



ISKCON
Congregation

*Congregational Development
Ministry*

BHAKTI VRIKSHA

INTRODUCTORY EDIFICATIONS



Dedicated to

His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda

The Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

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Our heartfelt gratitude and our respectful obeisances to our Spiritual Masters, H.H. Jayapataka Swami Maharaja and H.H. Radhanath Swami Maharaja, for their everlasting guidance, support, blessings and encouragement in every step of our lives.

Special thanks to Bhakta Jayanth for helping us in compiling this book.

Special thanks to HG Radhe Shyam Das, for his inspiration in designing the flow of the edifications.

Last but not the least, we express our deepest gratitude to the ISKCON Congregation Development Ministry, for their constant inspiration and guidance. We feel grateful and humbled to be given the privilege of serving in the Ministry.

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FOREWORD

Almost in every sphere, whatever is easily applicable is what grabs our attention the most. Nowadays when we all are in want of practical things, to have available these “Bhakti-Vriksha Introductory Edifications” is a bonus for those interested in expanding the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. I am sure that Bhakti Vriksha members, preachers and facilitators in ISKCON will benefit from using this material.

Now that, after twenty five years, the Bhakti Vriksha program has taken a strong foothold all over the world, it is encouraging to see more and more supporting material for the expansion of congregations. Advaitachandra prabhu and his good wife, Kalasudha Devi Dasi, both members of ISKCON Houston council, have kindly prepared these lesson-plans based on their experience of establishing Bhakti Vriksha in the USA. Throughout, the thirty two lessons have an appealing flow and a strategic way in which to introduce topics and practices for new practitioners of Krishna Consciousness.

The “Edifications” have a great potential, not only for being practical, but because they provide detailed guidance in the understanding and application of the philosophy. The entire course is a seamless and insightful progression on the spiritual path of devotional service.

The purpose of this material; facilitating the advancement of newer devotees, is one of the main interests in my service. As an outreach coordinator at the Congregational Development Ministry, I often receive queries from devotees from all over the world. “How can we present Krishna Consciousness in a simple but appealing way?”, “How to help newcomers to gradually understand the philosophy of Bhakti?” or “How to ensure people seriously takes to spiritual practices?” By being able to provide these lesson-plans to devotees, who are looking for useful resources, I’m confident that their outreach initiatives will be aided.

There are some particularly useful features included in the course. For example, how in a very subtle way, Bhakti Vriksha participants are encouraged to share their Krishna Conscious realizations with others outside their group; and, how every set of four lessons there is a Quiz and a fun “activity”. These aspects of the lessons for sure will help in strengthening the bond between members and also make their experience in their devotional life more meaningful.

Given that these lessons were created while presenting Krishna Consciousness in the West, it might be noted that their implementation can be easily adapted to various cultural settings. They may also facilitate addressing people of different philosophical, religious or spiritual backgrounds and

encourage newcomers to advance at their own pace. Being characteristic of the Bhakti Vriksha format, they will provide a support system for easy learning and understanding of Krishna Consciousness principles in a nutshell. In essence, these sequential multi-level “edifications” or learning modules can, without difficulty, take somebody from not knowing or understanding even the basics of Krishna Consciousness to becoming a serious practitioner in the close association of Krishna devotees.

We sincerely congratulate Advaita Chandra prabhu and Kalasudha mataji for sharing the lessons learnt in their pioneering work in America in the area of congregational development. They have attracted and mentored a considerable number of new devotees to ISKCON in various cities in the USA. This material in your hands reflects their ability in adapting the gradual presentation of Krishna Consciousness according to time place and circumstances. It is a practical way by which to make the process of Krishna Bhakti accessible to the newcomers of our movement. We are confident that these edifications will assist your endeavors in pleasing Srila Prabhupāda by assisting people in their spiritual advancement.

Your servant,

Iksvaku dasa
Outreach Coordinator
ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry
Central Office – Sridham Mayapur

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Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

1. Harmonizing Body, Mind and Spirit through Meditation

According to the “National Health Interview” Survey, 75% of the general population in America experiences at least “some stress” every two weeks. Millions of people around the world suffer from unhealthy levels of stress. This stress contributes to heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes, and affects the immune system in many individuals. Throughout the day, when we experience stress, our bodies automatically react in ways that prepare us to fight or run. In some cases of extreme danger, this physical response is helpful. However, a prolonged state of such agitation can cause physical damage to every part of the body.

One of the main causes of stress is the disharmony of body, mind and spirit. Meditation is a means by which the body, mind and spirit can be harmonized. Meditation affects the body in exactly the opposite ways that stress does, restoring the body to a calm state, helping the body to repair itself, and preventing new damage due to the physical effects of stress.

The mental relaxation that meditation brings about has real physiological benefits. The American Heart Association reports recent studies funded by National Institutes of Health, that those practicing meditation lowered their blood pressure, and reported less stress and anger, and exhibited a direct correlation between meditation and decreased incidence of heart attack and stroke. For thousands of years, spiritual traditions from around the world have emphasized the need for a balanced practice of contemplation and meditation in our individual lives. Today, science and biology affirm the same.

What is meditation? According to the Webster dictionary, the meaning of the word “meditate” is *to engage in contemplation or reflection or to engage in mental exercise for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness*

The main objective of meditation is to focus one’s attention. It could be a focus on sensations of breathing, or emotions or thoughts, or sound vibrations. Ultimately, it’s about bringing the mind back to the here and now, as opposed to letting the mind drift.

Meditation helps stabilize the mind and calm the senses of the body. However, the purpose of meditation is not to simply stabilize the mind as an end in itself but to use the stabilized sharpened mind to achieve a higher state of consciousness, which brings serenity, clarity, and bliss for the spirit within.

Different kinds of meditation: Meditation can be practiced in many different ways. While there are numerous different meditation techniques, a common thread runs through virtually all meditative techniques.

Being In The Now. Rather than focusing on the past or the future, virtually all meditative practices involve focusing on *right now*. This involves experiencing each moment, letting it go and experiencing the next.

Altered State of Consciousness: With time, maintaining a quiet mind and focus on the present can lead to an altered level of consciousness that isn’t a sleeping state but isn’t quite the average wakeful state, either. Meditation increases brain activity in an area of the brain associated with happiness, positive thoughts and emotions. Regular practice brings prolonged positive changes in these areas.

Researchers generally classify meditation techniques into two different categories: *concentrative*, and *non-concentrative*.

Concentrative techniques involve focusing on a particular object that’s generally outside of oneself: a candle’s flame, the sound of an instrument, or a particular mantra.

Non-concentrative meditation, on the other hand, can include a broader focus: the sounds in one’s environment as well as internal body states and one’s own breathing.

Let us explore one of the forms of meditation - *Mantra Meditation*, or meditation on sound vibrations. *Mantra* is a Sanskrit word which means “That which frees the mind”. A *Mantra* is a sound vibration that frees the mind from all stress and built-up negative emotional energies like anger, vengeance,

envy, and prepares the mind to tune in to the positive emotional energies like forgiveness, tolerance, compassion and humility.

Sound vibrations have the potency to alter the state of our mind. If someone speaks to us rudely, our mind becomes depressed. If someone speaks to us with kindness and love, our mind becomes elated. If we hear our favorite song or music, our mind becomes relaxed. Powerful speeches from great leaders have inspired the minds of people to create revolutions in history. These are all the effects of sound vibrations altering the state of the mind. Mantra Meditation is based on this principle.

The mantra recommended to overcome the ill-effects of this age of disagreement and duplicity, is the “Hare Krishna Mantra”

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE

HARE RAMA HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

HARE is the divine feminine energy which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving

KRISHNA is the all attractive source of beauty, power and truth

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving

The combination of these 3 words as arranged in the mantra, calls upon the facilities within us that illuminate the mind with spiritual energy.

Mantra meditation can be very easily performed by following the “3P” formula

1. **Posture** – One should sit in a comfortable relaxed position, neither too rigid nor too flexible.
2. **Pronunciation** – Each syllable of the mantra must be pronounced clearly, so as to produce the right sound vibration. Mantra Meditation is all about focusing the mind on hearing the sound vibration, and hence pronouncing all the syllables correctly is very important.
3. **Prayer** – While focusing on the sound vibration, the practitioner is encouraged to meditate on the meaning of each word as mentioned above. This chanting is a call for grace. An attitude of gratitude prepares the mind to tune-into higher realms of consciousness.

Overcoming Challenges during Meditation: One of the major stumbling blocks for a meditation practitioner has been to contend with the restless mind. Unless the mind is purified of its lower, base instincts, it will continue to provide newer challenges and obstacles.

Wisdom from the Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Text on Bhakti Yoga says

bandhur ātmātmanas tasya / yenātmaivātmanā jītaḥ

anātmanas tu śatruṭve / vartetātmaiva śatru-vat

"For one who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy."

The constant practice of the process of mantra meditation helps tame the restless mind, by gradually befriending it. A regulated lifestyle of healthy diet, discipline and positive association helps in reducing distractions and in steadying the mind. The activities that we perform during the entire day have a profound impact on the mind's response during meditation.

DISCOVERY:

1. What are the benefits of meditation?
2. Describe the different kinds of meditation. What is unique about Mantra Meditation?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. Explain the effects of sound vibrations on the mind with the help of an example.
4. What are some of the challenges faced by a practitioner during meditation?

APPLICATION:

5. What kind of a lifestyle is conducive to the practice of meditation?

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

1. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

The benefits of meditation:

- harmonizing the body, mind and spirit
- restoring the body to a calm state
- helping the body to repair itself
- preventing new damage due to the physical effects of stress
- therapeutic value for high-risk people with established coronary artery disease
- physiological benefits on cardiovascular health

Question #2.

Different kinds of meditation:

- concentrative techniques - focusing on a particular object or a mantra
- non-concentrative meditation – broader focus such as the sounds in one's environment as well as internal body states and one's own breathing
- mantra meditation - meditation on sound vibrations, positively altering the state of the mind

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Effects of sound vibration on mind:

- frees the mind from all stress and built-up negative emotional energies like anger, vengeance, envy
- prepares the mind to tune in to the positive emotional energies like forgiveness, tolerance, compassion and humility
- have the potency to alter the state of our mind

Examples:

- If we hear our favorite song or music, our mind becomes relaxed
- powerful speeches from great leaders have inspired the minds of people to create revolutions in history. These are all the effects of sound vibrations altering the state of the mind.

Question #4.

Challenges during meditation:

- to contend with the restless mind and distractions
- mind is not yet purified of its lower, base instincts

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Conducive life style for meditation:

- a regulated lifestyle of healthy diet
- discipline
- positive association

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

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hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

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KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

2. The Pursuit of Happiness

"Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" is one of the most famous phrases in the United States Declaration of Independence and considered by some as part of one of the most influential sentences in the history of the English language. All of us are searching for happiness. We perform all our activities with the hope to increase happiness unlimitedly and eliminate all suffering. Have you ever tried to stop an ant when it's heading towards some place? The ant goes through your fingers and works its way around the obstacles to somehow find its food or find a better situation. The various species of animals, plants, insects, birds, beasts and humans, try to find happiness in their own way. But despite all efforts to find happiness, we encounter so many anxieties, that everyone is always looking for relief, a break, or a vacation. Even the polar bear, mice and bees go in hibernation in winter, whereas frogs and toads go into deep sleep when it gets too warm. Of course, they are forced by their nature to do so, but humans have the prerogative to choose their vacation.

Sometimes, we do find happiness, but it is very short-lived. For example, when we eat food, we feel happy. But, after a few hours, we start feeling the pangs of hunger again. Can anyone conclusively say that they have found permanent happiness? Sometimes, the happiness we find comes with its own set of miseries. For example, if we eat too much, it can lead to disease. Can anyone conclusively say that they have found pure, unadulterated happiness? At other times, the happiness that we experience is relative to our surroundings, and is simply a mitigation of miseries, rather than absolute happiness which can give complete satisfaction within. Happiness seems to be simply a gap between two miserable situations. As the saying goes, one man's garbage is another man's treasure. When a person gets sick, the patient is in agony, but the doctor may be happy to get more business. Can anyone conclusively say that they have found absolute happiness?

If we observe carefully, there is a distinct similarity in the way Animals and Humans search for happiness. The National Geographic and Discovery channels are full of shows about animals, how the different species of animals go about finding their food, and how they eat it. We are also shown how the animals make nice arrangements for sleeping, how they build holes or intricate nests, without any degree in civil engineering, and defend themselves from other creatures. By nature's arrangement, every animal has been provided with some kind of defense system. A tortoise, who is very slow, has been provided with a shell to withdraw. An animal with a fragile body has been provided with speed to escape. We are also shown how the animals pro-create and produce offspring. Everything that we see in animal life seems to revolve around the basic principles of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending themselves.

An animal may eat raw food; and man may eat cooked delicacies on the top floor of a restaurant, enjoying the scenery all around, but the principle of eating is common. An animal may sleep in the forest sludge; and man may sleep on tempurpedic mattresses or on a waterbed, but the principle of sleeping is common. An animal may procreate in the open; and man may have elaborate arrangements for finding a partner and procreate offspring, but the principle of mating is common. An animal may defend with claws and teeth; and man may defend with bombs and missiles, but the principle of defending is common.

However, humans do not find real satisfaction simply by pursuing happiness in these 4 activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending.

In spite of the technological and scientific advancement, despite possessing money, comforts and luxuries, people are full of anxiety. We have reached the summit of material civilization – mobiles, computer systems, broad highways, fine cars, fast flights, and machines for everything – but people are still dissatisfied. The divorce rate, suicide rate, depression, crime rate, all of which are ever increasing all over the world, certainly do not signify happiness. History is filled with examples of affluent people who have everything that one can dream of, and yet have committed suicide or have lived in seclusion due to fear or have passed away due to drug overuse. Why is man unhappy even after possessing practically everything necessary for a comfortable and luxurious living? Could it be that real happiness lies beyond the four common activities?

Human beings differ from animals in their power of discrimination.

One may say that animals also have a sense of discrimination. An eagle can sight its prey from miles away. A dog can smell and detect thieves. A cat has the discrimination to drink milk from the kitchen without being detected. Honey bees have a very efficient social set-up, where the worker bees go for collecting honey (without going on a strike!), while the drones take care of the queen who begets offspring. So, even though animals have some sense of discrimination, yet the discrimination power of animals is limited to, and does not go beyond eating, sleeping, mating and defending. The animals are not interested in life's bigger picture.

The human body has the capacity to go beyond the four principles of eating, sleeping, mating and defending, to inquire into the causes of suffering and the destination of life. At some point in our lives, every human being, whether an atheist or a person of faith, has pondered – “I do not want miseries, I do not want unhappiness. Why is it being imposed upon me? I want happiness, I want peace of mind, I want bliss. Why is it eluding me? What is the destination of life? What happens after death? Why is my life ridden with the anxiety of facing and tackling one problem after another? Is this all life is meant for? Or is there a life of eternal joy that is never inhibited by sufferings?”

In human society, all cultures, traditions and faiths are founded on the principles surrounding these very questions, in pursuit of permanent, pure and absolute happiness. As the first aphorism of the Vedanta- Sutra proclaims: *athato brahma jijnasa* - ‘Now, therefore inquire into the Absolute Truth’.

DISCOVERY:

1. What are the similarities between human beings and animals?
2. What distinguishes the search for happiness between human beings and animals?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. Technological advancement has given several facilities to human beings today. No animal can dream of inventing such things. Is this what makes humans special?

APPLICATION:

4. Share one thing that brings you happiness and one thing that brings you unhappiness in your daily life. What do you conclude from this discussion?

Sri Namamrita

The Prime Religious Practice for the Kali-yuga Is the Chanting of the Holy name

The chanting of the holy name is the most sublime religion for the Kali-yuga:

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is specifically mentioned in many *Upaniṣads*, such as the *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, where it is said:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma
rāma rāma hare hare
itiṣoḍaśakam nāmnām
kali -kalmaṣa-nāśanam
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ
sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate

“After searching through all the Vedic literature one cannot find a method of religion more sublime for this age than the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 3.40

Saṅkīrtana is the present yuga-dharma:

[Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī]: “...In the Kali-yuga the occupational duty of the people is to chant congregationally the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.”

In Kali-yuga one worships Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 20.339

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate*

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

*śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,
jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,
swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi*

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

*jaya nimāi jaya nitāi
jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

2. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Similarities between humans and animals:

- the way animals and humans search for happiness
- basic principles of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending themselves

Question #2.

Differences between humans and animals:

- the discrimination power of animals is limited to, and does not go beyond eating, sleeping, mating and defending
- animals are not interested in life's bigger picture
- the human body has the capacity to go beyond the four principles of eating, sleeping, mating and defending
- humans can inquire into the causes of suffering and the destination of life

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Technological advancement in making humans special:

- technological advancement is for pursuing happiness in these four activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending
- in spite of technological advancement, people are full of anxiety and are dissatisfied
- technological advancement does not help reduce the divorce rate, suicide rate, depression, crime rate, suicide etc.
- technological advancement does not give happiness that lies beyond the four common activities

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

One happy and unhappy thing and conclusion:

- discuss one thing that produces happiness and unhappiness from work, home, or any sphere of our life
- conclude that real happiness lies beyond the four common activities. In pursuit of permanent, pure and absolute happiness, now, therefore inquire into the Absolute Truth

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

3. Consciousness: The Missing Link

Who am I? Am I this body? Or the mind? Or am I something higher? Am I an American, Australian, Indian or African? Does it really matter? When asked “Who are you?”, most people will reply with their name. If your name is changed, will YOU change? If not, then who are you? Others may reply by showing their photograph. However, the facial features keep changing throughout our lives, and in an extreme case, if the face is changed with plastic surgery, will YOU change? The purpose of life is to find happiness. In order for me to be happy, it is imperative that I seek the answer to the question “Who am I?”

All spiritual culture and traditions of the world have encouraged this enquiry and to search for an answer within. The Bhagavad Gita, one of the most ancient books of spiritual wisdom from the east, explains that we are not this body, but the Atma, spirit soul. The Atma is the spark of life force that activates the body. The body can be compared to a car and the soul to the driver of the car. Without a driver, the car cannot move by itself. Similarly, the body cannot function without the presence of a spirit soul.

Someone may ask, “Has anyone seen the soul?” According to the Gita, a soul is indestructible, individual and changes bodies. It has a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. The soul is situated in the region of the heart, and thus all the energies of bodily movement are emanating from this part of the body. The corpuscles, which carry the oxygen from the lungs, gather energy from the soul. When the soul passes away from this position, activity of the blood, generating fusion, ceases. The Upanishads say that the size of the soul is estimated to be 1/10,000th the tip of the hair. Hence, it is infinitesimally small and thus inconceivable. Some differences between matter and spirit are:

- Matter is formless, while spirit gives form to matter
- Matter is dead, while spirit soul is conscious
- Matter is perishable, while spirit is imperishable
- Matter undergoes transformations, while the spirit soul does not undergo any transformations

Due to its spiritual nature, the soul cannot be seen by the limited range of vision provided by our eyes, made up of matter. However, the existence of soul can be perceived in many ways:

- **Common sense** – We get an indication that the self is different from the body when we attend a funeral. We may see a crying widow grieving, “He’s gone! My husband is gone!” She says that her husband is gone, yet the body is lying there, looking much the same as it did a few days before. Who is gone at death? It is the real person, the self, who is different from the body it animates, that goes away.

- **Intuitive understanding** – By thoughtful self-observation we can become aware of the existence of the self beyond the body. For example, we don’t think of our foot or head or any part of our body as “me,” but as “my foot,” “my head,” “my body.” Then who am I? Who is that self—myself—beyond the body and beyond even the mind? That is the soul.

- **Consciousness** – Subtle objects can be perceived by their symptoms. For example, one cannot see air, but it can be perceived through its symptom of blowing wind. One cannot see intelligence, but it can be perceived by giving an IQ test. Similarly, the symptom of the existence of soul is consciousness. Consciousness from the soul pervades throughout the body, and the body appears alive. Just like the sun spreads heat and light all around, the soul spreads consciousness all

around the body, from the tip of the toes and fingers to the top of the head. It is this consciousness that enables us to think, feel, move and so on. Thus, consciousness is the symptom of the soul. Consciousness is what distinguishes a dead body from a living one. When an iPod plays music, it feels no emotions; however, a singer undergoes several emotions while singing. This is consciousness – the ability to be aware of one's existence, to think, to feel and to will. As Thomas Huxley said, "There is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which I cannot see to be matter or force." Consciousness gives the proof of the soul.

- **Changing Body** - We had a body which was three years old. If we show someone our photograph when we were 3 years old, they will most likely not be able to recognize us from then. Our body has changed since then, our mind has changed since then, our intelligence has changed since then. However, the person within, the experiencer remains unchanged. This indicates that we, the experiencer, are different from our body, mind or intellect. The Gita explains

dehino 'smin yathā dehe / kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā

tathā dehāntara-prāptir / dhīras tatra na muhyati

"As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change."

- **Near Death Experiences (NDE) and Out of Body Experience (OBE)** - NDEs, as the name suggests, involve people who have a close call with death. Many people having NDEs also have Out-of-Body Experiences (OBEs) in which they report observing their physical body and events relating to it from a perspective outside the body during severe illness or physical trauma resulting in unconsciousness. A typical case might involve a person who is resuscitated from a heart attack and reports that he observed, from a point outside his body, the medical personnel endeavoring to revive him. At such times, according to standard medical opinion, the normal functioning of the brain, as indicated by certain brain waves, is impaired, and the patient should be unconscious, if indeed consciousness is a manifestation of the brain. The book 'Into the Unknown' published by 'The Readers Digest' even gives evidences of people who had OBEs or Out-of-Body Experiences. Such people who could perform OBE, were made to lie on a bed closing their eyes, go out of the body, observe the different types of objects like triangular prism, rectangular, circular plates, kept on a loft, again return into the body and draw the objects that they saw on the loft on a sheet of paper. Such drawings perfectly matched with the objects kept high up on the loft that no one could observe from the ground level. This is called OBE or Out-of-Body Experience. There is enough research work in NDE and OBE presented by individuals with impeccable scientific credentials. For example, Dr. Michael B. Sabom, a cardiologist and professor at the Emory University Medical School, was openly skeptical of NDEs but changed his mind after investigating them.

- **Past life memories** – Rigorous, unbiased studies have been carried out by serious researchers on past-life memories. Ian Stevenson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, has extensively investigated spontaneous reincarnation memories recounted by children. In such cases he has been able to positively corroborate what the child has claimed by thoroughly investigating details of the place and people they describe, including the dead person they claim to have been. Stevenson has assembled numerous accounts of over 3000 cases of reincarnation and verified them, always taking great care to screen out fabrications. His studies give convincing evidence that the conscious self can travel from one physical body to the next. Clearly, when one

body dies, the contents of its brain are destroyed, and there is no physical process by which they can influence the contents of another brain. The logical interpretation is that the conscious self must be an entity distinct from the brain.

DISCOVERY:

1. What is the soul? How can we perceive the existence of the soul?
2. What are the qualities of the soul?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. What is the difference between a robot and a human being? Give an example to illustrate the difference between the body and the soul?
4. Do animals and plants have soul?

APPLICATION:

5. Are we giving importance to satisfy our real self, the soul, apart from taking care of the body? If not, how can we take care of our soul in our daily life?

The past life memories of an ex pilot – James Leininger

Could a little boy be proof of reincarnation?

