Skanda Purana and pure devotees (*bhagavatas*)?
2. Explain, giving evidence, why devotees do not care which species of life they will be born in, nor how they will maintain themselves.

Lesson Fourteen (Chapter Twelve)

1. What is the highest worship?
2. What is the actual definition of liberation and how is it different from freedom from material contamination?

Lesson Fifteen (Chapter Thirteen)

1. Why is Deity worship especially important for a *grhastha*?
2. What is the difference between performing duties according to *varnasrama* principles and practising devotional service?

Lesson Sixteen (Chapter Fourteen)

1. What is the difference between impersonalists and the devotees' acceptance and rejection of material objects?
2. What are the nine different kinds of devotional service?

Lesson Seventeen (Chapter Fifteen)

1. Impersonalists are spiritually inclined, but they have been compared with materialistic demons like Kamsa or Sisupala. Why?

Lesson Eighteen (Chapter Sixteen)

1. Briefly define *raganuga-bhakti* and give examples.
2. What is the criteria for eligibility for one who aspires to follow in the footsteps of a particular resident of Vrndavana?
3. How should a devotee who is advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness act?

Lesson Nineteen (Chapter Seventeen)

1. Describe the two ways of elevation to the stage of ecstasy. Explain with examples.

Lesson Twenty (Chapter Eighteen)

1. Define perseverance, pridelessness and *asa-bandha*.
2. What invokes attachment to Kṛṣṇa and what extinguishes such attachment?

Lesson Twenty-one (Chapter Nineteen)

1. What is the difference between love for Kṛṣṇa and love in the material world?
2. How can one recognise pure love for Kṛṣṇa?

Sri Isopanisad Questions

Lesson 1

1. Why is Vedic knowledge a more authentic source of knowledge than that obtained through the mind and senses?

Lesson 2

1. How is Bhagavan realisation the most complete understanding of transcendence?
2. How can the living entity realise its completeness?

Lesson 3

1. Answer the following inquiry based upon Mantra 1: “If everything belongs to K• • Ša, can I take your laundry soap without asking?”

Lesson 4

1. Define *karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma*. How would you categorise work done in the *isavasyam* conception?
2. Who is a “killer of the soul?”

Lesson 5

1. Why can even the great demigods misunderstand Kṛṣṇa’s position?
2. What does contradictory qualities of the Lord prove?

Lesson 6

1. How is the Madhyama Vaisnava different from the Kanistha?
2. From Mantra 7, please explain two ways to understand how the soul and God are one.

Lesson 7

1. What is the value of understanding that the Lord has no veins?
2. How can knowledge be considered worse than ignorance?

Lesson 8

1. What are some of the qualifications of a *dhira*?
2. What is the value of Vedic activities of religious sense gratification?

Lesson 9

1. Briefly explain why one cannot know what the Absolute Truth is by negation.
2. How would you counter someone who preached that “all paths lead to the same goal”?

Lesson 10

1. What is the main theme of Mantra 14 and purport?
2. How does Mantra 15 prove the supremacy of the personal feature of Godhead?

Lesson 11

1. How are the Lord and the soul different according to the final verses of Sri Isopanisad?
2. How does the Lord assist His devotees in coming to Him?

Lesson 12

1. What two ways does the Lord guide the devotee?
3. Is birthright a qualification for knowing Kṛṣṇa?

NOI Questions

Lesson One (Preface)

1. Who is Srila Rupa Goswami?
2. Which are the most exalted of Krishna's pastimes? How can we understand them?

Lesson Two (Text One)

1. Define the word "goswami" according to text 1.
2. What are the three bodily urges?
3. What is Maharaja Pariksit's question to Sukadeva Goswami?
4. What types of persons are compared to croaking toads?

Lesson Three (Text Two – first half)

1. What is the difference between a *mahatma* and a *duratma*?
2. Explain the factual position of *tatastha-sakti* in relation to the other two *saktis*.

Lesson Four (Text Two – second half)

1. Explain the twofold meaning of *niyamaagraha*.

Lesson Five (Text Three– first half)

1. Define enthusiasm.
2. Why is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness opening centres?
3. Why does Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura say that "cultivation of knowledge by philosophical speculation, the collection of mundane opulence by the advancement of fruitive activities, and the desire for *yoga-siddhis*, material perfections, are all contrary to the principles of devotional service"?

Lesson Six (Text Three– second half)

1. Define *tat tat karma pravartanat*.
2. What is the value of attending the morning programme in ISKCON?

Lesson Seven (Text Four)

1. Give two reasons why ISKCON has been formed.
2. List the four means by which we can develop our devotional service and dormant Krishna consciousness.

Lesson Eight (Text Five)

1. How many kinds of devotees does text five mention? What are their respective characteristics?
2. Who is a bona fide Vaishnava? How should one treat him?

Lesson Nine (Text Six)

1. Explain the connection between the River Ganges and the body of a pure devotee.
2. "The *goswami* title is actually the monopoly of pure devotees." Please explain.
3. How does one distinguish a superior Vaisnava from an inferior Vaisnava?

Lesson Ten (Text Seven)

1. What is the symptom of our diseased condition?
2. What are the different stages a person successively goes through while chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra?

Lesson Eleven (Text Eight)

1. “In the transcendental realm of Vraja (Vraja-dhama) one should serve the Supreme Lord, Sr... Krishna, with a feeling similar to that of His associates, and one should place himself under the direct guidance of a particular associate of Krishna and should follow in his footsteps. This method is applicable both in the stage of sadhana (spiritual practices executed while in the stage of bondage) and in the stage of sadhya (God realisation), when one is a siddha-purusha, or a spiritually perfect soul.” Explain the different kinds of sadhana. Which one does the above quote refer to?

Lesson Twelve (Texts Nine, Ten and Eleven)

1. Describe the hierarchy of the spiritual world. (Text Nine)
1. What is a jnani? Why is he considered superior to karmis? (Text Ten).
2. What is the difference between a karmi and a vikarmi? What are their goals? What are their destinations? (Text Ten)