ABC News, June 30, 2005

Nearly six decades ago, a 21-year-old Navy fighter pilot on a mission over the Pacific was shot down by Japanese artillery. His name might have been forgotten, were it not for 6-year-old James Leininger.

Quite a few people — including those who knew the fighter pilot — think James is the pilot, reincarnated. James' parents, Andrea and Bruce, a highly educated, modern couple, say they are “probably the people least likely to have a scenario like this pop up in their lives.” But over time, they have become convinced their little son has had a former life.

From an early age, James would play with nothing else but planes, his parents say. But when he was two, they said the planes their son loved began to give him regular nightmares. “I’d wake him up and he’d be screaming,” Andrea told ABC NEWS’ Chris Cuomo. She said when she asked her son what he was dreaming about, he would say, “Airplane crash on fire, little man can’t get out.”



James Huston Jr., whose tragic death during World War II is remembered in detail by young James Leininger, pauses for a picture sometime in 1944, the year before he was shot down.

Reality Check: Andrea says her mom was the first to suggest James was remembering a past life. At first, Andrea says she was doubtful. James was only watching kids' shows, his parents say, and they weren't watching World War II documentaries or conversing about military history. But as time went by, Andrea began to wonder what to believe. In one video of James at age three, he goes over a plane as if he's doing a preflight check.

Another time, Andrea said, she bought him a toy plane, and pointed out what appeared to be a bomb on its underside. She says James corrected her, and told her it was a drop tank. "I'd never heard of a drop tank," she said. "I didn't know what a drop tank was."

Then James' violent nightmares got worse, occurring three and four times a week. Andrea's mother suggested she look into the work of counselor and therapist Carol Bowman, who believes that the dead sometimes can be reborn.

With guidance from Bowman, they began to encourage James to share his memories — and immediately, Andrea says, the nightmares started to become less frequent. James was also becoming more articulate about his apparent past, she said.

Bowman said James was at the age when former lives are most easily recalled. "They haven't had the cultural conditioning, the layering over the experience in this life so the memories can percolate up more easily," she said.

Trail of Mysteries: Over time, James' parents say he revealed extraordinary details about the life of a former fighter pilot — mostly at bedtime, when he was drowsy. They say James told them his plane had been hit by the Japanese and crashed. Andrea says James told his father he flew a Corsair, and then told her, "They used to get flat tires all the time." In fact, historians and pilots agree that the plane's tires took a lot of punishment on landing. But that's a fact that could easily be found in books or on television.

Andrea says James also told his father the name of the boat he took off from — Natoma — and the name of someone he flew with — "Jack Larson." After some research, Bruce discovered both the Natoma and Jack Larson were real. The Natoma Bay was a small aircraft carrier in the Pacific. And Larson is living in Arkansas. "It was like, holy mackerel," Bruce said. "You could have poured my brains out of my ears. I just couldn't believe it."

James 2 = James M. Huston Jr.?: Bruce became obsessed, searching the Internet, combing through military records and interviewing men who served aboard the Natoma Bay. He said James told him he had been shot down at Iwo Jima. James had also begun signing his crayon drawings "James 3." Bruce soon learned that the only pilot from the squadron killed at Iwo Jima was James M. Huston Jr. Bruce says James also told him his plane had sustained a direct hit on the engine. Ralph Clabour, a rear gunner on a U.S. airplane that flew off the Natoma Bay, says his plane was right next to one flown by James M. Huston Jr. during a raid near Iwo Jima on March 3, 1945. Clabour said he saw Huston's plane struck by anti-aircraft fire. "I would say he was hit head on, right in the middle of the engine," he said.

Treasured Mementos: Bruce says he now believes his son had a past life in which he was James M. Huston Jr. "He came back because he wasn't finished with something." The Leiningers wrote a letter to Huston's sister, Anne Barron, about their little boy. And now she believes it as well.

“The child was so convincing in coming up with all the things that there is no way on the world he could know,” she said.

But Professor Paul Kurtz of the State University of New York at Buffalo, who heads an organization that investigates claims of the paranormal, says he thinks the parents are “self-deceived.” “They’re fascinated by the mysterious and they built up a fairy tale,” he said.

James’ vivid, alleged recollections are starting to fade as he gets older — but among his prized possessions remain two haunting presents sent to him by Barron: a bust of George Washington and a model of a Corsair aircraft. They were among the personal effects of James Huston sent home after the war.

“He appears to have experienced something that I don’t think is unique, but the way it’s been revealed is quite astounding,” Bruce said. Asked if the idea that James may have been someone else changes his or his wife’s feeling about their son, Bruce said: “It doesn’t change how we think. I don’t look at him and say, ‘That’s not my boy.’ That’s my boy.”

Source

<http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/Technology/Story?id=894217&page=1>

Part 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EWwzFwUOxA

Part 2 : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5965wcH2Kx0>

Sri Namamrita

The spiritual consciousness of the sleeping conditioned soul can be relieved by the transcendental sound of the mahā-mantra:

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

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“No one can understand Kṛṣṇa as He is by the blunt material senses. But He reveals Himself to the devotees, being pleased with them for their transcendental loving service unto Him.”

In this verse, the word *indriyaiḥ* means “the senses.” We have five senses for gathering knowledge (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin), and five senses for working (voice, hands, legs, genitals, and anus). These ten senses are under the control of the mind. It is stated in this verse that with these dull material senses, we cannot understand Kṛṣṇa’s name, form, and so forth. Why is this? Kṛṣṇa is completely spiritual, and He is also absolute. Therefore His name, form, qualities, and paraphernalia are also spiritual. Due to material conditioning, or material bondage, we cannot presently understand what is spiritual, but this ignorance can be removed by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. If a man is sleeping, he can be awakened by sound vibration. You can call him, “Come on, it’s time to get up!” Although the person is unconscious, hearing is so prominent that even a sleeping man can be awakened by sound vibration. Similarly, overpowered by this material conditioning, our spiritual consciousness is presently sleeping, but it can be revived by this transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The Path of Perfection

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

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tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

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hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

3. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

What is the soul:

- is the spark of life force that activates the body

Question #2.

Qualities of the soul:

- form of eternity, knowledge and bliss,
- accepts new material bodies,
- immutable, indestructible, invisible to material vision, inconceivable, individual, infinitesimally small (immeasurable)

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3

Robot vs human being:

- robot: dependent on human being, a machine built from matter and activated by material energy, lacks living force
- human beings: body activated by soul (spark of life force)

Question #4.

The soul in plants and animals:

- Yes, body functions of plants and animals are activated by the soul

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Taking care of the soul vs. the body:

- body: discuss how we take care of the body (eating, taking rest, defending etc.)
- soul: discuss steps we have or will take to satisfy the soul (e.g. mantra meditation, some spiritual activities, associating with spiritually minded people)

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

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I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

4. The Mind : A Friend or a Foe

As we progress into the 21st century, we see that Science and Technology has reached heights which couldn't have been imagined a few decades ago. The purpose of Science is to either eliminate all miseries or at best reduce miseries and thereby bring more and more happiness into the lives of common people. So, we should expect the most cherished qualities of love, peace and fraternity amongst the citizens. However, the present day scenario is just the opposite.

If "knowledge is power", it is worth considering why we are unable to control the world situation today. One need not blame the government, politicians, bureaucrats, police officials, judiciary etc. for the problems that the world faces today. If we are internally disturbed, we will reflect it onto the outside world by creating disturbances for others. Hence, it is essential to evaluate the nature of our mind in order to understand the ART OF MIND CONTROL.

The biggest challenge today is dealing with an identity crisis. "Who am I?" If one can identify one's real identity, he can work towards achieving lasting happiness. The ancient Vedic wisdom suggests that we are not these bodies, but pure spiritual souls. The body which we see is actually dead matter. It appears to be alive because of the presence of the soul. When the soul leaves the body, the body becomes inactive.

The soul is a spiritual energy covered by the material energy consisting of gross elements and subtle elements. Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 7 Text 4),

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ / khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṁkāra itīyaṁ me/ bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego--all together these eight comprise My separated material energies". The gross elements are earth, water, fire, air, ether and the subtle elements are mind, intelligence and false ego.

The subtle element of "False ego" or "ahankara" causes the spiritual soul to identify with the material body. Intelligence is the decision maker, and discriminates amongst the various options thrown by the mind.

Mind is the center of all activities of the senses and is the reservoir of all ideas of sense enjoyment. It is a storehouse of thoughts, unfulfilled desires and previous experiences. The simple functions of the mind are thinking, feeling and willing. These functions sometimes manifest in the form of the accepting or rejecting of ideas by the mind, and sometimes in the form of the mind hankering for things we don't have or to lament our past.

Our material body is like a chariot. It has five horses (the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell). Each of us is a spiritual soul riding within- we're the passenger. And to keep the horses on course, we have the reins (our mind) and the driver (our intelligence).

As we've all experienced, our sensory horses are always ready to bolt off after this or that, and their pulling creates anxiety in our mind. The problem is that we have no permanent goal to keep our mind on. If empowered by spiritual knowledge, it has sufficient strength to control the mind.

The senses composed of the gross elements, are the direct link of the soul and the subtle body with the external world. The overall coordination of the whole soul-body arrangement can thus be fulfilled only if the senses are controlled. For example, when you are walking along the road and you see a pizza shop, first your eyes are attracted by the picture of the pizza. This information is passed onto the mind. The mind has 2 things: the previous experience of the taste of pizza and the input of

seeing the pizza. The mind consults the intelligence and the intelligence dictates to your hands and legs to go the shop and purchase the pizza. In this way, coordination takes place between the senses, mind and intelligence.

The nature of mind is like a jumping monkey jumping from one branch to another and is never stable. The mind is not satiated no matter how many of its desire you try to fulfill. From stress to heart attack, from depression to suicide, from a petty quarrel to a bloody feud, the culprit behind all problems is the uncontrolled mind. An uncontrolled mind can completely ruin a person. However, there is hope, as the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 6, Text 5) says,

uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ / nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhu / ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ

“A man must elevate himself by his own mind, not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well. “

So how can we control the mind? There are many Physical, Mental and Spiritual techniques.

Physical methods include yoga Exercises, pranayama (breathing exercises), diet, celibacy, fasting etc.

Mental techniques include forgiveness, detachment, techniques to develop concentration, patience, self control over impulses, positive thinking and change of mental attitudes

Spiritual techniques include mantra meditation, developing realized knowledge about the self, associating with spiritually minded people and a spiritual diet.

The Spiritual techniques have been found to be all-inclusive and simply by following the spiritual principles, the benefits of all the other methods (physical and mental) can be experienced.

Sometimes, out of frustration, we try to quiet our mind by stopping our senses and engaging in silent meditation. This may bring us some relief, but it doesn't last, because sooner or later our senses have to act. So the solution to permanently control and engage the mind is to find a goal that's permanent and fully satisfying to our senses, mind, and intelligence. Krishna recommends in the Bhagavad Gita, “Dedicate your activities to Me, absorb your senses, mind, and intelligence in Me - and you will attain Me” (Krishna's very name means “the highest satisfaction”).

There is no peace and happiness in the accumulation of wealth or possessing bodily beauty or in display of strength. The real secret of happiness is in a controlled mind, which is gradually achieved with a spiritual way of life. It is very difficult to control the mind and senses without experiencing a higher taste of spiritual bliss. The soul can experience such a higher taste by chanting the names of God in love. For the present age, the recommended process for developing a higher taste is to chant the Maha-Mantra in the association of devotees:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

DISCOVERY:

1. Explain the interaction amongst the functions of the mind, intelligence and false ego?

UNDERSTANDING:

2. In your opinion, why is it essential to control the mind? What could be the consequences of an un-controlled mind on the self and the society?

3. What are the different ways to control the mind? Which method appeals to you the most?

APPLICATION:

4. What does stress mean to you? How can we befriend our mind to live a happy life?

Chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra revives one's dormant, eternal love:

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness. As living spiritual souls, we are all originally Kṛṣṇa conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now adulterated by the material atmosphere. The material atmosphere, in which we are now living, is called *māyā*, or illusion. *Māyā* means “that which is not.” And what is this illusion? The illusion is that we are all trying to be lords of material nature, while actually we are under the grip of her stringent laws. When a servant artificially tries to imitate the all-powerful master, he is said to be in illusion. We are trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but actually we are becoming more and more entangled in her complexities. Therefore, although we are engaged in a hard struggle to conquer nature, we are ever more dependent on her. This illusory struggle against material nature can be stopped at once by revival of our eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare is the transcendental process for reviving this original, pure consciousness. By chanting this transcendental vibration, we can cleanse away all misgivings within our hearts. The basic principle of all such misgivings is the false consciousness that I am the lord of all I survey.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. This consciousness is the original, natural energy of the living entity. When we hear this transcendental vibration, this consciousness is revived. This simplest method of meditation is recommended for this age.... No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the mahā-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The Science of Self-Realization

The Highest Welfare activity:

It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart.

Here is an explanation of how those engaged in activities for the welfare of others are very quickly recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.68–69), *ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati ... na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ*: “One who preaches the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* to My devotees is most dear to Me. No one can excel him in satisfying Me by worship.” There are different kinds of welfare activities in this material world, but the supreme welfare activity is the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Other welfare activities cannot be effective, for the laws of nature and the results of *karma* cannot be checked.... If one tries to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, he should be understood to be performing the best welfare activity. The Lord is automatically very pleased with him. If the Lord is pleased with him, what is left for him to achieve? If one has been recognized by the Lord, even if he does not ask the Lord for anything, the Lord, who is within everyone, supplies him whatever he wants.... The best welfare activity is raising people to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, since the conditioned souls are suffering only for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.... All the *śāstras* conclude, therefore, that spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the best welfare activity in the world. Because of the ultimate benefit this bestows upon people in general, the Lord very quickly recognizes such service performed by a devotee.

Bhāg. 8.7.44

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

4. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Interaction among the mind, intelligence and false ego:

- **False ego:** causes the spiritual soul to identify with the material body.
- **Intelligence:** is the decision maker, and discriminates amongst the various options thrown by the mind.
- **Mind:** is the centre of all activities of the senses and is the reservoir of all ideas of sense enjoyment.
- **Interaction:** The mind consults the intelligence and the intelligence dictates to the senses. In this way, coordination takes place between the senses, mind and intelligence.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

The need for controlling the mind and consequences of an un-controlled mind:

- **Need:** Eliminate or reduce miseries, bring more and more happiness, uncontrolled senses create anxiety in our mind, mind is not satiated even if our desires are fulfilled, no permanent goal to keep our mind on, real secret of happiness is in control of mind.
- **Consequences:** From stress to heart attack, from depression to suicide, from a petty quarrel to a bloody feud, the culprit behind all problems is the uncontrolled mind. An uncontrolled mind can completely ruin a person.

Question #3.

Ways to control the mind:

- **Physical:** yoga exercises, pranayama (breathing exercises), diet, celibacy, fasting etc.
- **Mental:** forgiveness, detachment, techniques to develop concentration, patience, self control over impulses, positive thinking and change of mental attitudes
- **Spiritual:** mantra meditation, developing realized knowledge about the self, associating with spiritually minded people and a spiritual diet.
- **Conclusion:** the Spiritual Techniques have been found to be all-inclusive and simply by following the spiritual principles, the benefits of all the other methods (physical and mental) can be experienced.

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Stress and befriending mind:

- **Stress:** discussion could include stress as a consequence of miseries created by self, other living beings, and natural calamities.
- **Befriending:** discuss about experiencing a higher taste of spiritual bliss, such as chanting the names of God in love.

Quiz 1, Edifications 1-4

1. What does “Hare” refer to in the Mahamantra?
2. What does “Krishna” refer to in the Mahamantra?
3. What does “Rama” refer to in the Mahamantra?
4. What are the four common ways by which animals and humans search happiness?
5. What is “Soul”?
6. What are the benefits of mantra meditation?
7. What are the challenges of mantra meditation?
8. What distinguishes the humans from animals in pursuit of happiness?
9. What are the attributes of soul?
10. How can we know about soul?
11. How do the senses interact with mind and intelligence?
12. Why do we need to control the mind?
13. How can the mind be controlled?
14. Which method of mind control is all-inclusive?

ACTIVITY: PRABHUPADA NIGHT I

Watch the first 25 minutes of “Your Ever Well Wisher” Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=wjeqzsjc2k>) and discuss the points that everyone likes from the video.

Quiz 1, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What does “Hare” refer to in the Mahamantra?

HARE is the divine feminine energy which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

2. What does “Krishna” refer to in the Mahamantra?

KRISHNA is the all attractive source of beauty, power and truth.

3. What does “Rama” refer to in the Mahamantra?

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

4. What are the four common ways by which animals and humans search happiness?

Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending.

5. What is the “Soul”?

The spark of life force that activates the body.

6. What benefit does mantra meditation offer to the mind?

Has the potency to alter the state of our mind; frees the mind from all stress and built-up negative emotional energies like anger, vengeance, envy; prepares the mind to tune in to the positive emotional energies like forgiveness, tolerance, compassion and humility.

7. What are the challenges of mantra meditation?

To contend with the restless mind and distractions; mind is not yet purified of its lower, base instincts.

8. What distinguishes the humans from animals in pursuit of happiness?

The discrimination power of animals is limited to, and does not go beyond eating, sleeping, mating and defending; animals are not interested in life’s bigger picture; humans can inquire into the causes of suffering and the destination of life.

9. What are the attributes of soul?

Form of eternity, knowledge and bliss; accepts new material bodies; immutable, indestructible, invisible to material vision, inconceivable, individual, infinitesimally small.

10. How can we know about soul?

Common sense, intuitive understanding, consciousness, changing body, near-death experiences (NDE) and out of body experience (OBE), past life memories.

11. How do the senses interact with mind and intelligence?

Senses pass information to mind, mind may consult intelligence, and intelligence dictates to body.

12. What are the consequences of an uncontrolled mind?

From stress to heart attack, from depression to suicide, from a petty quarrel to a bloody feud, the culprit behind all problems is the uncontrolled mind.

13. How can the mind be controlled?

Physical (yoga exercises, pranayama (breathing exercises), diet), mental (forgiveness, detachment, self-control; spiritual (mantra meditation).

14. Which method of mind control is all-inclusive?

The spiritual techniques have been found to be all-inclusive and simply by following the spiritual principles, the benefits of all the other methods (physical and mental) can be experienced.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

5. Moods and Modes

Why are some people by nature outgoing and talkative while others are quiet and shy? Why are some people attracted to hot spicy food and others to sweet and juicy foods? Why do some people enjoy classical music while others enjoy passionate rock music and yet others enjoy both? What are the forces of nature that compel people to act the way they do? How do these forces work, and who is controlling them?

We generally think that we're in control of our actions and that we're making our own decisions. However, in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, "All men are forced to act helplessly according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment." (Bhagavad Gita. 3.5)

All living beings are tied by ropes of illusion called the modes of material nature, and the material nature is compared to a prison house. One may be bound with gold chain (sattva guna - goodness), another by silver chain (rajo guna - passion) and the third by iron chain (tamo guna - ignorance). Guna means rope or chain. A man bound by the hands and feet cannot free himself; he must be helped by a person who is unbound. Because the bound cannot help another bound, the rescuer must be liberated.

The living entity, being conditioned, acts according to the mode of nature it comes in contact with. According to the level of our conditioning, we seek happiness on the material platform. As a simple example, consider the three primary colors, yellow, red and blue. By combining these three colors one can produce the entire color spectrum, and paint pictures which can arouse any emotion. Pots of paint do not usually inspire emotion but, manipulated by an artist, paint appears to possess its own special potency to enchant the hearts. Similarly, the Supreme artist, Krishna, has expertly designed the material world using unlimited color combinations of the modes of nature to attract us to a perverted reflection of the spiritual reality, and to keep us enticed with its false charm.

Meet Dr. & Mrs. Bright with their two children, who live in a small home, just suitable to their needs, in a peaceful country town. Dr. Bright is the local M.D., a thoughtful, qualified man, respected for doing his job honestly and selflessly. His hobby is reading books of philosophy, poetry and science. Mrs. Bright and the children farm and garden around the house and care for the family cow. The Brights are mildly prosperous people who give thanks to God for the things they have and take their religion as a serious duty. By almost anyone's standards, they'd have to be considered exceptionally pious. They don't gamble, and for them intoxicants are strictly taboo—they don't smoke, and not to speak of liquor, they don't even drink coffee or tea. Dr. Bright has seen too many of his patients bring trouble to themselves through extramarital affairs, so he's always been faithful to his wife; and she, too, has always been faithful to him. The Brights decided long ago that killing animals is barbaric, so they never eat meat, fish, chicken or even eggs. All in all, the Brights lead a clean, simple and happy life. But the Brights are conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge. They are attached to their harmonious world. Therefore they are bound to the mode of goodness.

The Smiths, by contrast, live in suburbia in a stylish home filled with modern conveniences. Each morning Larry Smith gulps down breakfast in time to fight traffic to the office. There he sits all day dealing with different "headaches," as he calls them. A hard job, but worth it, he figures, since it lets him afford the luxuries he enjoys and still have some money left over for the stock market and some rather shady business schemes he has going on the side. ("Money is the honey," Larry says.)

Gloria, his wife, wakes up in time to see that the two older children look decent and sends them off to school. She spends most of her day with the baby ("the one we didn't expect," says Gloria). Either Gloria's in the house with the TV going, in the playground with the other housewives and children, in the beauty salon, or shopping. On the weekends the Smiths try to be religious, but it's more or less a social affair, since in fact they generally disregard the guidelines of their scriptures. This family is typical of the mode of passion.

Now, let's meet John Dull and Betty Grumble. They never got married, but they live together, in a run-down apartment in New York City. Welfare checks cover part of the rent, and at the end of the month John gets together the rest by peddling drugs. Religion, they both decided long ago, is something they want no part of. They spend their time sleeping (at least ten or twelve hours a day) or else getting high on drugs, feasting on beer and languishing in their apartment. For years they've dreamed about starting a commune in Spain, or perhaps Madagascar or Nepal. Dull & Grumble have surrounded their lives with the mode of ignorance.

Similarly, we can compare the qualities of different animals according to the modes of nature

- The elephant represents mode of goodness. It eats only fresh vegetarian food, grass. It is a large, strong and gentle animal. It has the intelligence to work well with humans.
- The tiger represents the mode of passion. It is fierce, restless and aggressive by nature and kills and eats flesh of other animals.
- The jackal represents the mode of ignorance. Rather than seek its own food, it eats whatever is left over after another animal has eaten. It tends to be fearful and lazy. Being a nocturnal animal it shuns daylight.

Real happiness, that can completely satisfy the self, is experienced from the spiritual platform, beyond the three modes of nature. Hence, of the three modes, it is recommended to always be in the mode of goodness as it provides a runway for the airplane of human body to transcend beyond the influence of material modes of nature.

Freedom from these modes can only come by the grace of one who is already free. Krishna says in the Gita,

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī/ mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante / māyām etāṁ taranti te

"This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." [Bhagavad Gita 7.14]

Such a person is on the platform called vasudeva or shuddha sattva or pure goodness, beyond material nature, one with Krishna, not in personality but in interest, in service and love, "in this world, but not of it." Such a person is completely satisfied in the self, being situated in the original constitutional position of the soul. One need not wait till one's death to become liberated, but can be liberated from the influence of the modes of nature even while living in the present material body.

Thus we can attain spiritual perfection simply by remembering our relationship with Krishna and acting in that relationship. We need not be disturbed by the modes of nature, since instead of putting our consciousness into material activities, we can transfer it to activities centered around Krishna. Such Krishna-centered activities make up bhakti-yoga. When we engage in the Bhakti yoga system, we acquire the same spiritual qualities as Krishna. We can become free from the material concept of life simply by performing Bhakti Yoga in the association of those who are aspiring to or

have already transcended the modes. The most important process of Bhakti Yoga is to chant and meditate on the transcendental sound vibrations:

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

DISCOVERY:

1. Describe the three modes of material nature? Explain the platform of Shuddha-Sattva or pure goodness.

UNDERSTANDING:

2. A capseller tired of long distance walk, kept his basket aside and slept off under the shade of a banyan tree that was full with a group of mischievous monkeys. After a while he got up from his sleep, and found his basket was totally empty. The monkeys had each picked up a cap, and wearing it on their heads, had soon climbed up the tree. Discuss and compare the reactions to this situation by a person in the mode of goodness, passion, ignorance.

3. How can we become free from the influence of the three modes of nature, even in this present body?

APPLICATION:

4. What is the advantage of identifying the modes that influence each one of us?

Appendix

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE THREE MODES OF MATERIAL NATURE:

Person in TAMO GUNA (IGNORANCE)	Person in RAJO GUNA (PASSION)	Person in SATTVA GUNA (GOODNESS)	Person in SHUDDHA SATTVA (PURE GOODNESS)
No interest in Spiritual Life. Considers body as the self and no idea of Supreme Spirit	Unlimited desires and sees everything from the point of view of "I" and "mine"	Knowledge of soul and wisdom of distinguishing soul from the body	Realized knowledge of self and of his eternal relationship with the Lord
Laziness	Hankering for material enjoyment due to bodily concept of life	Free from sins	Always engaged in practicing and propagating devotional service of the Lord
Sleep and Intoxication	Characterized by attraction between man and woman	Sense of advancement in material knowledge	Characterized by loving attraction to the Supreme Lord and His devotees
Depression	Works very hard for honor and prestige in society	Conditioned by the sense of happiness	Situated above the 3 modes and always blissful in love of God

Sri Namamrita

The progressive development of the chanting of the holy name:

A bona fide spiritual master chants the holy names—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and the transcendental sound vibration enters into the ear of the disciple, and if a disciple follows in the footsteps of his spiritual master and chants the holy name with similar respect, he actually comes to worship the transcendental name. When the transcendental name is worshiped by the devotee, the name Himself spreads His glories within the heart of a devotee. When a devotee is perfectly qualified in chanting the transcendental vibration of the holy name, he is quite fit to become a spiritual master and to deliver all the people of the world. The chanting of the holy name is so powerful that it gradually establishes its supremacy above everything in the world. The devotee who chants it becomes transcendently situated in ecstasy and sometimes laughs, cries and dances in his ecstasy.

Teachings of Lord Caitanya

By chanting the holy name, one is freed from the sinful reactions of many millions of lives:

[Lord Caitanya to a Muhammadan holy man]: Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Please get up. You have chanted the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; therefore the sinful reactions you have accrued for many millions of lives are now gone. You are now pure.”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 18.205

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends, and then share your experience with the group

The preacher is very dear to the Lord:

“Therefore, my dear young friends ... show mercy to all living entities by enlightening them in devotional service, thus becoming their well-wishers.”

The Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55), *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*: “One can understand the Supreme Personality as He is only by devotional service.” Prahāda Mahārāja ultimately instructed his class friends, the sons of the demons, to accept the process of devotional service by preaching the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to everyone. Preaching is the best service to the Lord. The Lord will immediately be extremely satisfied with one who engages in this service of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.69). *Na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ*: “There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” If one sincerely tries his best to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by preaching the glories of the Lord and His supremacy, even if he is imperfectly educated, he becomes the dearest servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is *bhakti*. As one performs this service for humanity, without discrimination between friends and enemies, the Lord becomes satisfied, and the mission of one’s life is fulfilled. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore advised everyone to become a guru-devotee and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*yāre dekha, tāre kaha ‘kṛṣṇa’-upadeśa* [Cc. Madhya 7.128]). That is the easiest way to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bhāg. 7.6.24

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

5. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Modes of material nature:

- **Goodness:** conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge
- **Passion:** born of unlimited desires and longings and the living entity is bound to material fruitive actions; symptoms of great attachment, fruitive activity, intense endeavor, and uncontrollable desire and hankering develop.
- **Ignorance:** born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied living entities; results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.
- **Food:** Foods dear to those in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, fatty, wholesome, and pleasing to the heart; Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning are dear to those in the mode of passion. Such foods cause distress, misery and disease. Food prepared more than three hours before being eaten, food that is tasteless, decomposed and putrid, and food consisting of remnants and untouchable things is dear to those in the mode of ignorance.
- **Charity:** Charity given out of duty, without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, and to a worthy person is considered to be in the mode of goodness. Charity performed with the expectation of some return, or with a desire for fruitive results, or in a grudging mood, is said to be charity in the mode of passion. Charity performed at an impure place, at an improper time, to unworthy persons, or without proper attention and respect is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Reactions in mode of goodness, passion and ignorance:

- **goodness:** is not so much affected by material miseries, one uses this incident to become wiser.
- **passion:** uncontrollable desire, hankering, and intense endeavor develop to get the caps back from the monkey. he becomes associated with the fruits of his activities and becomes frustrated and angry, and thus becomes bound.
- **ignorance:** becomes mad, and a madman cannot understand what is what; appears to be always dejected and might use intoxicants and sleeping to alleviate misery.

Question #3.

Freeing oneself from material nature by:

- simply remembering our relationship with Krishna and act in that relationship.
- performing activities centered around Krishna.
- performing Bhakti Yoga in the association of those who are aspiring to or have already transcended the modes
 - surrendering to Krishna
 - chanting and meditating on the transcendental Maha Mantra

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Need to identify modes of material nature:

- It will help us transcend the modes: All three modes are conditioning; mode of goodness conditions one to material happiness and one can thus not be transferred to spiritual world; mode of passion binds one to fruitive activities; mode of ignorance binds one to madness, indolence, and sleep.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

6. The Law of Karma: An Infallible Justice

Two children are born at the same time on the same day. The parent of the first is wealthy and has anxiously awaited the arrival of their first-born for years. Their child, a boy, is bright, healthy and attractive, with a future full of promise. Surely destiny has smiled upon him. The second child enters into an entirely different world. He is born to a mother who was abandoned while pregnant. In her poverty she feels little enthusiasm to rear her sickly new offspring. The road ahead is fraught with difficulties and hardships, and to rise above them will not be easy. The world is full of disparities like these, blatant inequalities that often provoke questions, "How could Providence be so unfair? What did the parents do to have their son born blind? They're good people. Is God unkind?"

Why does one person enjoy, while another suffers? The answers to such questions are crucial to all of us, because they give us a direct clue on how we can become free from all future suffering.

Krishna explains in the Bhagavad Gita:

karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṁ/ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṁ / gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ

"The intricacies of action are very hard to understand. Therefore one should know properly what action is, what forbidden action is, and what inaction is." (Bhagavad Gita 4.17)

Karma means activities performed by the living entities conditioned by the three modes of material nature.

Karma is a subtle force generated by the interactions amongst conscious living beings. The law of Karma is similar to the scientific law of action and reaction observed in the physical system. By this subtle law, good or supportive actions lead to correspondingly positive reactions; exploitative or violent acts force the actor to undergo equivalent troubles. Religious scriptures generally promote compassion and sensitivity to our neighbors - both human & non-human. When a person ignores the concept of non-injury to others (called ahimsa) or the Biblical command, "Thou Shalt not kill", by unnecessarily killing innocent living beings, he must suffer the result at some point in the future - and when millions do so, "Collective Karma" inevitably leads to macroscopic catastrophes such as wars, urban violence and new diseases.

Karma is the law of cause and effect: there is a reaction for everything we do. If we throw a coin up, it will come down; If we regularly put money in the bank, our wealth will accumulate; If we drink alcohol, we'll suffer a hangover later. These are natural laws of cause and effect.

There are some facilities given to the human beings, but does that mean that we have a free license to engage in whimsical activities? We human beings are accountable for everything we think, speak and do. Therefore, we must be aware of the consequences of the activities we perform. The law of karma is not applicable to the animals because they do not possess a higher sense of discrimination between right and wrong. Their intelligence is limited to the activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending. However, human beings are gifted with a sense of discrimination and a higher intelligence to inquire into the purpose of life and the root cause of suffering. Thus the law of karma is completely binding upon the human beings.

There are three kinds of karma:

- **Punya Karma** - activities done according to the laws of nature and as per scriptural injunctions. Performance of punya karma gives pious and good reactions.
- **Vikarma** – whimsical activities done without any regard to the laws of nature and against scriptural directions. Performance of vikarma gives sinful reactions
- **Akarma** - activities for which one doesn't suffer any reactions. These are activities without bondage.

Good and Bad Karma (Punya Karma & Vikarma): If my body is nicely formed, intelligent, healthy and born in aristocratic or rich circumstances with good opportunities for education, it is understood that I have acted piously in my previous life. If I have a body that is ugly, deformed, diseased, unintelligent, or born in poverty and ignorance, without facility for improvement, I must have

acted sinfully in the past. I may want to live in a big house but I may not deserve a human body. In the appropriate body of a rat, however, I will be allowed to live in the big house and consider it my own.

Karma is like a bank account of credits and debits. Just as one's bank account determines whether one will get what one wants, the soul's karmic account determines whether he will get what he wants in life. Good karma is like a credit in the account and bad karma a debit.

For example, if someone is very charitable toward educational institutions, in his next life he may be very wealthy and receive an excellent education. On the other hand, if one kills a living being, he or she will suffer the same fate in the next life. As long as the soul is involved in good and / or bad activities, he will continually reincarnate in various species of life according to the laws of karma. At the time of death, the plans of the soul are stored within the mind (subtle matter), and by the help of higher order natural laws involving karma, the soul gets the facility to give these plans shape in his next life in a suitable bodily form. The numerous biological forms at various levels of consciousness are therefore present in nature only to accommodate the different desires of the soul. Good karma and bad karma do not cancel each other. One must suffer all bad karma and enjoy all one's good karma.

Akarma refers to spiritual activity, performed on behalf of or for pleasing the Supreme Lord, that does not have any material reaction. Punya (Good karma) and spiritual activity (Akarma) are not the same. Punya (Good karma) is material activity, pertaining to the material body. By performing this, one can get promoted to a better material situation within the material world, but one cannot go beyond it, just like in the case of a prisoner who may be transferred from a C-class prison cell to a A-class prison cell with more facilities, but who is not allowed to leave the prison.

Akarma or devotional service to the Lord, however, being fully spiritual has nothing to do with this material world. It is not meant for material promotion but it is meant to transfer us to the spiritual world, beyond the cycle of birth and death. Akarma is thus beyond both karma and vikarma. To free oneself from the bondage of this material nature, one should perform akarma, i.e., work without reactions. Lord Sri Krishna explains this very vividly in the Bhagavad Gita 3.9

yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra/ loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya/ mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara

“Work done as a sacrifice for Visnu has to be performed, otherwise work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore, O son of Kunti, perform your prescribed duties for His satisfaction, and in that way you will always remain free from bondage.” When a country goes to war, if a soldier kills many enemy soldiers, the government awards the soldier with prestigious awards. However, if the same soldier comes back, picks up a fight with someone and kills him, the same government punishes the soldier for killing one person, who was earlier awarded for killing many. This is because, in the battlefield, the soldier was acting on behalf of the government, and so the soldier was not liable, but when he killed a person for his personal reasons, the soldier was held accountable. Similarly, when we perform Akarma, by acting on behalf of the Supreme Lord, under His direction or the direction of a bonafide representative of Krishna, then there are no reactions to such actions.

Some examples of Akarmic activities are : Chanting the holy names of Hare Krishna, performing Bhakti or acts of loving devotional service in the association of others following the path of Bhakti Yoga. By performing Akarma, one develops devotion for the Lord, detachment from bad association, purity and spiritual happiness. Akarma liberates one from the cycle of birth and death and takes one back to the spiritual world.

DISCOVERY:

1. What are different kinds of Karma, collective Karma and the law of Karma?

UNDERSTANDING:

2. Is the law of Karma applicable to animals? Why or Why not?
3. Explain the difference between Good Karma and Akarma. Do good and bad Karma cancel each other?

APPLICATION:

4. How can we perform actions in our day-to-day life such that we don't suffer any reactions?

Sri Namamrita

Lord Caitanya introduced the saṅkīrtana-yajña for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna]: In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things.”

The Lord created this material world for the conditioned souls to learn how to perform yajñas (sacrifice) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety. Then after finishing the present material body, they can enter into the kingdom of God. That is the whole program for the conditioned soul. By performance of yajña, the conditioned souls gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious and become godly in all respects. In this age of Kali, the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the names of God) is recommended by the Vedic scriptures, and this transcendental system was introduced by Lord Caitanya for the deliverance of all men in this age. Sankīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His devotional form (as Lord Caitanya) is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows, with special reference to the saṅkīrtana-yajña:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (S.B. 11.5.32)

Other yajñas prescribed in the Vedic literatures are not easy to perform in this age of Kali, but the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is easy and sublime for all purposes.

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness. Share your experience with the group.

Sharing is the highest welfare activity:

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone. The sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend. Therefore, to act to revive this consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. One cannot be engaged in first-class welfare work without being liberated in the Supreme. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. He has no doubt because he is completely freed from all sins. This is the state of divine love.

A person engaged only in ministering to the physical welfare of human society cannot factually help anyone. Temporary relief of the external body and the mind is not satisfactory. The real cause of one's difficulties in the hard struggle for life may be found in one's forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. When a man is fully conscious of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is actually a liberated soul, although he may be in the material tabernacle.

Bg. 5.25

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

6. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Karma:

- **Karma:** Karma means activities performed by the living entities conditioned by the three modes of material nature.
- **Collective Karma:** "Collective Karma" inevitably leads to macroscopic catastrophes such as wars, urban violence and new diseases.
- **Law of Karma:** is similar to the scientific law of action and reaction observed in the physical system. By this subtle law, good or supportive actions lead to correspondingly positive reactions; exploitative or violent acts force the actor to undergo equivalent troubles.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Animals and the law of Karma:

- The law of karma is not applicable to animals because they do not possess a higher sense of discrimination between right and wrong. Their intelligence is limited to the activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending.

Question #3.

Good Karma Vs Akarma:

- **Punya (Good Karma)** and spiritual activity (Akarma) are not the same. Punya (Good Karma) is material activity, pertaining to the material body. By performing this, one can get promoted to a better material situation within the material world, but one cannot go beyond it, just like in the case of a prisoner who may be transferred from a C-class prison cell to a A-class prison cell with more facilities, but who is not allowed to leave the prison.
- **Akarma or devotional service** to the Lord, however, being fully spiritual has nothing to do with this material world. It is not meant for material promotion but it is meant to transfer us to the spiritual world, beyond the cycle of birth and death. Akarma is thus beyond both karma and vikarma.

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Performance of daily activities:

By performing Akarma, one develops devotion for the Lord, detachment from bad association, purity and spiritual happiness. Akarma liberates one from the cycle of birth and death and takes one back to the spiritual world.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

7. Karma, Free Will, and Destiny

Karma means activities performed by the living entities conditioned by the three modes of material nature. These activities are performed under the control and purview of time. The law of Karma is similar to the scientific law of action and reaction observed in the physical system. There are good and bad karma i.e., pious and sinful activities. Both these activities are binding, i.e., they have reactions.

One may wonder, if a living entity is subject to the results of previous activities, then what is the scope for free will? Once having committed either a pious or whimsical action, the living entity would be bound in an endless chain of suffering, being perpetually subject to previous reactions. If every move we made was completely controlled by fate, destiny or astrological influences, how could there be such a thing as right act or wrong act? For that matter, why should we feel regret toward something we were forced to do? And if everything is destined, why do various books of various faiths take so much trouble to offer valuable lessons to discriminate between the right and wrong and choose the path of right action?

What is destined? What is NOT destined? By living a righteous life in accordance to the laws of nature, one attains a better position in the material world. As a result, one may be rich, learned, or beautiful. Thus it is destined whether one will be born rich or poor, learned or illiterate, beautiful or ugly. What is not destined, however, is how one is going to use all these facilities awarded or how one is going to behave in difficult circumstances. That action will decide the future destiny. Herein, lays the free will for the soul to exercise.

One who is born with some assets and facilities should know that they are all meant for the advancement of our spiritual consciousness. Unfortunately, when a person is misguided, he misuses his high position for the purpose sense gratification, in the form of intoxication, illicit affairs or gambling. In these ways, the plundering senses take away all the assets that the conditioned soul has acquired with great difficulty.

Here is a practical example to clarify the relationship between destiny and free will. A person purchases a ticket for an airline flight, and boards the plane. Once the plane takes-off, that person's decision to board the plane forces him/her to continue flying until the plane lands. He/She cannot change their decision now to, say, travel by road. Their destiny is tied to the destination of the plane.

Although he/she is forced to be bound by this destiny, on board the plane, they can make many new decisions. They may accept the food and drink from the stewardesses or reject it, they may read a magazine or newspaper, or they may sleep, walk up and down the aisle, converse with other passengers, and so on. In other words, although the general context - flying to a particular city - is forcibly imposed as a reaction to his/her previous decision to board the plane, even within that situation they are constantly making new decisions and creating new reactions. For example, if they cause a disturbance on the airplane they may be arrested when the plane lands. On the other hand, if they make friends with a businessman sitting next to them on the plane, such a contact may lead to favorable business transaction in the future.

Thus, our destiny does not hamper our free will. A sincere soul engaged in the process of Bhakti – loving devotional service - can easily overcome the previous conditionings by humble submission to the grace of God. By being grateful and submitting ourselves to the will of God, Krishna as paramatma within the heart, eradicates the reactions to all karma and cleanses the mind of all misgivings.

In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 10, Text 10-11, Krishna says

teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ / bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ / yena mām upayānti te
teṣāṁ evānukampārtham / aham ajñāna-jam tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho / jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā

“To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.”

'My Endeavour' or 'God's Grace'? Some people think “There is no such thing as destiny; everything is in our own hands”. This philosophy is called karmavada. It is similar to the way a baby monkey holds on to the mother. The baby monkey holds on to the belly or back of the mother monkey, and the mother jumps from one branch to another. It is entirely up to the baby to hold on to the mother. If the baby's grip loosens, the baby slips. This kind of philosophy only leads to frustration. Mike Tyson, on becoming the world heavyweight boxing champion at the age of 19, declared "I am the youngest champion - and I will be oldest champion." In his forties, he was trying to make a comeback, but he soon gave up after being defeated, saying, "I can't lie to myself anymore; I can't fight anymore", and announced retirement.

Some other people think “Everything is determined by destiny; nothing is in our hands”. This philosophy is called daivavada. It is similar to the way a cat carries the kitten in its mouth. The kitten is completely dependent on the mother cat. This philosophy is usually used to justify laziness or irresponsibility.

The truth, however, lies somewhere in between. The Vedic texts explain that these 2 ideologies, karmavada (endeavour, karma, alone determines success) and daivavada (destiny, daiva, alone determines success) are the 2 extremes of the pendulum of human imagination. In reality, success requires both - endeavour and destiny. For example, in agriculture, a good harvest requires both - diligent ploughing and timely rains. Ploughing represents endeavour and rains signify destiny. Despite ploughing, no harvest can result, if there are no rains. Similarly sometimes, despite our best efforts, we may fail, due to adverse destiny.

When people are uninformed about the role of destiny in determining results, failures make them feel hopeless, "I am worthless and cannot do anything well", even when they have the potential to perform well in the future. Consequently, today many people in the world are unfortunately and needlessly suffering from mental problems like inferiority complex, low self-esteem, depression and self-pity.

Lord Krishna gives us hope in the Bhagavad-Gita by pointing out that though we do not determine the result, but we do play a significant role. As Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 Text 47:

“You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty”

DISCOVERY:

1. What is the law of Karma?
2. What role does our free will have in shaping our destiny?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. How can we overcome our destiny?

APPLICATION:

4. What does success mean to you and what is the secret to achieving success in our endeavors?

Sri Namamrita

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally came as Lord Caitanya in order to distribute the process of chanting—the easiest means, in this age, to help us attain the highest perfection of life:

Out of many thousands of persons who are in self-knowledge as to what and who they are, only one or two may be actually liberated. And out of many thousands who are liberated, only one or two may understand what and who Kṛṣṇa is. So understanding Kṛṣṇa is not such an easy job. Thus in this age of Kali, an age characterized by ignorance and chaos, liberation is out of the reach of practically everyone. One has to go through the whole ordeal of becoming civilized, then religious, and then one has to perform charities and sacrifices and come to the platform of knowledge, then to the stage of liberation, and finally, after liberation, to the understanding of what Kṛṣṇa is.... Practically speaking, this process is not very easy in this age of Kali. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam a description is given of the people of this age. Their duration of life is said to be very short, they tend to be phlegmatic and slow and to sleep a great deal, and when they're not sleeping, they are busy earning money. At the most they only have two hours a day for spiritual activities, so what is the hope for spiritual understanding? It is also stated that even if one is anxious to make spiritual progress, there are many pseudospiritual societies to take advantage of him. People are also characterized in this age as being unfortunate. They have a great deal of difficulty meeting the primary demands of life—eating, defending, mating, and sleeping—necessities which are met even by the animals. Even if people are meeting these necessities in this age, they are always anxious about war, either defending themselves from aggressors or having to go to war themselves. In addition to this, there are always disturbing diseases and economic problems in Kali-yuga. Therefore Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa considered that in this age it is impossible for people to come to the perfectional stage of liberation by following the prescribed rules and regulations.

Thus out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and distributed the means to the highest perfection of life and spiritual ecstasy by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process of chanting is most practical, and it does not depend on whether one is liberated or not, or whether one's condition is conducive to spiritual life or not—whoever takes to this process becomes immediately purified. Therefore it is called pavitram (pure). Furthermore, for one who takes to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness process, the seeds of latent reactions to his sinful actions are all nullified. Just as a fire turns whatever we put into it to ashes, this process turns to ashes all the sinful reactions of our past lives.

Rāja-vidyā: The King of Knowledge

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Cook, offer and distribute prasadam to your friends. Share your experience with the group.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana movement is meant for making people happy:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His *saṅkīrtana* movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy.

Cc. Ādi 9.45

Preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness is showing real mercy to living entities:

“If a living entity is developed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is merciful to others, and if his spiritual knowledge of self-realization is perfect, he will immediately attain liberation from the bondage of material existence.”

In this verse the word *dayā jīvesu*, meaning mercy to other living entities, indicates that a living entity must be merciful to other living entities if he wishes to make progress in self-realization. This means he must preach this knowledge after perfecting himself and understanding his own position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Preaching this is showing real mercy to living entities. Other types of humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.

Bhāg. 4.29.1b

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

7. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Law of Karma:

- The law of Karma is similar to the scientific law of action and reaction observed in the physical system. There are good and bad karmas i.e., pious and sinful activities. Both these activities are binding, i.e., they have reactions.

Question #2.

Free will shaping destiny:

- Destiny does not hamper our free-will.
- Success requires both endeavor in Krishna consciousness and destiny. For example, in agriculture, a good harvest requires both diligent ploughing and timely rains. Ploughing represents endeavour and rains signify destiny. Despite ploughing, no harvest can result if there are no rains. Similarly sometimes, despite our best efforts, we may fail, due to adverse destiny.
 - Examples: Karmavada - It is similar to the way a baby monkey holds on to the mother. The baby monkey holds on to the belly or back of the mother monkey, and the mother jumps from one branch to another. It is entirely up to the baby to hold on to the mother. If the baby's grip loosens, the baby slips. This kind of philosophy only leads to frustration. Mike Tyson, on becoming the world heavyweight boxing champion at the age of 19, declared "I am the youngest champion - and I will be oldest champion." In his forties, he was trying to make a comeback, but he soon gave up after being defeated, saying, "I can't lie to myself anymore; I can't fight anymore", and announced retirement.
 - Daivavada - It is similar to the way a cat carries the kitten in its mouth. The kitten is completely dependent on the mother cat.
 - The truth, however, lies somewhere in between. The Vedic texts explain that these 2 ideologies, karmavada (endeavour, karma, alone determines success) and daivavada (destiny, daiva, alone determines success) are the 2 extremes of the pendulum of human imagination.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Changing destiny:

- A sincere soul engaged in the process of Bhakti – loving devotional service - can easily overcome the previous conditionings by humble submission to the grace of God.
- By being grateful and submitting ourselves to the will of God, Krishna as paramatma within the heart, eradicates the reactions to all karma and cleanses the mind of all misgivings.

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Success:

- Share each devotee's definition of success. The secret of success is to work to the best of one's ability in Krishna consciousness.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

8. Spiritual Evolution

The foundation of all spiritual knowledge is the understanding that we are not this body, but the eternal spirit soul. Soul is the life force that activates the body. The Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2 Text 13) explains “As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change”. How does the soul pass into another body? What type of body does the soul pass into? How is the next bodily form decided?

The Padma Purana, an ancient Vedic Bhakti Text, describes:

jalaja nava laksani / sthavara laksha-vimsati
krimayo rudra sankhyakat / prkshinam dasa-laksanam
trimsal-laksani paravah / catur laksani manusah

“There are 900,000 species of aquatic life; 2 million species of plants and trees; 1.1 million species of insects; 1 million species of bird life; 3 million species of beasts, and 400,000 species of human life.”

Hence, there are 8.4 million species of life forms throughout the creation. The meaning of "species" understood by biologists is different from the meaning implied here. The meaning used by biologists applies to the gross physical appearance or the gross morphological feature of the living material bodies. The Vedic meaning, however, which is derived after thorough and careful analysis, is based on the level of consciousness of the living being. For example, biologists say that all human beings belong to one species, whereas the Vedic literatures list 400,000 species of human beings. In other words, there are 400,000 grades of human beings on different levels of consciousness from most degraded human beings to highly evolved demigods and pure devotees.

The varieties of life forms are products of the combinations and permutations of the three modes of material nature – goodness, passion and ignorance. The life forms are just like temporary houses or apartments of various sizes, shapes and colors, in which the eternal self or living being temporarily resides.

One may occupy one of these apartments according to one's ability to pay the rent, but all types of apartments nevertheless exist simultaneously. Similarly, the soul, according to his karma, is given the facility to occupy one of these bodily forms, but all the forms exist simultaneously. Therefore the body does not evolve; the soul evolves by paying the price of karma.

In the material world, the soul has two kinds of coverings – the subtle body and the gross body. Actually the soul enjoys through the subtle body, which is composed of mind, intelligence and false ego. The gross body is the instrumental outer covering. When the gross body is lost, or when it dies, the root of the gross body – the mind, intelligence and false ego – continues and brings about another gross body. Although the gross bodies change, the real root of the gross body – the subtle body – is always there. The subtle body's activities – be they pious or impious – create another situation for the soul to enjoy or suffer in the next gross body. Thus the subtle body continues whereas the gross bodies change one after another.

The process of transmigration of the soul is very subtle. Krishna says in the Bhagavad-gita that

yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ / tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ tam evaiti kaunteya / sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ

‘Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.’ [Bhagavad Gita Chapter 8 Text 6]. According to the condition of the mind at the time of death, the minute soul enters into the womb of a particular mother through the semen of a father, and then the soul develops a particular type of body. He may get the body of a human being, a cat, a dog or any other species depending on all these factors. After death, the living being gets another body according to his desires, total impression on the mind and one's karmic reactions. So at the time of death the living entity, under supervision of higher authorities, is taken to another gross body. The

process is just like air carrying fragrance [Bhagavad Gita 15.8]. This is basically the mechanism of reincarnation.

There are 8.4 million species for the soul to choose from. Think of any desire – if someone likes to sleep a lot, the material nature will give him a polar bear's body so that he can sleep for six months in a year without being ridiculed. If someone delights in eating flesh, nature may award him the body of a tiger.

Lower forms of life such as plants, animals or birds do not suffer from sinful activities because they never violate the laws of nature. A tiger, for instance, does not commit sinful activity by killing its prey, because his body is meant to act in that way; it is properly equipped for that purpose. Karma, which determines the path one takes through various species or to other human bodies, is accrued only in the human form of life. The soul uses up its accumulated karma as he passes through the non-human species. Thus we can understand how the human form of life is like a cross-road where one has to clearly decide which road to take – the path to heaven, the path to hell, or the path to God.

Originally, the soul is fully conscious of its spiritual identity, but when the soul desires to enjoy this material world, it falls down from the spiritual platform. First, the soul accepts a body that is human in form, but gradually, due to his degraded activities, he transmigrates into lower forms of life – into the animal, plant and aquatic forms. By the gradual process of spiritual evolution, the living entity again attains the body of a human being and is given another chance to get out of the process of transmigration. If he again misses his chance in the human form to understand his position, he is again placed in the repeated cycle of birth and death in various types of bodies.

The living entity falls from the human body to the animal kingdom owing to bad karma and animalistic propensities. After he has worked off his karma in the non-human species, eventually, he returns to the human platform, where he gets a new opportunity to carve out a new destiny. While the living entity is in the animal body, he loses the opportunity to make spiritual progress. Only in the human form of life can one choose to perform spiritual activities like chant the Hare Krishna mantra and make tangible spiritual advancement on the progressive march back to Godhead. On the other hand, living entities in non-human bodies are forced to act only by instinct till they get a human body. The human form of life is especially meant to facilitate the liberation of the conditioned soul. Therefore one who abuses human life by engaging in sense gratification, loses this opportunity to get out of this samsara - the cycle of birth and death.

The living beings are suffering due to our forgetfulness of Krishna and the blissful situation of His abode. If we take shelter of Krishna as the protector and take advantage of His instructions, we can easily revive our eternal, blissful nature as parts and parcels of the Personality of Godhead. It is for this purpose that Krishna has created human life.

We can escape the cycle of repeated birth and death by reviving our eternal loving relationship with Krishna and return back to our original constitutional position. This can be easily achieved by regularly chanting the Hare Krishna Maha mantra in the association of like-minded devotees.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Discovery:

1. What are the various species of life described? What is the basis of their classification?

Understanding:

2. What criteria decide the next life form of the living entity? Explain by example.

Application:

3. What is the special privilege of the human form of life? What changes can we make in our lifestyle to make the best use of this human form of life?

Sri Namamrita

Nārada Muni mentions this *sādhana-bhakti* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Seventh Canto, First Chapter, verse 32. He says there to King Yudhiṣṭhira: “My dear King, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.” That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is the duty of the *ācārya*, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us an authorized program for this purpose, centered around the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. This chanting has so much power that it immediately attaches one to Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*. Somehow or other, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. The great saint Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, although a responsible king, fixed his mind on Kṛṣṇa, and similarly anyone who tries to fix his mind in this way will very rapidly make progress in successfully reviving his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Nectar of Devotion

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Tell a friend about what you like in the Bhakti Vriksha gathering, and if the friend is interested, introduce them to the group. Share your experience with the group

There are so many unwanted literatures full of materialistic ideas of sense gratification.... The people in general want to read (that is a natural instinct), but because their minds are polluted they want such literatures. Under these circumstances, transcendental literature like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will not only diminish the activities of the corrupt mind of the people in general, but also it will supply food for their hankering after reading some interesting literature. In the beginning they may not like it because one suffering from jaundice is reluctant to take sugar candy, but we should know that sugar candy is the only remedy for jaundice. Similarly, let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavaram*, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification. When men have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease.

Bhāg. 1.5.11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

8. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Various species of life:

- There are 900,000 species of aquatic life; 2 million species of plants and trees; 1.1 million species of insects; 1 million species of bird life; 3 million species of beasts, and 400,000 species of human life. These species are on different levels of consciousness from most degraded human beings to highly evolved demigods and pure devotees

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Criteria for next life:

- The living entity falls from the human body to the animal kingdom owing to bad karma and animalistic propensities. After he has worked off his karma in the non-human species, eventually, he returns to the human platform.
- Karma, which determines the path one takes through various species or to other human bodies, is accrued only in the human form of life. The soul uses up its accumulated karma as he passes through the non-human species. Thus we can understand how the human form of life is like a cross-road where one has to clearly decide which road to take – the path to heaven, the path to hell, or the path to God.
- Example: If someone likes to sleep a lot, the material nature will give him a polar bear's body so that he can sleep for six months in a year without being ridiculed. If someone delights in eating flesh, nature may award him the body of a tiger.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Special privileges of human form:

- Only in the human form of life can one choose to perform spiritual activities like chant the Hare Krishna Mantra and make tangible spiritual advancement on the progressive march back to Godhead. The human form of life is especially meant to facilitate the liberation of the conditioned soul. Therefore one who abuses human life by engaging in sense gratification, loses this opportunity to get out of this samsara - the cycle of birth and death.

Use of human life:

- If we take shelter of Krishna as the protector and take advantage of His instructions, we can easily revive our eternal, blissful nature as parts and parcels of the Personality of Godhead.
- This can be easily achieved by regularly chanting the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra in the association of like-minded devotees.

Quiz 2, Edifications 5-8

1. What are the three modes of material nature?
2. Describe the food items associated with three modes of material nature respectively?
3. Describe the the kind of charity associated with three modes of material nature respectively?
4. Describe the platform of pure goodness?
5. What activities can free one from the modes of material nature?
6. Define Karma?
7. What is good Karma vs. Akarma?
8. Define the law of Karma.
9. Is the law of karma applicable to animals?
10. Does destiny hamper free-will?
11. What are the theories on destiny and free-will?
12. How can we change destiny?
13. What are the various species of life?
14. What criteria decide the next life form of the living entity?
15. What is the special privilege of the human form of life?

ACTIVITY: PRABHUPADA NIGHT II

Watch the remainder of “Your Ever Well Wisher” Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=wjeqzsijc2k>) and discuss the points that everyone likes from the video.

Quiz 2, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What are the three modes of material nature?

► **Goodness**: conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge.

► **Passion**: born of unlimited desires and longings and living entity is bound to material fruitive actions; symptoms of great attachment, fruitive activity, intense endeavor, and uncontrollable desire and hankering develop.

► **Ignorance**: born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied living entities; results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.

2. Describe the food items associated with three modes of material nature respectively?

Foods dear to those in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, fatty, wholesome, and pleasing to the heart; Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning are dear to those in the mode of passion. Such foods cause distress, misery and disease. Food prepared more than three hours before being eaten, food that is tasteless, decomposed and putrid, and food consisting of remnants and untouchable things is dear to those in the mode of ignorance.

3. Describe the the kind of charity associated with three modes of material nature respectively?

Charity given out of duty, without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, and to a worthy person is considered to be in the mode of goodness. Charity performed with the expectation of some return, or with a desire for fruitive results, or in a grudging mood, is said to be charity in the mode of passion. Charity performed at an impure place, at an improper time, to unworthy persons, or without proper attention and respect is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

4. Describe the platform of pure goodness?

A person who is on the platform called vasudeva or shuddha sattva or pure goodness is beyond material nature, one with Krishna, not in personality but in interest, in service and love, "in this world, but not of it." Such a person is completely satisfied in the self, being situated in the original constitutional position of the soul.

5. What activities can free one from the modes of material nature?

► simply remember our relationship with Krishna and act in that relationship.

► perform activities centered around Krishna.

► perform Bhakti Yoga in the association of those who are aspiring to or have already transcended the modes

► surrender to Krishna

► chant and meditate on the transcendental Maha Mantra

6. Define Karma?

Karma means activities performed by the living entities conditioned by the three modes of material nature.

7. What is good karma vs. akarma?

► **Punya** (Good Karma) and spiritual activity (**Akarma**) are not the same. **Punya** (Good Karma) is material activity, pertaining to the material body. By performing this, one can get promoted to a better material situation within the material world, but one cannot go beyond it, just like in the case of a

prisoner who may be transferred from a C-class prison cell to an A-class prison cell with more facilities, but who is not allowed to leave the prison.

► Akarma or devotional service to the Lord, however, being fully spiritual has nothing to do with this material world. It is not meant for material promotion but it is meant to transfer us to the spiritual world, beyond the cycle of birth and death. Akarma is thus beyond both karma and vikarma.

8. Define the law of Karma.

The Law of karma is similar to the scientific law of action and reaction observed in the physical system. By this subtle law, good or supportive actions lead to correspondingly positive reactions; exploitative or violent acts force the actor to undergo equivalent troubles.

9. Is the law of karma applicable to animals?

The law of karma is not applicable to the animals because they do not possess a higher sense of discrimination between right and wrong. Their intelligence is limited to the activities of eating, sleeping, mating and defending.

10. Does destiny hamper free-will?

No. We have eternal free-will.

11. What are the theories on destiny and free-will?

Karmavada and Daivavada. Truth is between the two theories.

12. How can we change destiny?

► A sincere soul engaged in the process of Bhakti – loving devotional service - can easily overcome the previous conditionings by humble submission to the grace of God.

► By being grateful and submitting ourselves to the will of God, Krishna as paramatma within the heart, eradicates the reactions to all karma and cleanses the mind of all misgivings.

13. What are the various species of life?

There are 900,000 species of aquatic life; 2 million species of plants and trees; 1.1 million species of insects; 1 million species of bird life; 3 million species of beasts, and 400,000 species of human life. These species are on different levels of consciousness from most degraded human beings to highly evolved demigods and pure devotees.

14. What criteria decide the next life form of the living entity?

Karma determines the next material life. Liberation depends on taking shelter of Sri Guru and Krishna.

15. What is the special privilege of the human form of life?

Only in the human form of life can one choose to perform spiritual activities like chant the Hare Krishna Mantra and make tangible spiritual advancement on the progressive march back to Godhead. The human form of life is especially meant to facilitate the liberation of the conditioned soul. Therefore one who abuses human life by engaging in sense gratification, loses this opportunity to get out of this Samsara - the cycle of birth and death.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

9. Understanding the Real Problems of Life

All endeavors made in the field of Science are to reduce the miseries of mankind and to increase his comforts. A fan is used to reduce the misery of sweating. A grinder is used to avoid the misery of manual grinding. A motorcycle is used to avoid the misery of pedaling. These are simple examples. In a similar way, advances in science, technology and medicine are aimed at reducing the miseries and, if possible, ending them altogether.

But actually, if one analyzes deeply, one understands that these daily problems are simply symptoms of deeper real problems. Underneath this dazzle, the real problems of life still persist.

In our pursuit of happiness, it is imperative to understand the nature of the miseries and problems that we face. What do we mean by a problem? A simple explanation could be “A problem is to get what we do NOT want and to NOT get what we want”. A problem for a homemaker is dealing with the constant increase in grocery prices. A problem for a student is the constant threat of exams. A problem for an employee is to deal with the increasing demands and stress at work. A problem for a businessman is to deal with a fluctuating economy.

Being caught up in the immediate problems of life, we hardly think of the real problems that every one of us have to face in life. However, the purpose of life is to identify and solve the real problems of life. All the petty problems that we face in our day-to-day lives are a symptom of these real problems of life.

So, what are the REAL problems of life? A problem could be considered REAL if:

1) It is common to all; 2) Nobody wants it; 3) Nobody can avoid it 4) Solving which, all other symptomatic problems are resolved permanently.

Simply solving the symptoms may temporarily avoid suffering but does not solve the problem itself.

For example, a person suffering from “Yellow fever” may show several symptoms like fever, muscle pain, loss of appetite and nausea. If the patient receives medicines that simply treat these symptoms individually, the symptoms may subside for some time, but will re-appear, because the real problem, “Yellow Fever”, is still not cured. However, an expert doctor will identify the real problem, by taking note of the symptoms, and administer a cure for “Yellow Fever”, which will cure the symptoms along with it.

The problems that fulfill the above criteria of real problems are explained below.

Disease: No one wants any disease. There are so many different kinds of diseases and medical science is trying to find remedies for them. But medical history shows that by the time science finds a cure for one disease, another more deadly disease comes up, as has happened in the case of cancer, syphilis, gonorrhea, AIDS, etc. We may cure one disease for some time, but we cannot eradicate all diseases. The pain suffered through disease is a common experience for everyone and needs no further explanation.

Old age: No one wants to get old. A millionaire spent millions of dollars employing several doctors to find out whether he could stop getting old and remain youthful forever. But the doctors realized that, even if they were to understand the mechanism of ageing, they wouldn't be able to find a solution to reverse it in the millionaire's lifetime. We were all children some years ago. Later, we grow to youth and eventually to old age. The cosmetic industry is flourishing only due to fear of old age.

Death: Steve Jobs said “No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven, don't want to die to get there. No one has ever escaped it, because death is very likely the single best invention of life. It's life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new.” No one wants death. In the Garuda Purana, one of the ancient Vedic scriptures, it is mentioned that death is extremely painful and the dying person experiences a pain that is equivalent to forty thousand scorpions biting simultaneously. In nature, we see that even the tiniest creatures display amazing abilities and techniques for escaping death when their lives are threatened. But death is inevitable for all living beings and everyone has to face it one day, though it is fearsome and painful.

Birth: Birth is an extremely painful experience for the living entity. For nine long months, the human fetus lies cramped within the darkness of the womb, suffering severely, scorched by the mother's gastric fire, continually jolted by sudden movements, and feeling constant pressure from being contained in a small sack which surrounds him in the womb. This tight, constricting packet forces the child's back to arch constantly like a bow. Furthermore, hungry worms in the abdominal cavity torment the child. The child passes stool and urine in the same packet. Such is the misery of birth.

The wisdom of Bhagavad-gita, an ancient text on Bhakti Yoga says that, the goal of human form of life is to perceive the problems of birth, old age, disease and death and find out the permanent solution for them. The Gita also states that we are not this temporary body but the eternal spirit soul. The root cause of all problems is that the eternal, conscious, blissful soul identifies itself as the temporary, miserable, material body. The Gita recommends the practice of Bhakti Yoga, as the solution, that can give the realization of the eternal identity of the soul.

One may argue, "The problems of birth, old age, disease and death come only once in a while. We can just ignore them and enjoy life for the remaining time." But at every moment everyone is suffering due to at least one of the following threefold miseries:

Miseries caused by one's own mind and body (adhyatmika klesha): The body and the mind give rise to innumerable problems. According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, in the year 2000, in America, 19 million youths were suffering from mental-related illness; everyday 1200 youths were attempting to commit suicide and one tenth of them were successful. Thus sometimes people are driven to the point of suicide due to mental frustration. In old age, the deteriorating body gives varieties of problems. For example, once a person grows beyond 80 years, generally he can't even sit or stand without back-pain.

Miseries caused by other living entities (adhibhautika klesha): Even if we have a healthy body and mind, other living beings may inflict miseries upon us. Even if everything is nicely arranged in our life, some other living entity, such as our enemy, boss, colleague, relative, family member or friend, terrorists or, if no one else, then a mosquito or a virus, is sure to make our life miserable.

Miseries caused by nature (adhidaivika klesha): Floods, droughts, famines, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc are devastating calamities imposed upon us through the agency of nature. A volcanic eruption at Pompeii devoured 20,000 people under a 20 ft high lava layer. The recent tsunami tidal wave disaster swallowed 3,80,000 lives in a few minutes. Even if these come only occasionally, they wreak havoc whenever they come. And moreover, we are being constantly tormented by the changes in the weather such as scorching heat, freezing cold and untimely rains.

Can we say that we are not constantly being harassed by these problems? A wise person would wonder, "Why should our lives be ridden with the anxiety of facing and tackling one problem after another? I do not want miseries, I do not want unhappiness, why is it being imposed upon me when I want happiness, I want peace of mind, I want bliss. Why is it eluding me? Why I am not able to find happiness? When have I missed it? Where did the formula go wrong? This is the purpose. What is the destination of life? Where am I heading to? Is this all life is meant for? Or is there a life of eternal joy that is never inhibited by sufferings?"

To inquire into these questions is the purpose of human form of life.

DISCOVERY:

1. What are the characteristics of the Real problems of Life? What are the Real problems of life?
2. What are the threefold miseries?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. What is the aim of the human form of life?

APPLICATION:

4. How can we align our immediate goals with the ultimate aim of life?

Sri Namamrita

In the age of logic, argument and disagreement, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the only means of self-realization:

In three out of the four millenniums (namely Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga and Dvāpara-yuga) people had the honor to be able to understand transcendence through the path of disciplic succession. However, in the present age, people have no interest in the disciplic succession. Instead, they have invented many paths of logic and argument. This individual attempt to understand the supreme transcendence (called the ascending process) is not approved by the *Vedas*. The Absolute Truth must descend from the absolute platform. He is not to be understood by the ascending process. The holy name of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is a transcendental vibration because it comes from the transcendental platform, the supreme abode of Kṛṣṇa. Because there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is as pure, perfect and liberated as Kṛṣṇa Himself. Academic scholars have no entrance by means of logic and other argument into the understanding of the transcendental nature of the holy name of God. The single path in understanding the transcendental nature of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the chanting of these names with faith and adherence. Such chanting will release one from designated conditions arising from the gross and subtle bodies.

In this age of logic, argument and disagreement, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the only means for self-realization.

Teachings of Lord Caitanya

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute one book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger, and share your experience with the group

One can very intelligently conclude that without devotional service, without becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, one cannot be happy. Therefore the duty of all devotees is to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere all over the world, because all living entities without Kṛṣṇa consciousness are suffering the pangs of material existence. To preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the best welfare activity. Indeed, it is described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as *para-upakāra*, work for the true benefit of others.

Bhāg. 7.7.53

When a person actually revives his consciousness with thoughts of Kṛṣṇa by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he revives his spiritual life and becomes addicted to the service of the Lord. Only then can he act as an *ācārya*. In other words, everyone should engage in preaching, following in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this way one will be very much appreciated by Lord Kṛṣṇa and will quickly be recognized by Him. Actually a devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu must engage in preaching in order to increase the followers of the Lord. By thus preaching actual Vedic knowledge all over the world, one will benefit all mankind.

Cc. Madhya 7.153

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

9. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Characteristics of the Real problems of Life:

- 1) It is common to all; 2) Nobody wants it; 3) Nobody can avoid it 4) Solving which, all other symptomatic problems are resolved permanently
- Disease, old age, death, birth;
 - We may cure one disease for some time, but we cannot eradicate all diseases.
 - Even if they were to understand the mechanism of ageing, they wouldn't be able to find a solution to reverse it in one's lifetime.
 - Death is inevitable for all living beings and everyone has to face it one day, though it is fearsome and painful.
 - Birth is an extremely painful experience for the living entity.

Question #2.

The three fold miseries:

- Miseries caused by one's own mind and body (adhyatmika klesha)
- Miseries caused by other living entities (adhibhautika klesha)
- Miseries caused by nature (adhidaivika klesha)

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Aim of the human form of life:

- The goal of the human form of life is to perceive the problems of birth, old age, disease and death and find out the permanent solution for them.
- The Gita also states that we are not this temporary body but the eternal spirit soul. The root cause of all problems is that the eternal, conscious, blissful soul identifies itself as the temporary, miserable, material body.

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Alignment of goals:

- The Gita recommends the practice of Bhakti Yoga, as the solution, that can give the realization of the eternal identity of the soul.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

10. Why are We Here?

The beginning of spiritual life is to understand that we are not this material body, but the spirit soul. However, simply realizing our nature as different from the body is not enough. We can experience true satisfaction and happiness only by realizing our true identity in relation with the Supreme Soul, Krishna and by acting on that platform.

What is the origin of the soul? Why are we bound in this prison house of the material world, by the three modes of material nature? Where do we go when we become free from the bondage of the three modes?

The Vedas explain that the soul is constitutionally resident of the eternal realm, the spiritual world. It is explained in the Upanishads, that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna, is one amongst many souls, who are all subordinate to Him. Being a part and parcel of the Supremely Independent Krishna, every soul is endowed with minute independence, either to choose to love and serve God, or to be independent of God and struggle for so called illusory enjoyment in this material world. The souls in this material world have chosen the second option.

Under the influence of the illusory energy, every living being thinks that he is the lord and creator of the material world. Material Consciousness has 2 psychic divisions. One is that “I am the creator” and the other is that “I am the enjoyer”. But, actually the Supreme Spirit is both the creator and the enjoyer, and the living entity, being the part and parcel of the Supreme Spirit, is neither the creator, nor enjoyer, but a co-operator. He is the created and enjoys being enjoyed by the Supreme enjoyer.

For instance, part of a machine co-operates with the whole machine. A part of the body co-operates with the whole body. The hands, legs, eyes, and so on are all parts of the body, but they are not actually the enjoyers. The stomach is the enjoyer. The legs move, the hands supply food, the teeth chew, and all parts of the body are engaged in satisfying the stomach, because the stomach is the principle factor that nourishes the body’s organization. Therefore, everything is given to the stomach.

One nourishes the tree by watering its root and one nourishes the body by feeding the stomach, for if the body is to be kept in a healthy state, then the parts of the body must co-operate to feed the stomach. Similarly, the Supreme Soul is the enjoyer and the creator, and we, as subordinate living beings, are meant to co-operate to satisfy Him. This co-operation will actually help us, just as food taken by the stomach will help all other parts of the body. If the fingers of the hand think that they should take the food themselves instead of giving it to the stomach, then they will be frustrated.

The central figure of creation and enjoyment is the Supreme Personality Krishna, and the living entities are co-operators. By co-operation, they enjoy. Just like a child asks his mother, “Mother! I want to hold the moon in my hand.” Mother tries to explain that it is not possible, but the child keeps insisting and starts crying. So, the mother gives a mirror in the child’s hand and positions it in such a way that the reflection of the moon is seen in the mirror. The child is happy in the illusion that he has the moon. However, when he moves the mirror, the moon goes away and after a few attempts the child is frustrated and understands the futility of such illusory enjoyment. Similarly, when the living entity wants to enjoy independently of God in the spiritual world, he is given the material world to fulfill his desire to enjoy separately from God and is subjected to the illusion that he is enjoying.

After several lifetimes of trying to enjoy, when a living entity comes to understand the futility of trying to find enjoyment in this material world, the Lord as the paramatma in the heart, directs the living entity to the association of His devotees, where one can learn the purpose of life and perfect one’s life. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna also comes to this material world to display His SuperExcellent pastimes to attract the living entity back to the spiritual world- the real Home. He also sends His representatives in the form of the great devotees to reclaim the fallen conditioned souls.

avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas / tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim

yañ prāpya na nivartant / tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

That Supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode. (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 8 Text 21)

The soul being part and parcel of the Supreme Godhead Krishna can be happy only when he is serving Krishna with Love and devotion and not otherwise. The living being who desires to enjoy independently of God will never get satisfaction, exactly like a fish out of water can never be satisfied with any amount of comforts. Only when the fish is put back in its original position in the water, will it become completely happy.

Similarly, the spirit soul can be happy only in the spiritual world, which is the original home of the living being. The material realm of activities can never satisfy the pure soul, who is in search of real bliss.

We are all like the lost son of a millionaire. Having lost touch with our eternal father, Krishna, we are wandering in this material world, unaware of our true glory. We have to now revive our eternal relationship with the father to become truly happy. This relationship can be revived by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, associating with people who are trying to revive this relationship and by performing practical devotional service. Once we revive our lost relationship with the Supreme Father by performing loving devotional service, we are in a liberated state, even while residing in the material body.

Sri Rupa Gosvami in his Nectar of Devotion describes this as follows:

“A person acting in Krishna consciousness (or, in other words, in the service of Krishna) with his body, mind, intelligence and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities.”

Srila Prabhupada, the founder acharya of ISKCON says: “We never had any occasion when we were separated from Kṛṣṇa. Just like one man is dreaming and he forgets himself. In dream he creates himself in different forms: now I am the King discussing like that. This creation of himself is as seer and subject matter or seen, two things. But as soon as the dream is over, the ‘seen’ disappears. But the seer remains. Now he is in his original position.

Our separation from Kṛṣṇa is like that. We dream this body and so many relationships with other things. First the attachment comes to enjoy sense gratification. Even with Kṛṣṇa desire for sense gratification is there. There is a dormant attitude for forgetting Kṛṣṇa and creating an atmosphere for enjoying independently. Just like at the edge of the beach, sometimes the water covers, sometimes there is dry sand, coming and going. Our position is like that, sometimes covered, sometimes free, just like at the edge of the tide. As soon as we forget, immediately the illusion is there. Just like as soon as we sleep, dream is there...So the conclusion is that whatever may be our past, let us come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and immediately join Kṛṣṇa. Just like with a diseased man, it is a waste of time to try to find out how he has become diseased; better to spend time curing the disease”

DISCOVERY:

1. What is the original nature of the soul? Explain with examples
2. How does the soul become subjected to the illusions of this material world?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. What is the nature of Krishna’s abode?
4. Are we separated from Krishna? Explain with example

APPLICATION:

5. How can we be liberated even while residing in this material body?

Chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra revives one's dormant, eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness. As living spiritual souls, we are all originally Kṛṣṇa conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now adulterated by the material atmosphere. The material atmosphere, in which we are now living, is called *māyā*, or illusion. *Māyā* means “that which is not.” And what is this illusion? The illusion is that we are all trying to be lords of material nature, while actually we are under the grip of her stringent laws. When a servant artificially tries to imitate the all-powerful master, he is said to be in illusion. We are trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but actually we are becoming more and more entangled in her complexities. Therefore, although we are engaged in a hard struggle to conquer nature, we are ever more dependent on her. This illusory struggle against material nature can be stopped at once by revival of our eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare is the transcendental process for reviving this original, pure consciousness. By chanting this transcendental vibration, we can cleanse away all misgivings within our hearts. The basic principle of all such misgivings is the false consciousness that I am the lord of all I survey.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. This consciousness is the original, natural energy of the living entity. When we hear this transcendental vibration, this consciousness is revived. This simplest method of meditation is recommended for this age.... No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the mahā-mantra: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The Science of Self-Realization

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Cook, offer and distribute prasadam to your friends

Devotees should rise from the neophyte stage to the preaching platform:

Everyone is eligible to become Kṛṣṇa's devotee. One simply has to be trained according to the approved process. It is the work of Kṛṣṇa's confidential devotees to turn everyone into a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*. If the confidential devotees do not take up the task of elevating everyone to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then who will do it? Those who claim to be devotees but do not engage in Kṛṣṇa's service to elevate all living creatures to Kṛṣṇa consciousness are to be considered *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* (people in the lowest stage of devotional service). When one rises to the second platform of devotional service, his business is to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. Those who are active in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should not remain in the neophyte stage but should rise to the platform of preachers, the second platform of devotional service. Devotional service is so enchanting that even the first-class devotees (*uttama-adhikārīs*) also come down to the second platform to preach and render service to the Lord for the benefit of the whole world.

Cc. Madhya 24.205

Preachers go door to door to enlighten the people in general:

The great saint Jaḍa Bharata described both the miserable condition and the means to get out. The only way out of it is association with devotees, and this association is very easy. Although unfortunate people also get this opportunity, due to their great misfortune they cannot take shelter of pure devotees, and consequently they continuously suffer. Nonetheless, this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement insists that everyone take to this path by adopting the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. The preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness go from door to door to inform people how they can be relieved from the miserable conditions of material life.

Bhāg. 5.14.39

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

10. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Constitutional position of the soul:

- The soul is constitutionally resident of the eternal realm, the spiritual world, and subordinate to Krishna.
- The Supreme Spirit is both the creator and the enjoyer, and the living entity, being the part and parcel of the Supreme Spirit, is neither the creator, nor enjoyer, but a co-operator.
- Example: stomach in relation to parts of body, or the root of a tree.

Question #2.

The soul and the illusory material realm:

- Being a part and parcel of the Supremely Independent Krishna, every soul is endowed with minute independence, either to choose to love and serve God, or to be independent of God and struggle for so called illusory enjoyment in this material world. The souls in this material world have chosen the second option.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Nature of Krishna's abode:

- The supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode.

Question #4.

Separation from Krishna:

- We never had any occasion when we were separated from Krsna. Just like one man is dreaming and he forgets himself. In dream he creates himself in different forms: now I am the King discussing like that. This creation of himself is as seer and subject matter or seen, two things. But as soon as the dream is over, the 'seen' disappears. But the seer remains. Now he is in his original position. Our separation from Krsna is like that.

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Process of liberation:

- We have to now revive our eternal relationship with the father to become truly happy.
- This relationship can be revived by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, associating with people who are trying to revive this relationship and by performing practical devotional service.
- Once we revive our lost relationship with the Supreme Father by performing loving devotional service, we are in a liberated state, even while residing in the material body.
- Sri Rupa Gosvami in his Nectar of Devotion describes this as follows: "A person acting in Krishna consciousness (or, in other words, in the service of Krishna) with his body, mind, intelligence and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities".

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

11.Time

Kala or time is one of Krishna's unlimited energies. It is present only in the material world. In the spiritual world, time is conspicuous by its absence. Vedic time is cyclic and not linear. Time is the cause of all the transformations in the material nature, like the cycle of the universe - creation, maintenance and annihilation; and the six kinds of transformations in all living entities.

There are 4 yugas or ages:

<i>Satya Yuga</i>	<i>Treta Yuga</i>	<i>Dvapara Yuga</i>	<i>Kali Yuga</i>
1728000 years	1296000 years	864000 years	432000 years
Characterized by Austerity, Cleanliness, Mercy, Truthfulness.	Characterized by Cleanliness, Mercy, Truthfulness.	Characterized by Cleanliness, Truthfulness.	Characterized by Truthfulness.
Austerity keeps reducing as SatyaYuga proceeds	Mercy keeps reducing as TretaYuga proceeds	Cleanliness keeps reducing as DvaparaYuga proceeds	Truthfulness keeps reducing as KaliYuga proceeds
Yuga Dharma is meditation on Vishnu	Yuga Dharma is Vedic sacrifices	Yuga Dharma is Dietary Worship	Yuga Dharma is Congregation chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna

Each cycle of Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga is called a MahaYuga. After the end of one Mahayuga, the Satya Yuga of the next MahaYuga starts. 1000 such MahaYugas is equal to 12 hours of Brahma, the engineer of the universe. Brahma lives for 100 such years.

Time is the most powerful force in the material world. The most cruel form of time is death.

"Life is a preparation" - the human being prepares himself throughout his life to undergo the final examination which is death. In what way does he prepare himself? By finding out answers to questions like, who am I? Where will I go after my death? What is my relationship with God? We can get the answers from the proper and bonafide source - the Vedic scriptures. The scriptures tell us that we are not this gross body, but eternal spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. According to Srimad Bhagavad Gita (8.5 & 8.6), whatever activities we perform throughout our lives and whatever will be our consciousness at the time of death, we will get a body according to that in our next life. Death is the ultimate truth in everyone's life. But one who dies knowing Krishna, his is a successful death. The death of a devotee and that of a non-devotee is not the same (eg. Cat and kitten; cat and mice).

Death is compared to a cat and an ordinary person is like a mouse. When the mouse is in the mouth of a cat, it knows its destruction and so is exceedingly afraid and struggles to escape the mouth of the cat. The mouse does not surrender. The mouse is always trying to get away from the cat and therefore there is fear. Cat is death personified for the mouse.

On the other hand, a devotee of the Lord is compared to the kitten. Because the kitten is surrendered to the cat, it is fully dependant on the love of the cat. The kitten sees the cat's mouth when it holds it—as its most loving protector. Similarly, when a devotee is face to face with death, he/she simply sees God with love and gratitude. That devotee is feeling the divine protection, the divine love of God at death; that devotee sees that death is simply the door opening to the spiritual world and so there is no fear. It is a promotion. It is like graduating. A devotee welcomes death as an opportunity to serve the Lord in the spiritual world.

So, if we want to free ourselves from the vicious cycle of birth and death, we have to accept the Supremacy of Lord Krishna as the Absolute Personality of Godhead and surrender to Him. The goal and the means to free ourselves is to always remember Krishna and never forget Him. In this way, we can go back to Krishna at the end of our lives.

DISCOVERY:

1. What is Time and describe the transformations it causes in the material nature
2. What are the 4 yugas? What are the characteristics of the 4 yugas?
3. How can we free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death?

UNDERSTANDING:

4. "Life is a preparation" - Why? How does one prepare himself?
5. How is the death of a devotee different from a non-devotee? Explain with example

APPLICATION:

6. How can we mould our lives so that we can remember Krishna at the time of death?

Sri Namamrita

Rather than inventing one's own religious process, one should accept the approved method of religion for this age—hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana:

[Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya to King Pratāparudra]: Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya replied, “This sweet transcendental sound is a special creation of the Lord known as prema-saṅkīrtana, congregational chanting in love of Godhead. In this age of Kali, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has descended to preach the religion of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore the chanting of the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the religious principle for this age. Anyone who worships Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu by congregational chanting should be understood to be very intelligent. One who does not do so must be considered a victim of this age and bereft of all intelligence.”

Rascals propose that anyone can invent his own religious process, and this proposition is condemned herein. If one actually wants to become religious, he must take up the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.... Dharma, or religion, cannot be manufactured by a human being. Religion is the law or code of the Lord.... Dharma refers to the science of bhakti-yoga, which begins by the novice's chanting the holy name of the Lord (tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ).

In this age of Kali it is recommended in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, kali-kale dharma—kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana. In the age of Kali the chanting of the holy name of the Lord is the method of religion approved by all Vedic scriptures.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 11.97–99

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends

The preachings of a sādhu:

A devotee travels all over the country, from door to door, preaching, “Be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Don’t spoil your life in simply fulfilling your animal propensities. Human life is meant for self-realization or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” These are the preachings of a sādhu.

Bhāg. 3.25.21

What a preacher should preach:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā mām śāntim rcchati
(Bg. 5.29)*

One is expected to understand these three formulas of knowledge concerning the Supreme Lord—that He is the supreme enjoyer, that He is the proprietor of everything, and that He is the best well-wisher and friend of everyone. A preacher should personally understand these truths and preach them to everyone. Then there will be peace and tranquility all over the world.

Bhāg. 7.6.24

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

11. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Time and transformation:

- Kala or time is one of Krishna's unlimited energies. It is present only in the material world.
- The transformations in the material nature: The cycle of the universe - creation, maintenance and annihilation; and the six kinds of transformations in all living entities (birth, growth, sustenance, reproduction, dwindling and death).

Question #2.

Four yugas and their characteristics:

- Refer to the table in the edification.

Question #3.

Liberation from cycle of birth and death:

- We have to accept the Supremacy of Lord Krishna as the Absolute Personality of Godhead and surrender to Him.
- The goal and the means to free ourselves is to always remember Krishna and never forget Him.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #4.

Life as preparation:

- By finding out answers to questions like, who am I? Where will I go after my death? What is my relationship with God?
- We can get the answers from the bonafide source - Vedas. The scriptures tell us that we are not this gross body, but eternal spirit souls, part and parcel of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna.
- Whatever activities we perform throughout our lives and whatever will be our consciousness at the time of death, we will get a body according to that in our next life.

Question #5.

Death of devotee vs. non-devotee:

- **Devotee:** When a devotee is face to face with death, he/she simply sees God with love and gratitude. That devotee is feeling the divine protection, the divine love of God at death; that devotee sees that death is simply the door opening to the spiritual world and so there is no fear. It is a promotion. It is like graduating. A devotee welcomes death as an opportunity to serve the Lord.
- **Non-devotee:** They know that destruction is imminent and so are exceedingly afraid and struggle to escape death. (**Example:** cat and kitten).

APPLICATION:

Question #6.

Moulding life:

- Discuss how we can remember Krishna everyday, to get trained to think of Him at death.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

12. The Yoga Ladder

The laws of nature which bind us to the cycle of birth and death are very stringent. How can we get liberation from the laws of nature? According to Bhagavad Gita, this can be done by the performance of Yoga.

“Yoga” means union in love between the individual consciousness and the supreme consciousness. A yogi is one whose life is centered on the practice of yoga. A yogi’s life and activities are oriented towards re-establishing his relationship with God - Krishna. This implies that any genuine approach to yoga should involve the spiritual pursuit, however varied that pursuit may be.

Yoga – what it is not:

- Yoga is not limited to mere physical exercise for a shapely body or good health and increased sense gratification or for an increased life span
- Purpose of Yoga is not simply to become an emaciated renunciant in meditation
- Purpose of Yoga is not to possess mystic powers

There are mainly four kinds of Yoga practices described in Bhagavad Gita – Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Dhyana Yoga (also known as Hatha Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga), and Bhakti Yoga. These four kinds of yoga are not four different paths. They are different levels of realizations of union with the Supreme Consciousness - Yoga. In fact, yoga is one path. It’s like a ladder and different steps of the ladder are called by different names, for the same yoga process. It is just like education. From Kindergarten to PhD is all the process of education. But different steps of the ladder of education are called by different names. The Bbeginning step is called elementary, the next step is middle school, next step is high school , then graduation. Similarly, Bhagavad Gita explains four steps of the yoga ladder. The first step is Karma Yoga, then Jnana Yoga, then Dhyana Yoga and the topmost is Bhakti Yoga. However, the Gita also describes Bhakti Yoga as an elevator process that can take one from the lowest level to the highest, by-passing the other steps.

The Bhagavad Gita describes four stages of the yoga ladder. These are not

- KARMA YOGA: Karma means activity and so Karma Yoga is a process whereby one links with God by his work. He performs his work for God, without selfish desire for personal gain. It is the art of working without entanglement. A Karma Yogi offers the results of all work to Krishna. He is always aware of his constitutional position as subordinate to Krishna and acts in that way. Hence, a Karma Yogi can work without any desire for fruits, a feeling of proprietorship or laziness.

The difference between Karma Yogi and Bhakti Yogi is that a Karma Yogi is attached to a particular kind of work he performs, but is not attached to the results. He wants to choose the kind of work he performs and then whatever is the result he offers to Krishna. A Bhakti Yogi is neither attached to the work nor its results. He performs any kind of work that is ordained by the Lord or His representative, the spiritual master.

As one practices karma-yoga one should try to add the principles of bhakti-yoga to one’s life as much as one can practically maintain them. Gradually one will rise to the platform of unconditional, unmotivated, uninterrupted service to Krishna, the exclusive feature of pure bhakti-yoga, the topmost rung of the “yoga ladder.”

Srila Prabhupada says: Yoga means connection with Krishna. Bhakti-yoga means a direct connection, but there is also karma-yoga, which is yoga, but not pure yoga. Karma-yoga means: Whatever you are doing already can be offered to Krishna. In the beginning, you may not be able to take to pure bhakti-yoga. Therefore karma-yoga is recommended...People are interested in different types of work... And how does it become karma-yoga? Tat kuruñva mad-arpaëam: “You give it to Me.”

Krishna says, karmaëy evädhikāras te mäs phaleñu kadācana: You can go on with your business, but don’t expect the fruit of your business. He is indirectly saying that the fruits should be given to Him—mäs phaleñu kadācana.

Suppose you grow a nice mango tree. There will be fruit, but according to Bhagavad-Gita you should not take this fruit. One might think, “Oh, I’ve nourished such a nice mango tree for so many years, and now the fruit is there.” But Krishna says, *mā phaleṇu kadācana*: “Don’t take the fruit.” Then who will take it? It will fall down on the ground and rot? “No,” Lord Krishna replies. “Don’t you take it, but give it to Me.” That is karma-yoga.

- **JNANA YOGA:** Jnana means knowledge and so Jnana Yoga is a process of elevation to spiritual consciousness and to link with Krishna through cultivation of philosophical knowledge. A yogi on the path of jnana-yoga must have purified his consciousness through work and has thus already progressed upward from the stage of karma to the stage of jnana. Generally, a practitioner of JnanaYoga is an Impersonal transcendentalist. Since he is engaged in speculative knowledge, he thinks that ultimately God does not have a personal form. Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that Jnana Yoga is a very troublesome path.

“For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.” (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12, Text 5)

The basic difference between Jnana Yogi and Bhakti Yogi is that a Jnana Yogi is attached to the process of speculative knowledge. However, a Jnana Yogi can be promoted to Bhakti Yoga through the association of a pure devotee.

- **ASTANGA YOGA (Dhyana Yoga or Hatha Yoga):** Astanga means 8 limbs. So, Astanga Yoga is a process of mechanical meditation practice meant to control the mind and the senses to help focus one’s concentration on the Supreme. It is also known as Dhyana Yoga or Hatha Yoga. In the Sixth Chapter of Bhagavad Gita, the subject of Dhyana yoga is explicitly detailed. One must follow strict rules and regulations while practicing the eightfold procedures of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. One has to drive out the sense objects such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell by the pratyahara (breathing) process in yoga, and then keep the vision of the eyes between the two eyebrows and concentrate on the tip of the nose, while meditating on the Paramatma or Supersoul within the heart. To practice yoga, one should go to a secluded place and should lay kusa-grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and a soft cloth. This yoga is nearly impossible to perform perfectly in the age of Kali.

- **BHAKTI YOGA:** Bhakti means selfless devotional love. In love, one becomes selfless, and thus, instead of giving prominence to one’s own desires, one considers the beloved first. So connecting with God – Krishna, takes precedence over what the individual wants. Thus Bhakti Yoga is the yoga of selfless, ecstatic, love of God through transcendental devotional service.

It is the easiest means to revive our dormant, inherent constitutional position of the soul and achieve perfection of life. Bhakti Yoga revives our inherent relationship with Krishna, by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, associating with people who are trying to revive this relationship and by performing practical devotional service. The culmination of all kinds of yoga practices lies in bhakti yoga. All other yogas are but a means to come to the point of bhakti in bhakti-yoga. Yoga actually means bhakti-yoga; all other yogas are progressions toward the destination of bhakti-yoga. From the beginning of karma-yoga to the end of bhakti-yoga is a long way to self-realization. Karma-yoga, without fruitive results, is the beginning of this path. When karma-yoga increases in knowledge and renunciation, the stage is called jnana-yoga. When jnana-yoga increases in meditation on the Supersoul by different physical processes, and the mind is on Him, it is called astanga-yoga. And when one surpasses the astanga-yoga and comes to the point of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna, it is called bhakti yoga, the culmination.

“And of all yogis, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me--he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion”(Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6 Text 47)

Bhakti Yoga is so potent that simply by performing Bhakti Yoga, one can bypass the other yoga processes in the yoga ladder and come to the highest perfection. So, Bhakti Yoga is the goal and also the means to reach the goal.

By performing Sadhana Bhakti- performance of the principles of Bhakti Yoga in a regulated manner under the guidance of a bonafide spiritual master, one can come to the platform of spontaneous loving service to Krishna and eventually perform devotional service in ecstatic love.

DISCOVERY:

1. What is “Yoga”? What are the different types of Yoga?
2. Who is the topmost yogi according to Lord Krishna?

UNDERSTANDING:

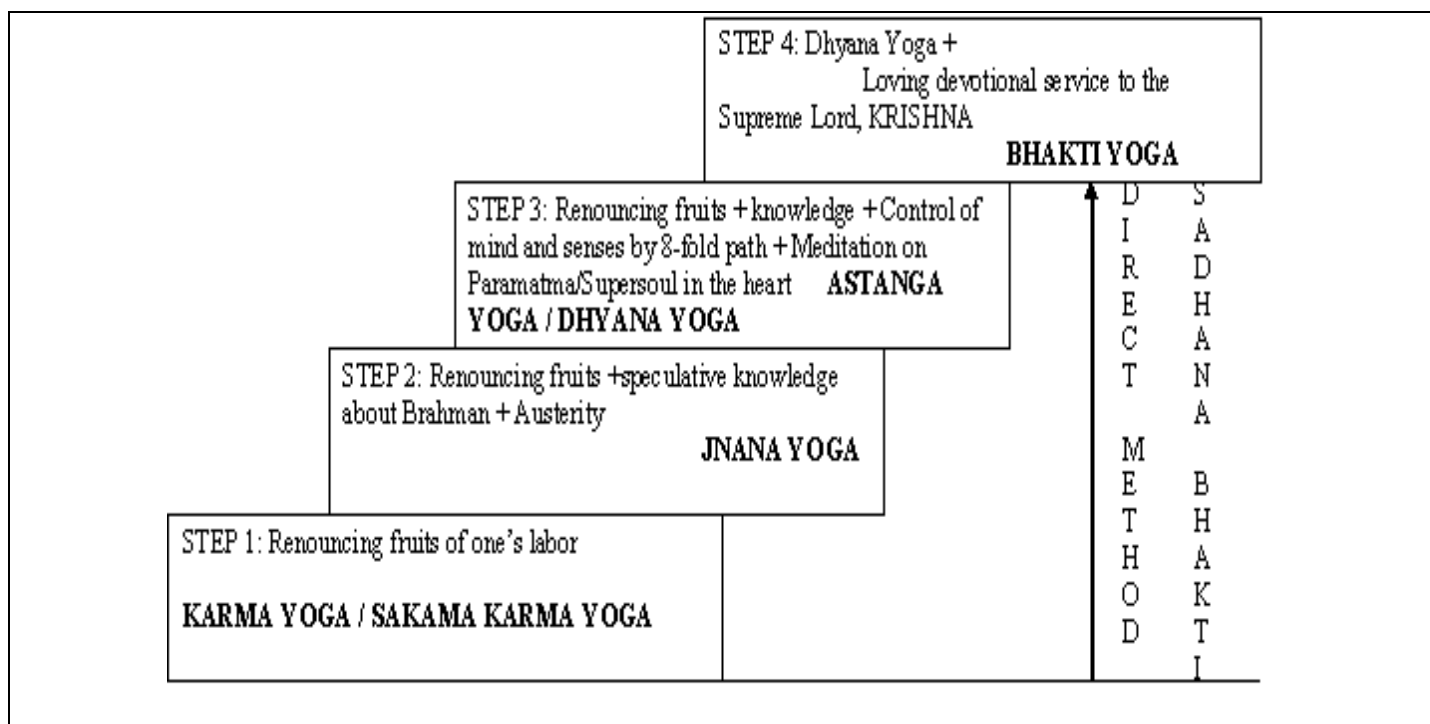
3. How is Bhakti Yoga different from the other types of Yoga?

APPLICATION:

4. Discuss different ways in which we can practice Bhakti Yoga in our home with our family.

GRADUAL AND DIRECT DEVELOPMENT

THE YOGA LADDER



Sri Namamrita

If, due to some righteous activities which provoke devotional service, one is influenced by the service attitude and takes shelter of the good association of pure devotees, he develops attachment for hearing and chanting. By developing chanting and hearing, one can advance further and further in regulative devotional service to the Supreme Lord. As one so advances, his misgivings about devotional service and his attraction for the material world proportionately diminish. By advancing in hearing and chanting, a devotee becomes more firmly fixed in his faith, and gradually his initial faith develops into a taste for devotional service, and that taste develops into attachment. When attachment becomes pure, it exhibits the two characteristics of bhāva and rati. When rati increases, it is called love of Godhead, and love of Godhead is the ultimate goal of human life.

Teachings of Lord Caitanya

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness.

Lord Kapila was very satisfied by the request of his glorious mother because she was thinking not only in terms of her personal salvation but in terms of all the fallen conditioned souls. The Lord is always compassionate towards the fallen souls of this material world, and therefore He comes Himself or sends His confidential servants to deliver them. Since He is perpetually compassionate towards them, if some of His devotees also become compassionate towards them, He is very pleased with the devotees. In *Bhagavad-gītā* it is clearly stated that persons who are trying to elevate the condition of the fallen souls by preaching the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā*—namely, full surrender unto the Personality of Godhead—are very dear to Him. Thus when the Lord says that His beloved mother was very compassionate towards the fallen souls, He was pleased, and He also became compassionate towards her.

Bhāg. 3.29.3,5,6

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

12. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Definition of Yoga:

- “Yoga” means union in love between the individual consciousness and the supreme consciousness.
- A yogi’s life and activities are oriented towards re-establishing his relationship with God - Krishna.

Types of yoga:

- **Karma Yoga:** is a process whereby one links with God by his work. He performs his work for God, without selfish desire for personal gain. It is the art of working without entanglement. A Karma Yogi offers the results of all work to Krishna.
- **Jnana Yoga:** is a process of elevation to spiritual consciousness and to link with Krishna through cultivation of philosophical knowledge.
- **Astanga Yoga:** is a process of mechanical meditation practice meant to control the mind and the senses to help focus one’s concentration on the Supreme. It is also known as Dhyana Yoga or Hatha Yoga.
- **Bhakti Yoga:** is the yoga of selfless, ecstatic, love of God through transcendental devotional service.

Question #2.

Topmost yogi:

- And of all yogis, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me--he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6 Text 47).

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Differences with Bhakti yoga:

- **Karma vs Bhakti:** The difference between Karma Yogi and Bhakti Yogi is that a Karma Yogi is attached to a particular kind of work he performs, but is not attached to the results. He wants to choose the kind of work he performs and then whatever is the result he offers to Krishna. A Bhakti Yogi is neither attached to the work nor its results. He performs any kind of work that is ordained by the Lord or His representative, the spiritual master.
- **Jnana vs Bhakti:** The basic difference between a Jnana Yogi and a Bhakti Yogi is that a Jnana Yogi is attached to the process of speculative knowledge. However, a Jnana Yogi can be promoted to Bhakti Yoga through the association of a pure devotee.
- **Dhyana and culmination:** When jnana-yoga increases in meditation on the Supersoul by different physical processes, and the mind is on Him, it is called astanga-yoga. And when one surpasses the astanga-yoga and comes to the point of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, it is called bhakti yoga, the culmination.

APPLICATION:

Question #4

Ways to practice Bhakti at home:

- Chanting, setting up an altar, preparing, offering, and honoring spiritual food, kirtan with the family, reading scriptures etc.

Quiz 3, Edifications 9-12

1. What are the characteristics of real problems?
2. What are the real problems?
3. What are the three kinds of miseries?
4. What is the original nature of the soul?
5. What is the goal of human life?
6. What is the nature of Krishna's abode?
7. How does the soul become subjected to the illusions of this material world?
8. What are the 4 yugas?
9. What are the characteristics of the 4 yugas?
10. What are the yuga dharmas of the four ages?
11. How does a devotee perceive death?
12. What is "Yoga"?
13. What are the different types of Yoga?
14. Who is the topmost yogi according to Lord Krishna?

ACTIVITY: Bhajan Sandhya (Singing Devotional Songs)

Please sing the following bhajans after the quiz. You may choose two bhajans of your choice.

Bhajans

Song Name: Jaya Radha Madhava

Author: Bhaktivinoda Thakura

(1)

jaya rādhā-mādhava kuñja-bihārī
gopī-jana-vallabha giri-vara-dhārī

(2)

yaśodā-nandana braja-jana-rañjana
yāmuna-tīra-vana-cārī

TRANSLATION

1) Kṛṣṇa is the lover of Rādhā. He displays many amorous pastimes in the groves of Vṛndāvana, He is the lover of the cowherd maidens of Vraja, and the holder of the great hill named Govardhana.

2) He is the beloved son of mother Yaśoda, the delighter of the inhabitants of Vraja, and He wanders in the forests along the banks of the River Yamuna!

Song Name: Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Doya Koro More

Author: Narottama Dāsa Thakura

(1)

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu doyā koro more
tomā binā ke doyālu jagat-saṁsāre

(2)

patita-pāvana-hetu tava avatāra
mo sama patita prabhu nā pāibe āra

(3)

hā hā prabhu nityānanda, premānanda sukhī
kṛpābalokana koro āmi boro duḥkhī

(4)

doyā koro sītā-pati adwaita gosāi
tava kṛpā-bale pāi caitanya-nitāi

(5)

gaura premamaya tanu paṇḍita gadādhara
śrīnivāsa haridāsa doyāra sāgara

(6)

hā hā swarūp, sanātana, rūpa, raghunātha
bhaṭṭa-juga, śrī-jīva hā prabhu lokanātha

(7)

doyā koro śrī-ācārya prabhu śrīnivāsa
rāmacandra-saṅga māge narottama-dāsa

TRANSLATION

- 1) My dear Lord Caitanya, please be merciful to me, because who can be more merciful than Your Lordship within these three worlds?
- 2) Your incarnation is just to reclaim the conditioned, fallen souls, but I assure You that You will not find a greater fallen soul than me. Therefore, my claim is first.
- 3) My dear Lord Nityananda, You are always joyful in spiritual bliss. Since You always appear very happy, I have come to You because I am most unhappy. If You kindly put Your glance over me, then I may also become happy.
- 4) My dear Advaita Prabhu, husband of Sita, You are so kind. Please be merciful to me. If You are kind to me, naturally Lord Caitanya and Nityananda will also be kind to me.
- 5) Gaura's love embodiment is shown by Gadadhara Pandita. Srinivasa Pandita and Haridasa Thakura are the ocean of mercy.
- 6) O Svarupa Damodara, personal secretary of Lord Caitanya, O six Gosvamis O Sri Rupa Gosvami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami, and Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami! O Lokanatha Gosvami, my beloved spiritual master! Narottama dasa also prays for your mercy.
- 7) O Srinivasa Acarya, successor to the six Gosvamis! Please be merciful to me. Narottama dasa always desires the company of Ramacandra Cakravarti.

Song Name: Radha Kṛṣṇa Prana Mora

Author: Narottama Dasa Thakura

(1)

rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa mora jugala-kiśora
jīvane maraṇe gati āro nāhi mora

(2)

kālindīra kūle keli-kadambera vana
ratana-bedīra upara bosābo du'jana

(3)

śyāma-gaurī-aṅge dibo (cūwā) candanera gandha
cāmara ḍhulābo kabe heri mukha-candra

(4)

gāthiyā mālatīr mālā dibo dohāra gale
adhare tuliyā dibo karpūra-tāmbūle

(5)

lalitā viśākhā-ādi jata sakhī-bṛnda
ājñāya koribo sebā caraṇāravinda

(6)
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-prabhuṛ dāser anudāsa
sevā abhilāṣa kore narottama-dāsa

TRANSLATION

- 1) The divine couple, Sri Sri Radha and Kṛṣṇa, is my life and soul. In life or death I have no other refuge but Them.
- 2) In a forest of small kadamba trees on the bank of the Yamuna, I will seat the divine couple on a throne made of brilliant jewels.
- 3) I will anoint Their dark and fair forms with sandalwood paste scented with cūya, and I will fan Them with a camara whisk. Oh, when will I behold Their moonlike faces?
- 4) After stringing together garlands of malati flowers I will place them around Their necks, and I will offer tambula scented with camphor to Their lotus mouths.
- 5) With the permission of all the sakhis, headed by Lalita and Visakha, I will serve the lotus feet of Radha and Kṛṣṇa.
- 6) Narottama dasa, the servant of the servant of Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu, longs for this service to the divine couple.

Quiz 3, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What are the characteristics of real problems?
 - a. 1) They are common to all 2) Nobody wants them 3) Nobody can avoid them 4) Solving which, all other symptomatic problems are resolved permanently.
2. What are the real problems?
 - a. Disease, old age, death, birth.
3. What are the three kinds of miseries?
 - a. Miseries caused by one's own mind and body (adhyatmika klesha)
 - b. Miseries caused by other living entities (adhibhautika klesha)
 - c. Miseries caused by nature (adhidaivika klesha)
4. What is the original nature of the soul?
 - a. The soul is constitutionally resident of the eternal realm, the spiritual world, subordinate to Krishna.
 - b. The Supreme Spirit is both the creator and the enjoyer, and the living entity, being the part and parcel of the Supreme Spirit, is neither the creator, nor enjoyer, but a co-operator.
5. What is the goal of human life?
 - a. To perceive the problems of birth, old age, disease and death and find out the permanent solution for them.
6. What is the nature of Krishna's abode?
 - a. The supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is Krishna's supreme abode.
7. How does the soul become subjected to the illusions of this material world?
 - a. Being a part and parcel of the Supremely Independent Krishna, every soul is endowed with minute independence, either to choose to love and serve God, or to be independent of God and struggle for so called illusory enjoyment in this material world. The souls in this material world have chosen the second option.
8. What are the 4 yugas?
 - a. Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga.
9. What are the characteristics of the 4 yugas?
 - a. Satya: Characterized by Austerity, Cleanliness, Mercy, Truthfulness
 - b. Treta: Characterized by Cleanliness, Mercy, Truthfulness
 - c. Dvapara: Characterized by Cleanliness, Truthfulness
 - d. Kali: Characterized by Truthfulness
10. What are the yuga dharmas of the four ages?
 - a. Satya: meditation on Vishnu
 - b. Treta: Vedic sacrifices

- c. Dvapara:Diety Worship
- d. Kali: Congregational chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna

11. How does a devotee perceive death?
 - a. When a devotee is face to face with death, he/she simply sees God with love and gratitude. That devotee is feeling the divine protection, the divine love of God at death; that devotee sees that death is simply the door opening to the spiritual world and so there is no fear. It is a promotion. It is like graduating. A devotee welcomes death as an opportunity to serve the Lord.
12. What is "Yoga"?
 - a. "Yoga" means union in love between the individual consciousness and the supreme consciousness.
13. What are the different types of Yoga?
 - a. Karma yoga: is a process whereby one links with God by his work. He performs his work for God, without selfish desire for personal gain. It is the art of working without entanglement. A Karma Yogi offers the results of all work to Krishna.
 - b. Jnana Yoga: is a process of elevation to spiritual consciousness and to link with Krishna through cultivation of philosophical knowledge.
 - c. Astanga Yoga: is a process of mechanical meditation practice meant to control the mind and the senses to help focus one's concentration on the Supreme. It is also known as Dhyana Yoga or Hatha Yoga.
 - d. Bhakti Yoga: is the yoga of selfless, ecstatic, love of God through transcendental devotional service.
14. Who is the topmost yogi according to Lord Krishna?
 - a. And of all yogis, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me--he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6 Text 47).

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

13. Different Religions, One God

Many times a seeker of the Truth is troubled by perplexing questions, “Common Sense says that there can be only one God, then why there are so many religions, so many scriptures and so many gods mentioned in them? And whom should I follow? Which is the perfect path back to the Kingdom of God?”

Actually, God is one. Therefore all scriptures being the word of that one God, teach the same truths in essence. But God gives His message, directly or through His messenger, according to the capacity of the individuals who receive it.

For example, in elementary school mathematics, a child is taught basic addition and subtraction such as $5 - 2 = 3$. But if he is asked, “What is $2 - 5 = ?$ ” he will say that it is not possible to subtract a bigger number from a smaller number. But when he goes to high school, he learns $2 - 5 = -3$. That is also Mathematics. When he goes to university, he learns differential calculus, integral calculus etc., which is also Mathematics. Although the knowledge he has acquired at each level comes under the subject of Mathematics, still there is a difference in the standard between elementary school Math and M.S. Math. The teacher may himself be a Ph.D. in Math, but he teaches according to the level of understanding of the student, depending on whether he is in elementary, high school or college.

So, different religions teach according to Time, Place, Circumstance and the audience. Even though the audiences were of a different quality for all these great religions, the message in essence was the same.

- God is one
- Every living being has an eternal relationship with God
- Primarily the duty of everyone is to serve God
- The goal of the human form of life is to develop Love of God
- Love of God can be achieved by chanting the holy names of God

Bible	Quran	Vedas
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10.13) Our father which art in Heaven hallowed be Thy name. (Matt 6.9)	“Call upon Allah [Benefactor] or call upon Rahman [Beneficent] by whatever name you call upon Him [it is well], for to Him belong the most beautiful names.” Quran 17.110	“In this darkened age of Kali, the only means of deliverance is to chant the holy names of Hari, holy names of Hari, holy names of Hari. There is no other way, no other way, no other way” (Brihan-Naradiya Purana)

Yet, there are apparent differences in the words of different scriptures. Why is this so?

Let us try to understand this with an example. We have a pocket dictionary and a big bulky Chamber's Dictionary. Just as small words like, “come”, “go”, “eat” etc can be found in both the pocket and the Chamber's Dictionaries, similarly basic instructions in the mode of goodness like “Do Not Steal”, “Love Everyone”, “Forgive Your enemy”, “Always Do Good to Others” may be found in all religious scriptures. And just as big words like “Cataclysm”, “Corroborate” will not be found in the pocket dictionary, but can be found only in the Chamber's dictionary, similarly instructions in the mode of pure goodness, like “Surrender to the will of the Lord out of unmotivated, uninterrupted Love”, “Think of God and serve Him 24 hrs a day”, and “Renounce all worldly pleasures and have a desire to serve God Birth after Birth without desiring even liberation”, can be found only in the most advanced scriptures. Therefore, authorized religions like Christianity, Islam etc. are like pocket dictionaries where there is a partial revelation of the truth according to the level of the audience and the scriptures like Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam are like the Chamber's dictionary which gives complete knowledge by knowing which nothing further remains to be known.

Let us examine the audience for these great scriptures of the world.

Bible	Quran	Bhagavad-Gita
"I've many things to say unto you, but your ears cannot hear them yet." (John 16.12)	"I received 2 kinds of knowledge: One of these I taught – But if I had taught them the other, it would have broken their heart" --- Prophet Mohammad [Reincarnation & Islam, Nadar Beg K. Mirza, Madras, 1927]	"I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know." (Bhagavad Gita 7.2)

Bhagavad Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, an individual of spotless character and a product of Vedic civilization at its zenith. Srimad Bhagavatam was spoken by Suta Goswami to the sages of Naimisharanya, who were ascetics and dedicated their lives for the welfare of humanity. The Vedic Texts are not sectarian Hindu scriptures, as is commonly misunderstood. The Vedic literature is meant for all mankind since time immemorial, whereas the word 'Hindu' came up only a few centuries ago. The proper term for the teachings of Vedic scriptures, as mentioned in these scriptures themselves, is 'Sanatana Dharma' - the eternal and universal religion, which is not limited by time, place and circumstance.

Sanatana Dharma does not refer to any sectarian process of religion. "Sanatana" means that which has neither beginning nor end. It is the eternal function of the eternal living entities in relationship with the eternal Supreme Lord. Sanatana Dharma refers to the eternal occupation of the living entity.

The word 'religion' conveys the idea of faith, and faith may change. One may have faith in a particular process, and he may change his faith and adopt another, but Sanatana Dharma refers to that activity which cannot be changed. For instance, liquidity cannot be taken away from water, nor can heat and light be taken away from fire. Sugar and sweetness, salt and saltiness cannot be separated. Similarly, the eternal function of the eternal living entity – which is to love and serve God – cannot be taken from the living entity. Those belonging to some sectarian faith will wrongly consider that Santana Dharma is also sectarian, but if we go deeply into the matter and consider it scientifically, we will see that Sanatana Dharma is the business of all people of the world – nay, of all the living entities of the universe.

Srila Prabhupada says, "The test of any scripture is how one is developing love of God. If you find that by following some religious principles you are developing your love of God, then it is perfect. It doesn't matter whether it is the Bible or the Qur'an or the Bhagavad gita"

DISCOVERY:

1. Why are there so many religions and so many scriptures? Explain with examples.
2. What are the similarities in the teachings of different scriptures?

UNDERSTANDING:

3. What is the meaning of Sanatana Dharma? Can Sanatana Dharma be called a "religion"?

APPLICATION:

4. What do we conclude from this discussion and how can we apply this knowledge to serve humanity at large?

Sri Namamrita

Chanting the holy name is the sum and substance of sanātana-dharma:

In this age of Kali, there are no genuine religious principles. There are only the Vaiṣṇava devotees and the Vaiṣṇava devotional scriptures. This is the sum and substance of everything.

In this age a person should not envy Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement but should chant the holy names of Hari and Kṛṣṇa, the *mahā-mantra*. That is the sum and substance of eternal religion, known as *sanātana-dharma*.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 9.362

In Kali-yuga Kṛṣṇa has incarnated as the holy name in order to deliver the sinful, who are suffering greatly:

As the Lord says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.7):

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*

“Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bhārata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.”

In the present age, Kali-yuga, people are very much sinful and are consequently suffering greatly. Therefore Kṛṣṇa has incarnated in the form of His name, as found in the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Teachings of Queen Kuntī

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share with a friend about what you like in the Bhakti Vriksha gathering, and if the friend is interested, introduce them to the group

Out of compassion for living entities, the sādhu preaches:

The symptoms of a sādhu are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.

A *sādhu*, as described above, is a devotee of the Lord. His concern, therefore, is to enlighten people in devotional service to the Lord. That is his mercy. He knows that without devotional service to the Lord, human life is spoiled. A devotee travels all over the country, from door to door, preaching, “Be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Don’t spoil your life in simply fulfilling your animal propensities. Human life is meant for self-realization, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” These are the preachings of a *sādhu*. He is not satisfied with his own liberation. He always thinks about others. He is the most compassionate personality towards all the fallen souls. One of his qualifications, therefore, is *kāruṇika*, great mercy to the fallen souls.... He is merciful because he is the well-wisher of all living entities. He is not only a well-wisher of human society, but a well-wisher of animal society as well. It is said here, *sarva-dehinām*, which indicates all living entities who have accepted a material body. Not only does the human being have a material body, but other living entities, such as cats and dogs, also have material bodies. The devotee of the Lord is merciful to everyone—the cats, dogs, trees, etc. He treats all living entities in such a way that they can ultimately get salvation from this material entanglement.

Bhāg. 3.25.21

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

13. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Many religions and scriptures:

- Different religions teach according to the time, place, circumstance and the audience.
- Example: Math taught at elementary school vs in a graduate school.

Question #2.

Similarities in teaching:

- Even though the audiences were of a different quality for all these great religions, the message in essence was the same.
- God is one
- Every living being has an eternal relationship with God
- Primarily the duty of everyone is to serve God
- The goal of the human form of life is to develop Love of God
- Love of God can be achieved by chanting the holy names of God

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3

Sanatana Dharma:

- ‘Sanatana Dharma’ - the eternal and universal religion, which is not limited by time, place and circumstance.
- Sanatana Dharma does not refer to any sectarian process of religion. “Sanatana” means that which has neither beginning nor end. It is the eternal function of the eternal living entities in relationship with the eternal Supreme Lord. Sanatana Dharma refers to the eternal occupation of the living entity.
- The word ‘religion’ conveys the idea of faith, and faith may change. One may have faith in a particular process, and he may change his faith and adopt another, but Sanatana Dharma refers to that activity which cannot be changed.

APPLICATION:

Question #4.

Application to humanity:

- the notion of sanatana-dharma as a basis for spiritual unity; Interfaith dialogue and inter-religious understanding; relationship between faith, truth and opinion can be discussed.
- Real religion, which involves re-establishing and acting in one's eternal relationship with God, is above worldly and sectarian designations
- If one finds that by following some religious principles you are developing your love of God, then it is perfect. It doesn't matter whether it is the Bible or the Qur'an or the Bhagavad gita.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

14. Faith & Reason

The purpose of the human form of life is to inquire into the Absolute truth. But how do we acquire perfect knowledge about the Absolute Truth?

There are three primary ways of acquiring knowledge.

- Knowledge through direct sense perception
- Knowledge through inference and
- Knowledge through the word of authority.

As the saying goes, "To err is human". Human beings have several defects and they can be categorized in four primary categories.

1. Imperfect senses – The five senses – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin – are limited in their perception. For example, our eyes cannot see Infrared and Ultraviolet rays. Our ears cannot hear frequencies less than 20Hz or above 20,000Hz. We are not able to smell scents which a dog can. Hence, knowledge derived from imperfect senses is also limited.

2. Tendency to be illusioned – Illusion means to accept something which is not: Maya. Due to imperfect senses, we sometimes tend to be illusioned. For example, sometimes while driving we see the illusion of a mirage. We see the sun daily, and it appears to us just like a small disc, but it is actually far, far larger than many planets.

3. Tendency to commit mistakes

4. Tendency to cheat – Sometimes, we go beyond innocent mistakes and pose ourselves as what we are not. History is full of examples of people cheating one another.

Due to these defects in human beings, a human source can not be relied upon to acquire perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Hence, the results of "sense perception" and "inference" are fallible.

Let us explore knowledge through the word of authority. We rely on authorities even in our day-to-day life. For instance there are doctors for every part of our body and some for parts we do not even know about. To gain knowledge, we go to teachers in schools and colleges. We place our lives in the hands of a total stranger, be that a doctor, an auto-mechanic or a bus-driver. We are already accepting so many authorities in different fields. Why?

- Because we have no choice
- It saves time and inconvenience
- It is safe.

However, we need to be careful in choosing the authority in which we put faith. We should not put blind faith in an authority. For example, while choosing a doctor, we make sure that they have a degree in the medical field from a recognized institution. It is practical to put faith in such a doctor. It is not blind faith. Similarly, even in spiritual life, we need to put practical faith in the authority from whom we receive knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

There are 2 systems of gaining knowledge – inductive and deductive. Inductive knowledge is to try to know things by the imperfect mind and intelligence. Deductive knowledge is shabda pramana, knowledge through the word of authority. We take so much knowledge from our mother. For example, if we want to know who our father is, we approach the mother. If the mother says, "Here is your father," we accept it. Inductive knowledge would be to perform a DNA test on every male, and even then we may not be able to come to a proper conclusion. Similarly, if we want to know something beyond our experience, beyond our experimental knowledge, beyond the activities of the senses, then we accept the authority of the Vedas. Another name for the Vedas is sruti. Sruti refers to that knowledge which is acquired by hearing. Sruti or Vedas are considered to be like a mother. The Vedas do not require us to have blind faith in their teachings about the Absolute truth. By applying the teachings of the Vedas in our lives, the Absolute Truth is clearly revealed to us.

Vedic scriptures are the sound representation of God - Sruti. It is received by hearing from authority. Vedas are the original scriptures. The knowledge of the Vedas has been coming down the ages since

the dawn of creation. In Sanskrit, 'Veda' means "knowledge". It is apaurusheya, that is, any ordinary human being subject to the four defects does not give it. Vedic Scripture is compared to an instruction manual, which has definite guidelines as to how we should conduct ourselves. The Bhagavad Gita describes the essence of the Vedas.

The Vedas were revealed to Brahma at the dawn of creation. They came down as word of mouth in the form of sound vibrations from one guru to the next down the line. 5000 years ago, the Vedas were put down in writing by Vyasadev keeping in mind the short memory of people in the age of Kali yuga. This knowledge has come down in a disciplic succession from Krishna to Brahma to Narada to Vyasa to Madhvacarya to..... Chaitanya Mahaprabhu....to Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON. Thus, through the unbroken disciplic succession, the original Vedic knowledge is available to us even today. The proper way of studying the Vedas is mentioned in the Vedas themselves.

'The mantra that is not received in disciplic succession does not produce results. Therefore in the Age of Kali there are four such disciplic successions. They are the Sri, Brahma, Rudra and Sanaka sampradayas. In the Age of Kali, these four disciplic lines will appear out of Purusottama' - (Padma Purana quoted in Prameya-ratnavali)

It is important to accept the Vedic knowledge through a disciplic succession, in order to avoid gross mis-interpretation of the Vedas. No one can become a doctor simply by studying medical books, rather he needs to study and practice under an expert doctor, before being awarded a medical degree. Similarly, without studying and practicing the Vedas under a bonafide Guru from a disciplic succession starting from the Lord Himself, one cannot understand the Vedic scriptures. However, in order to apply the principles given in the scripture appropriately, we need to take guidance from a bonafide Guru/spiritual master.

Qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master are

- He comes in a proper "disciplic succession"
- He must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by application and deliberation
- Be fixed in devotional service
- Has controlled senses
- Be an "acharya" – one who teaches by personal example

Discovery:

1. What are the four defects in human beings?
2. What are the different ways of acquiring knowledge?
3. What is the meaning of "Veda"? What are the Vedas compared to?

Understanding:

4. Which is the most effective way to acquire knowledge of absolute truth? Why do we rely on authorities in our daily lives?
5. What is the importance of disciplic succession in receiving Vedic knowledge?

Application:

6. We see that sometimes there are many authorities in the spiritual field. How can we choose the authority to put our faith in?

Distribution of transcendental literature benefits human society:

There are so many unwanted literatures full of materialistic ideas of sense gratification.... The people in general want to read (that is a natural instinct), but because their minds are polluted they want such literatures. Under the circumstances, transcendental literature like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will not only diminish the activities of the corrupt mind of the people in general, but also it will supply food for their hankering after reading some interesting literature. In the beginning they may not like it because one suffering from jaundice is reluctant to take sugar candy, but we should know that sugar candy is the only remedy for jaundice. Similarly, let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavaram*, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification. When men have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease.

Bhāg. 1.5.11

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute 1 book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger

The preacher is recognized by Kṛṣṇa:

If one gives the conditioned souls a chance to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, all his activities are approved by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is extremely pleased.... Following the examples of the previous *ācāryas*, all the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should try to benefit the conditioned souls by inducing them to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and giving them all facilities to do so.... By such activities, a preacher or anyone who endeavors to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness is recognized by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As the Lord Himself confirms in *Bhagavad-gītā*: ... “For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.”

Bhāg. 6.4.44

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

14. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Four defects:

- **Imperfect senses** – The five senses – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin – are limited in their perception. Hence, knowledge derived from imperfect senses is also limited.
- **Tendency to be illusioned** – Illusion means to accept something which is not: Maya.
- **Tendency to commit mistakes**
- **Tendency to cheat** – we go beyond innocent mistakes and pose ourselves as what we are not. History is full of examples of people cheating one another.

Question #2.

Ways of acquiring knowledge:

- Knowledge through direct sense perception,
- Knowledge through inference, and
- Knowledge through the word of authority.

Question #3.

Veda:

- Vedic scriptures are the sound representation of God - Sruti.
- It is received by hearing from authority.
- The knowledge of the Vedas has been coming down the ages since the dawn of creation.
- In Sanskrit, 'Veda' means "knowledge". It is *apaurusheya*, that is, any ordinary human being subject to the four defects does not give it.
- Vedic Scripture is compared to an instruction manual, which has definite guidelines as to how we should conduct ourselves. The Bhagavad Gita describes the essence of the Vedas.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #4.

Effective way to acquire knowledge, reason to go to authorities:

- The results of "sense perception" and "inference" are fallible.
- Shruti; Vedas are not subject to the four defects of ordinary human beings.
- We go to authorities in our daily lives because we have no choice, it saves time and inconvenience, and it is safe.

Question #5.

Necessity of disciplic succession:

- *Disciplic succession* is needed in order to avoid gross mis-interpretation of the Vedas. No one can become a doctor simply by studying medical books, rather he needs to study and practice under an expert doctor, before being awarded a medical degree. Similarly, without studying and practicing the Vedas under a bonafide Guru from a disciplic succession starting from the Lord Himself, one cannot understand the Vedic scriptures.

APPLICATION:

Question #6.

Choosing authority:

- Qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master are

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

15. The Hare Krishna Mahamantra

The transcendental vibration established by the chanting of Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness.

As living souls, we are all originally Krishna Conscious entities, but due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now adulterated by the material atmosphere.

The material atmosphere, in which we are living, is called maya or illusion. Maya means, “that which is not.” And what is this illusion? The illusion is that we are all trying to be lords of material nature, while actually we are under the grip of her stringent laws. When a servant artificially tries to imitate the all-powerful master, he is said to be in illusion.

We are trying to exploit the resources of material nature, but actually we are becoming more and more entangled in her complexities. Therefore, although we are engaged in a hard struggle to conquer nature, we are ever dependent on her. This illusory struggle against material nature can be stopped at once by revival of our Krishna Consciousness.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare is the transcendental process for reviving this original, pure consciousness. By chanting this transcendental vibration, we can cleanse away all misgivings within our hearts. The basic principle of all such misgivings is the false consciousness that I am the lord of all I survey.

Krishna Consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. This consciousness is the original, natural energy of the living entity. When we hear this transcendental vibration, this consciousness is revived.

This simplest method of meditation is recommended for this age. By practical experience also, one can perceive that by chanting this maha- mantra, or the Great chanting of deliverance, one can at once feel a transcendental ecstasy coming through from the spiritual stratum.

As such this chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord, so that immediate effects can be achieved. As far as possible, chanting from the lips of non-devotees should be avoided. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects.

The word Hara is a form of addressing the energy of the Lord, and the words Krishna and Rama are forms of addressing the Lord Himself.

The material energy called maya, is also one of the multi-energies of the Lord; and we are also the energy, the marginal energy of the Lord.

The living entities are superior to material energy. When the superior energy is in contact with inferior energy, an incompatible situation arises; but when the superior marginal energy is in contact with the superior energy, Hara, it is established in its happy, normal condition.

These three words, namely, Hara, Krishna and Rama, are the transcendental seeds of the Mahamantra. The chanting is the spiritual call for the Lord and His energy, to give protection to the conditioned soul. This chanting is like the genuine cry of a child for its mother’s presence.

Mother Hara helps the devotee achieve the supreme father’s grace and the Lord reveals Himself to a devotee who chants this mantra sincerely.

No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the mahamantra:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Discovery:

1. What does the Hare Krishna mantra do to our consciousness?
2. Why is our consciousness adulterated now? What do we think wrongly in this consciousness?

Understanding:

3. Explain the meaning of the mahamantra.
4. What makes the living entity happy? Why does the mahamantra make one happy?
5. Why is it important for us to chant this mahamantra?

Application:

6. Share your realization of how you feel when you chant the Mahamantra during the kirtan or japa.

Recommendation for this Age:

In this age, Kali-yuga, one cannot execute any process of self-realization or perfection of life other than kirtana. Kirtana is essential in this age.

In all Vedic literatures it is confirmed that one must meditate on the Supreme Absolute Truth, Vishnu, not on anything else. But there are different processes of meditation recommended for different ages. The process of mystic yogic meditation was possible in Satya-yuga, when men lived for many thousands of years. Now people will not believe this, but in a previous age there were people who lived for one hundred thousand years. That age was called Satya-yuga and the meditation of mystic yoga was possible at that time. In that age the great yogi Valmiki Muni meditated for sixty thousand years. So that is a long-term process, which is not possible to execute in this age. If one wishes to conduct a farce, that is another matter. But if one actually wants to practice such meditation, it takes an extremely long time to perfect such. In the next age, Treta-yuga, the process of realization was to perform the various ritualistic sacrifices recommended in the Vedas. In the next age, Dvapara-yuga, the process was temple worship. In this present age, the same result can be achieved by the process of hari-kirtana or glorification of Hari, i.e. Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Science of Self-Realization

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends

The Lord has inaugurated the Hare Krishna movement for the benefit of human society

Whenever the principles of religion deteriorate and the principles of irreligion increase, the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead Sri Hari, appears by His own will. In the present age, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has appeared as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to inaugurate the Hare Krishna movement. At the present time, in Kali-yuga, people are extremely sinful and bad.... They have no idea of spiritual life and are misusing the benefits of the human form to live like cats and dogs. Under these circumstances Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has inaugurated the Hare Krishna movement, which is not different from Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If one associates with this movement, he directly associates with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. People should take advantage...and, thus, gain relief from all the problems created in this age of Kali.

Srimad Bhagvatam 9.24.56

The Lord sends His representatives to remove the miseries of life. Material existence is full of undesirables. Things we do not want are forced upon us by some superior energy, and we do not see that these undesirables are under the grip of the three modes of material nature.... undesirable happenings in life cannot be checked by any number of plans. Such miseries can be removed only by the mercy of the Lord, who sends His bona fide representatives to enlighten human beings and thus save them from all calamities.

Srimad Bhagvatam 1.14.11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

15. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Effect on consciousness:

- Chanting the Hare Krishna mantra is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness.

Question #2.

Adulteration of consciousness:

- Due to our association with matter from time immemorial, our consciousness is now adulterated by the material atmosphere.
- In this consciousness, we are under the illusion that we are all trying to be lords of material nature.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Meaning of the mahamantra:

- This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter to the divine spiritual energy and the source of all energy.
- **HARE** is the divine feminine energy which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.
- **KRISHNA** is the all attractive source of beauty, power and truth.
- **RAMA** is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

Question #4.

Happiness, living entity, and mahamantra:

- When the living entity (superior energy) is in contact with inferior energy, an incompatible situation arises; but when the superior marginal energy is in contact with the superior energy, Hara, it is established in its happy, normal condition.

Question #5.

Need for chanting:

- No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the mahamantra.

APPLICATION:

Question #6.

Feeling while performing japa:

- Devotees can share individual realizations while performing japa.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

16. Does the Divine Have a Form?

Whether the Divine has a personal form or is impersonal has been a subject of raging controversy throughout the ages. Within the theistic traditions of India and the world, there are varying opinions on the subject. For many, it's not too difficult to understand the presence of an energy and presence of a Higher Power in nature and even in one's self. There is a school of thought within Hinduism that the Supreme is without form or qualities. A person pursuing liberation with this notion of the Divine, is supposed to, upon death, leave this material body behind and become one with the Supreme by merging into the impersonal energy.

However, according to the Bhagavad Gita, the soul is eternal, active by nature, and can never be destroyed. The soul can merge into the Supreme, but can't remain in that inactive state perpetually. The soul needs activity and interaction with others and it's especially hankering for a loving relationship with the Divine. In the fourth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explains that He reciprocates with individuals according to the way they approach Him. The goal of life described by many spiritual traditions is to develop a loving relationship with the Supreme. Love has to be reciprocal which means, love can only exist between two or more individual sentient beings. We can't love something inanimate simply because an object can't love us back. We like to make the claim "I love my car or I love my hair..." but that's not love because our car or hair doesn't love us and it really can't love us in reality. Even though it may sound attractive or may be easier to understand that the Supreme Divine is a formless energy, it's not possible to exchange love with formless energy.

We all have a personal form. Our neighbors, our friends, and even the butterfly has a personal form. In fact, every living entity has a form. Krishna says in the 10th chapter of the Gita that "Everything emanates from Me" (BG 10.8). When all of us have forms, then how can God, the source of everything and one from whom all of us have originated, be impersonal? Our father has a personal form, his father had a personal form, his father also had a personal form, then how can the supreme father not have a personal form?

Some might offer the argument that imposing a personality upon the supreme is limiting Him. But, let us consider this. By definition, God is perfect and complete. Being the complete whole, He must contain everything both within and beyond our experience, otherwise He cannot be complete. Therefore, to be perfect and complete, God must be both personal and impersonal. When we all have personal forms, why should someone consider that the Absolute truth in the ultimate sense does not have a form? It is very difficult for a person who is too materially affected to understand the personal nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Generally, people who are too attached to the bodily conception of life cannot understand that there is a transcendental body which is 'sac-cit-ananda', imperishable, full of knowledge and eternally blissful.

In the materialistic concept, the body is perishable, full of ignorance and completely miserable. Therefore, people in general keep this same bodily idea in mind when they are informed of the personal form of the Divine. Consequently they feel that the supreme cannot be personal. And because they are too materially absorbed, the conception of retaining the personality after liberation from matter frightens them. When they are informed that spiritual life is also individual and personal, they become afraid of becoming persons again, and so they naturally prefer a kind of merging into the impersonal void to achieve peace.

The fact that the Supreme Divine has a personal form whose bodily effulgence is the impersonal brahmajyoti can be well understood from several scriptural statements.

According to the Shrimad Bhagavatam (1.2.11), the Absolute Truth exists in three aspects: Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan:

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam yaj jnanam advayam
brahmeti paramatmeti bhagavan iti shabdyate

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

These three divine aspects can be compared to the sun, which also has three different aspects, namely the sunshine, the sun’s form and the sun planet itself.

BRAHMAN is the impersonal brahmajyoti which is actually the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It can be compared to the sunshine or the energy of the sun. In trying to understand the sun, the ordinary students are satisfied by simply understanding the sunshine -- its universal pervasiveness and the glaring effulgence of its impersonal nature. Such students can be compared to the jnanis or the mental speculators who can realize only this Brahman feature of the Absolute Truth.

PARAMATMA is the all-pervading localized aspect of the Absolute Truth. He is the four-handed form of Vishnu, present in every atom as well as in the hearts of all living beings.

The students who have advanced further in the study of the sun can know the sun disc. They can be compared to the yogis or the meditators who perceive this Paramatma feature of the Absolute Truth.

BHAGAVAN is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth and is the last word in transcendence. The students who can **enter into the sun planet** are compared to the bhaktas or the devotees who realize the personal features of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

This Bhagavan aspect is the all-glorious, all-beautiful threefold bending form of Shri Krishna holding a flute in His hands. Realization of this Bhagavan feature automatically includes the realization of the Brahman and Paramatma features just as a person who has understood the sun planet automatically comes to know that the sun is the source of both the sunshine and sun disc.

The Vedic literatures thus clearly declare that the Supreme Absolute Truth has a form. But they also explain that His form is certainly not like ours-- made of flesh, bone and blood. Our body is temporary, and is the cause of our ignorance and misery whereas Krishna’s body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss.

Thus the form of Krishna is completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception. Nevertheless He has a form. To help us understand how His form is completely different from ours, Krishna performed a wonderful pastime which is described in the tenth canto of Shrimad Bhagavatam. Once, when Krishna was still a child, His mother, Yashodamai, looked into His mouth to see if He has eaten mud. What would one expect to see in the mouth of an ordinary mortal? The oral cavity with teeth, tongue and palate – nothing worth seeing. Yet when she looked into the mouth of Krishna, she saw the entire universe in His mouth – all the directions, the mountains, the islands, oceans, seas, planets, air, fire, moon and stars. In this universe she also saw herself - looking into Krishna’s mouth. This pastime illustrates that although Krishna appeared to be just like an ordinary child standing in front of His mother, He simultaneously contained the entire universe within Himself.

This conclusion that God has a personal form, is the most confidential knowledge taught by the Vedas, and it was revealed to the world by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who thus opened the lid of the honey bottle of love of Krishna and made it available for anyone and everyone throughout the world to drink and relish. To make the subject free from all ambiguity, he would always refer to the Absolute Truth Krishna, not just as God but as “The Supreme Personality of Godhead.” This is the English equivalent of the Sanskrit word Bhagavan, which refers to the ultimate aspect of the Absolute Truth. When Krishna is addressed as, “The Supreme Personality of Godhead”, it is clearly understood that He has a form and a personality, and the word Godhead signifies that He is the Supreme God.

DISCOVERY:

1. What are the different phases of understanding God? Explain with examples.

2. Does God have form? What is the nature of His form? Explain on the basis of scripture (See addendum on next page)

UNDERSTANDING:

3. How can we say that God has a personal form? Does He have an impersonal nature?
4. Why do some people think that God cannot have a personal form?

APPLICATION:

5. How does the understanding of God having personal features affect our consciousness and lifestyle?

ADDENDUM

Scriptural Quotes: God is a Personal Being

Generally people have a notion that the Absolute Truth is some power or some form of energy, but the actual fact is that God is a personal being just like each one of us is a personal being. He is sentient and He reciprocates love with His unlimited subordinates, the living entities, in His own abode, known variously as the kingdom of God or the spiritual world. All religions refer to God as a personal being and not as a power or a void. For example, In the Bible, Ezekiel (1.26) describes God as having “the semblance of a human form.”

In Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, it is stated that God appeared before Abraham in a humanlike form, although the form is not elaborately described. There are also many other references to the form of God, such as, “under His feet” (Exodus 24:10), “the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 38:7), “the ears of the Lord” (Numbers 11:1), “inscribed with finger of God” (Exodus 31:18) In the Koran too, Allah’s face (‘Wajh’ 55.26-27), Allah’s eyes (‘Aynun’ 11.37), etc. are clearly mentioned.

How can an impersonal God have feet, finger, hand, eyes, ears etc? The Vedic literatures, which predate the Bible as well as the Koran and which were written in a highly advanced spiritual culture, also declare God to have a personal form, but they go well beyond that; they specifically reveal His form, His features, His pastimes and His personality. Of course the attributes of God are infinite, and words can only hint at His glory.

A few quotes from the Vedic scriptures proving the form of God are given below:

om shri krishnaya namah om sac cid ananda rupaya

“I invoke Lord Krishna, who possesses a form that is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss.”

(Gopal Tapani Upanishad 1.1, 1.2)

isvarah paramah krishnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha
anadir adir govindah sarva-karana-karanam

(Brahma Samhita 1)

“Krishna, (God) is the supreme controller. He has a form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He is the prime cause of all causes”. Here the word vigraha, which means ‘form’, is explicitly used.

The Vedic literatures also give vivid descriptions of the form of the Lord. For example,

alola-candraka-lasad-vanamalya-vamshi
ratnangadam pranaya-keli-kala-vilasam
shyamam tri-bhanga-lalitam niyata-prakasham
govindam adi-purusham tam aham bhajami

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, round whose neck is swinging a garland of flowers beautified with moon-locket, whose two hands are adorned with the flute and jeweled ornaments, who always revels in pastimes of love and whose graceful threefold-bending form of Shyamasundara is eternally manifest.” There are many other similar descriptions about the Lord.

The jnanis or monists often cite verses from the Upanishads to support the impersonal viewpoint. But in Ishopanishad we find :

hiranmayena patrena satyasyapihitam mukham
tat tvam pushann apavrunu satya dharmaya dhrishtaye

(Ishopanishad, Text 15)

“O my Lord, sustainer of all that lives, Your real face is covered by Your dazzling effulgence. Kindly remove that covering and exhibit Yourself to Your pure devotee.”

That the brahmajyoti is Krishna’s effulgence is confirmed in the Bhagavad-Gita (14.27) as well as the Brahma-samhita (5.40) :

yasya prabha-prabhavato jagad anda koti
kotish vashesha vasudhadi vibhuti-bhinna
tad brahma nishkalam anantam ashesha
govindam adi-purusham tam aham bhajami

“In the millions and millions of universes there are innumerable planets, and each and every one of them is different from the others by its cosmic constitution. All of these planets are situated in a corner of the brahmajyoti. This brahmajyoti is but the personal rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, whom I worship.” This mantra from the Brahma-samhita is spoken from the platform of factual realization of the Absolute Truth by the first created living being, Lord Brahma.

Sri Namamrita

One should not trust his mind, which is so fickle that it can give way to enemies at any moment. The mind is always accompanied by six enemies—namely, *kāma*, *krodha*, *mada*, *moha*, *mātsarya* and *bhaya*—that is, lust, anger, intoxication, illusion, envy and fear. Although the mind may be merged in spiritual consciousness, one should always be very careful in dealing with it, just as one is careful in dealing with a snake. One should never think that his mind is trained and that he can do whatever he likes. One interested in spiritual life should always engage his mind in the service of the Lord so that the enemies of the mind, who always accompany the mind, will be subdued. If the mind is not engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness at every moment, there is a chance that it will give way to its enemies. In this way we become victims of the mind.

Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra engages the mind at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa constantly; thus the mind's enemies do not have a chance to strike.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 11.10

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness.

The secret of success is unknown to people in general, and therefore Śrīla Vyāsadeva, being compassionate toward the poor souls in this material world, especially in this age of Kali, has given us the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.... For Vaiṣṇavas who are somewhat advanced, or who are fully aware of the glories and potencies of the Lord, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a very beloved Vedic literature. After all, we have to change this body (*tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*). If we do not care about *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we do not know what the next body will be. But if one adheres to these two literatures—*Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—one is sure to obtain the association of Kṛṣṇa in the next life. Therefore, distribution of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all over the world is a great welfare activity for theologians, philosophers, transcendentalists and yogīs as well as for people in general.

Bhāg. 10.12.7–11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

16. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Different Phases of Understanding:

- **BRAHMAN** is the impersonal brahmajyoti which is actually the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- **PARAMATMA** is the all-pervading localized aspect of the Absolute Truth. He is the fourhanded form of Vishnu, present in every atom as well as in the hearts of all living beings.
- **BHAGAVAN** is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth and is the last word in transcendence. This Bhagavan aspect is the all-glorious, all-beautiful threefold bending form of Shri Krishna holding a flute in His hands. Realization of this Bhagavan feature automatically includes the realization of the Brahman and Paramatma; **Example:** Sunshine, sun disk, and sun planet.

Question #2.

Form of God:

- Krishna's form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Basis supporting the form of God:

- Direct meaning from vedic scriptures.
- Logical arguments:
 - "Everything emanates from Me" (BG 10.8). When all of us have forms, then how can God, the source of everything and one from whom all of us have originated, be impersonal?
 - By definition, God is perfect and complete. Being the complete whole, He must contain everything both within and beyond our experience, otherwise He cannot be complete. Therefore, to be perfect and complete, God must be both personal and impersonal.
- Yes, the impersonal brahmajyoti is the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Question #4.

People's logic for why God cannot have a personal form:

- People may feel that imposing a personality upon the supreme is limiting Him.
- People who are too attached to the bodily conception of life cannot understand that there is a transcendental body which is 'sac-cit-ananda', imperishable, full of knowledge and eternally blissful.
- For some, the conception of retaining personality after liberation from matter frightens them.

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Activities and Consciousness with the understanding on personality of God:

- Discuss activities geared towards the Personality of Godhead in daily lives.

Quiz 4, Edifications 13-16

1. What are the reasons for many world religions?
2. What are the similarities in the teachings of different scriptures?
3. What is the meaning of Sanatana Dharma?
4. What are the four defects in human beings?
5. What are the different ways of acquiring knowledge?
6. What is the meaning of “Veda”?
7. Which is the most effective way to acquire knowledge of absolute truth?
8. What are the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?
9. Explain the meaning of the mahamantra.
10. What makes the living entity happy?
11. What is the need for chanting the mahamantra?
12. What is the effect of the mahamantra on our consciousness?
13. What are the different phases of understanding God?
14. What is the nature of God's form?
15. How can we say that God has a personal form?
16. Does God have a personal and impersonal form?

ACTIVITY: KRISHNA PASTIME NIGHT I

Share the pastime of Putana from the Krishna Book.

Quiz 4, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What are the reasons for many world religions?

Different religions teach according to Time, Place, Circumstance and the audience. They are all variations from the eternal Vaishnava religion.

2. What are the similarities in the teachings of different scriptures?

► Even though the audiences were of different quality for all these great religions, the message in essence was the same.

► God is one

► Every living being has an eternal relationship with God

► Primarily the duty of everyone is to serve God

► The goal of the human form of life is to develop Love of God

► Love of God can be achieved by chanting the holy names of God

3. What is the meaning of Sanatana Dharma?

The eternal and universal religion, which is not limited by time, place and circumstance.

4. What are the four defects in human beings?

► Imperfect senses – The five senses – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin – are limited in their perception. Hence, knowledge derived from imperfect senses is also limited.

► Tendency to be illusioned – Illusion means to accept something which is not: Maya.

► Tendency to commit mistakes

► Tendency to cheat – we go beyond innocent mistakes and pose ourselves as what we are not. History is full of examples of people cheating one another.

5. What are the different ways of acquiring knowledge?

► Knowledge through direct sense perception,

► Knowledge through inference, and

► Knowledge through the word of authority.

6. What is the meaning of “Veda”?

► Vedic scriptures are the sound representation of God - Sruti.

► It is received by hearing from authority.

► The knowledge of the Vedas has been coming down the ages since the dawn of creation.

► In Sanskrit, ‘Veda’ means “knowledge”. It is apaurusheya, that is, any ordinary human being subject to the four defects does not give it.

► Vedic Scripture is compared to an instruction manual, which has definite guidelines as to how we should conduct ourselves. The Bhagavad Gita describes the essence of the Vedas.

7. Which is the most effective way to acquire knowledge of absolute truth?

Shruti; Vedas are not subject to the four defects of ordinary human being.

8. Qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?

► He comes in proper “disciplic succession”

► He must have realized the conclusion of the scriptures by application and deliberation

► Be fixed in devotional service

► Have controlled senses

► Be an “acharya” – one who teaches by personal example.

9. Explain the meaning of the mahamantra.

► This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter to the divine spiritual energy and the source of all energy.

► HARE is the divine feminine energy which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

► KRISHNA is the all attractive source of beauty, power and truth.

► RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

10. What makes the living entity happy?

When the living entity (superior energy) is in contact with inferior energy, an incompatible situation arises; but when the superior marginal energy is in contact with the superior energy, Hara, it is established in its happy, normal condition.

11. What is the need for chanting the mahamantra?

No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the mahamantra.

12. What is the effect of mahamantra on our consciousness?

Chanting the Hare Krishna mantra is the sublime method for reviving our transcendental consciousness..

13. What are the different phases of understanding God?

► BRAHMAN is the impersonal brahmajyoti which is actually the effulgence emanating from the transcendental body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

► PARAMATMA is the all-pervading localized aspect of the Absolute Truth. He is the fourhanded form of Vishnu, present in every atom as well as in the hearts of all living beings.

► BHAGAVAN is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth and is the last word in transcendence. This Bhagavan aspect is the all-glorious, all-beautiful threefold bending form of Shri Krishna holding a flute in His hands. Realization of this Bhagavan feature automatically includes the realization of the Brahman and Paramatma; Example: Sunshine, sun disk, and sun planet.

14. What is the nature of God's form?

Krishna's form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, completely transcendental, beyond the limits of sense perception.

15. How can we say that God has a personal form?

Direct meaning from Vedic scriptures and logical arguments.

16. Does God have a personal and impersonal form?

Yes.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

17. Deity or Idol

The following interview with freelance reporter Sandy Nixon took place in July 1975, in Srila Prabhupāda's quarters at the Krishna center in Philadelphia, from the book, The Science of Self Realization.

Ms. Nixon: One of the most difficult aspects of Krishna Consciousness for an outsider to accept is the Deity in the temple – how it represents Krishna. Could you talk a little about that?

Srila prabhupada: Yes, at the present moment because you have not been trained to see Krishna, He kindly appears before you so you can see Him. You can see wood and stone, but you cannot see what is spiritual. Suppose your father is in the hospital, and he dies, you are crying by his bed side, “Now my father is gone!”... But why do you say he is gone? What is the thing which is gone?

Ms Nixon: Well, his spirit is gone.

Srila Prabhupada : So you cannot see spirit and God is the supreme spirit. Actually He is everything – spirit and matter- but you cannot see Him in his spiritual identity. Therefore to show kindness to you, He appears out of His unbounded mercy in the form of a wooden or stone Deity, so that you can see Him. Vedic scriptures prescribe worship of the deity as a means to develop a relationship with the God as a person. While it is true that God is spirit, it is also true that, as spirit, God permeates all matter, including marble and brass. God cannot be separated from His creation, and so to worship His form, even if constructed of physical materials, is certainly to worship Him. Scriptures mention a variety of materials that may be used to create the deity, including earth, sand, and the mind.

Ms Nixon : Thank you very much.

Srila Prabhupada: Hare Krishna!

The difference between an idol and Deity is that God authorizes the worship of Deities. For example, if you put mail into an authorized mailbox it will be delivered to the address written on the envelope. But if you drop that mail into some box other than an authorized mailbox, it will not be delivered. Similarly, if you create some form, call it God, and worship it, all according to your own mental concoction, there will be no benefit and your act will be condemned by God. If however, you create a form according to the actual description of God's form given in the revealed scriptures, and if you worship that form according to the rules and regulations given by God in the scriptures, you will achieve excellent results. The result of that worship is love for God.

There are 3 main differences between Idol worship and Deity worship:

1. An idol is made from an imaginary form of God, whereas a Deity is made from the authorized description of the Lord from the scriptures
2. During the Deity installation, a pure devotee invites the Lord in the Deity form, called as Prana Pratistha ceremony
3. A Deity is worshipped with love and devotion by the devotees.

Discovery:

1. What happens when a person dies?
2. What is the nature of God?

Understanding:

3. Explain with an example why we cannot see Krishna with our material eyes.
4. What is the difference between Deity Worship and Idol Worship? Explain with an example.

Application:

5. What Deity pictures do you worship at home? How do you serve Them?

Reference from other scriptures:

Exodus 37

1 And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it:

2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

3 And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it.

4 And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold.

5 And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

6 And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat.

8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

9 And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims.

Exodus chapters 25 to 27 provide the instructions that God gave the Israelites for construction of the Ark of the Covenant, so that he could dwell among them (Exodus 25:8). Thus it appears that the principal purpose of the Ark was to provide a mercy seat on which God could be carried, as the Israelites moved about in the desert. It also held the tablets on which were carved the Ten Commandments.

The Ark was to be an elaborate structure, made of the finest materials, including gems, gold, silver and rare woods and cloths. Chapter 35 explains how Moses received from the wandering Israelites everything that was needed as it was brought to him.

Exodus chapters 36 to 39 narrate how Moses made the Ark exactly to the specifications that God had provided.

Sri Namamrita

A devotee engaged in chanting the holy name of the Lord should practice forbearance like that of a tree. Even if rebuked or chastised, he should not say anything to others to retaliate. For even if one cuts a tree, it never protests, nor even if it is drying up and dying does it ask anyone for water.

This practice of forbearance (tṛṇād api sunīcena) is very difficult, but when one actually engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the quality of forbearance automatically develops. A person advanced in spiritual consciousness through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra need not practice to develop it separately, for a devotee develops all good qualities simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 17.27–28

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Cook, offer and distribute prasadam to your friends

My dear Arjuna, one who is engaged in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly to every living entity, certainly comes to Me.

A devotee of Kṛṣṇa is friendly to everyone. Therefore it is said here that he has no enemy. How is this? A devotee situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows that only devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can relieve a person from all the problems of life. He has personal experience of this, and therefore he wants to introduce this system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, into human society. There are many examples in history of devotees of the Lord risking their lives for the spreading of God consciousness. The favorite example is Lord Jesus Christ. He was crucified by the nondevotees, but He sacrificed His life for spreading God consciousness.... Similarly, in India also there are many examples, such as Ṭhākura Haridāsa. Why such risk? Because they wanted to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is difficult. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person knows that if a man is suffering, it is due to his forgetfulness of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the highest benefit one can render to human society is relieving one's neighbor from all material problems. In such a way, a pure devotee is engaged in the service of the Lord.

Bg. 11.55

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

17. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

What happens when a person dies:

- The soul leaves the body and accepts another body.

Question #2.

Nature of God:

- God is the supreme spirit (sat, cit, ananda). Actually He is everything – spirit and matter- but you cannot see Him in his spiritual identity.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Krishna and material eyes:

- One cannot see spirit with material eyes and God is the supreme spirit.

Question #4.

Deity vs idol:

- An idol is made from an imaginary form of God, whereas a Deity is made from the authorized description of the Lord from the scriptures
- During the Deity installation, a pure devotee invites the Lord in the Deity form, called as Prana Pratistha ceremony
- A Deity is worshipped with love and devotion by the devotees..

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Pictures at home:

- Discuss pictures at one's home altar and how they are served.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

18. Supersoul – The Unseen Friend

Have you ever wondered how sometimes the greatest discoveries happen in the flash of a moment? How did Archimedes arrive at his "Eureka!!" moment? How did Newton discover the law of gravitation when an apple fell from the tree? How do birds get their ability to fly and man to walk?

According to Vedanta [summative Vedic teachings], Krishna expands and accompanies each and every living entity in order to guide his/her activities, as the Supersoul. This is seen in the form of inspiration or a sudden flash of insight experienced by scientists at the time of discovery, and by poets and artists in different circumstances.

The Katha Upanishad explains that those who are living in the tree of the body are just like two birds. One bird is the localized aspect of Kṛṣṇa known as the Supersoul or Paramātmā, and the other bird is the living entity. One bird on the tree of the body is eating the fruits, and the other bird is simply witnessing.

The living entity is eating the fruits of this material manifestation. Sometimes he eats the fruit of happiness, and sometimes he eats the fruit of distress. But the other bird, the Supersoul, is not interested in eating the fruit of distress or happiness because He is self-satisfied.

The function of the other bird is explained in the Bhagavad Gita.

sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo / mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca
vedaīś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo / vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

"I am seated in everyone's heart. From Me comes remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness." (BG 15.15)

Krishna is situated as the Supersoul in everyone's heart, and it is from Him that all inspiration and activities are initiated. The living entity forgets everything of his past life, but he has to act according to the direction of the Supersoul, who is a witness to all his work. Therefore he begins his work according to his past deeds. Required knowledge is supplied to him, remembrance is given to him, and he also forgets, about his past life. Thus, the Supreme Personality is not only all-pervading; He is also localized in every individual heart. He awards the different fruitive results, and inspiration to the living entity.

The living entity forgets as soon as he quits his present body, but the Supersoul gives him the intelligence to renew his work where he ended in his last life. A living entity gets guidance from the Supersoul to enjoy (or suffer) the varieties of desires in this world. At the same time, the living entity also receives the opportunity from the Supersoul, to inquire into and understand the spiritual aspects of life. If one is serious to understand spiritual knowledge, then Krishna as the supersoul gives the required intelligence from within.

When a child desires to go to a theme park, the father accompanies the child to guide and facilitate the child's enjoyment. The father places the child on different rides, and takes care of child's safety. However, when the child feels tired and wants to go home, the father happily takes the child back home. Similarly, all living beings are spirit souls belonging to the spiritual world, where they are eternally enjoying with the Supreme Soul, Krishna. When a particular spirit soul wants to enjoy separately from Him, Krishna accompanies the soul to the theme park of material world in His Supersoul feature. Residing in the heart of the living entity, Krishna as the Supersoul, guides the living entity in the different theme park rides in each species of life. The Supersoul is a witness to all the activities, Karma and desires of the living entity in different species of life. He reminds the living entity of the various desires in previous lives and awards the result of his Karma based on what the living being deserves. The Supersoul is always eagerly and patiently waiting for the spirit soul to turn towards Him. When the spirit soul is frustrated by his attempts to enjoy the illusions of this material world, the Supersoul, happily directs the soul to the proper association of Bhakti Yogis, and gives instructions from within to guide the soul back Home back to Godhead.

Sometimes we falsely think ourselves independent of the laws of material nature and free to act. But, we are already under strict material laws. However, as soon as we act in Bhakti Yoga or Krishna consciousness, we are liberated, free from the material perplexities. One should note very carefully that one who is not active in Krishna consciousness is losing himself in the material whirlpool, in the ocean of birth and death. No conditioned soul actually knows what is to be done and what is not to be done, but a person who acts in Krishna consciousness is free to act, because everything is prompted by Krishna from within and confirmed by the spiritual teacher.

For one who acts in Bhakti Yoga or Krishna consciousness, the Supersoul - Krishna becomes the most intimate friend. He always looks after His friend's comfort. He gives Himself to His friend, who is so lovingly engaged working twenty-four hours a day in His devotional service.

Discovery:

1. What is the difference between the soul and Supersoul?
2. Where is the Supersoul situated?
3. What are the primary functions of the Supersoul?

Understanding:

4. If the Supersoul is inspiring us to do everything, then why are we held responsible for our bad deeds?
5. How does the Supersoul guide a sincere seeker of Truth?

Application:

6. How can we listen to the voice of the Supersoul within our heart?

Sri Namamrita

When the mind is finally trained to the point where it will think of nothing but Kṛṣṇa, it will attain peace and will become very tranquil.

*praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ
yoginam sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasam
brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam*

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

The mind is always concocting objects for happiness. I am always thinking, “This will make me happy,” or “That will make me happy. Happiness is here. Happiness is there.” In this way the mind is taking us anywhere and everywhere. It is as though we are riding on a chariot behind an unbridled horse. We have no power over where we are going but can only sit in horror and watch helplessly. As soon as the mind is engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process—specifically by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—then the wild horses of the mind will gradually come under our control.

On the Way to Kṛṣṇa

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Tell a friend about what you like in the Bhakti Vriksha gathering, and if the friend is interested, introduce them to the group.

In this material world, everyone is trying to counteract the onslaught of material nature, but everyone is ultimately fully controlled by material nature.... So-called scientists, philosophers, religionists and politicians should therefore conclude that they cannot offer facilities to the people in general. They should make vigorous propaganda to awaken the populace and raise them to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our humble attempt to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world is the only remedy that can bring about a peaceful and happy life. We can never be happy without the mercy of the Supreme Lord....

Bhāg. 7.9.19

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

18. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Soul and Supersoul:

- The Supersoul is the localized aspect of Kṛiṣṇa, and the soul is the individual living entity.

Question #2.

Location of Supersoul:

- Krishna is situated as the Supersoul in the region of everyone's heart.

Question #3.

Functions of Supersoul:

- The Supersoul is a witness to all the activities, Karma and desires of the living entity in different species of life.
- He reminds the living entity of the various desires in previous lives and awards the result of his Karma based on what the living being deserves.
- The Supersoul awards the different fruitive results, and inspiration to the living entity. Required knowledge is supplied to him, remembrance is given to him, and he also forgets, about his past life.
- The Supersoul is always eagerly and patiently waiting for the spirit soul to turn towards Him. When the spirit soul is frustrated by his attempts to enjoy the illusions of this material world, the Supersoul, happily directs the soul to the proper association of Bhakti Yogis, and gives instructions from within to guide the soul back Home back to Godhead.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #4.

Responsibility of the individual soul:

- When a particular spirit soul wants to enjoy separately from Him, Krishna accompanies the soul to the material world in His Supersoul feature.
- At the same time, the living entity also receives the opportunity from the Supersoul, to inquire into and understand the spiritual aspects of life. If one is serious to understand spiritual knowledge, then Krishna as the Supersoul gives the required intelligence from within.

Question #5.

Guidance given by Supersoul for sincere seeker:

- The Supersoul happily directs the soul to the proper association of Bhakti Yogis, and gives instructions from within to guide the soul back Home back to Godhead.

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Listening to Supersoul:

- Discuss how to listen to the Supersoul by practice of regulative principles of devotional service under the guidance of a bonafide spiritual master.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

19. Perceiving the Spiritual World

The spirit soul, being conditioned, acts according to the mode of nature it comes in contact with. According to the level of our conditioning, we seek happiness on the material platform. We are forced to helplessly act according to the impulse born of the modes of nature. The material world consists of the 3 modes of nature; Mode of Goodness, Mode of Passion and Mode of Ignorance.

The Gita tells us that beyond the limited material world is the infinite spiritual world. Everyone there is eternal and absorbed in ever-increasing happiness.

“Yet there is another unmanifest nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifested and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is.”(Bhagavad Gita 8.20)

How can we perceive the existence of a higher dimensional spiritual world?

a. One who is at a higher dimension can see things at lower dimensions. For example, draw a line diagram of a square box on a drawing sheet; draw a man inside it. Now if you draw another man outside the square box, he cannot see what is happening inside the square as they both are existing on a two dimensional city. The outside man cannot see inside man, but you can see both men because you exist at three dimensions. Now on a 3D plane, if your friend walks into his room and you find that he has closed the door, then you cannot know what he might be doing inside the room. But someone existing in 4D can see you as well as your friend. In this way, one existing in higher and higher dimensions can have access to greater and greater truths. Thus scriptures say there are demigods or angels who exist on higher dimensions like heavenly planets who can know about us inside out, more than what we know about ourselves.

We are like a small ant in the ceiling of a classroom. All that such an ant knows is an infinite flat plain surface all around him. It hardly has any idea about the classroom, the conscious students sitting and listening to a class, the high level language and conversations they have, the activities they do and so forth. We are too insignificant to even fathom the tiny material creation of God. What to speak of the vast anti-material world or spiritual world that has multi-dimensions!

b. Wherever there is a need, there should be something to fulfill the need. We feel thirsty; there is water. We feel hungry; there is food. We feel sex urge; there is an arrangement. We feel the need to become free from death, ignorance and sufferings. Thus there must be a spiritual world of eternity-knowledge-bliss to fulfill this need. In the spiritual world, there is happy, eternal life free of any limitations that we experience in the material world like disease, old age, and death.

c. Can there be a reflection of an object without the real object? Have you seen people who have outstanding beauty without any make up, even when they get up from their bed in the morning? Have you seen students who have outstanding intelligence to grasp Mathematics faster than others? Thus the world with its people is not some chemical bundle. Intuitively we understand that these opulences possessed by people, pass away with old age and death; but these must be originate from somewhere. Without the sun, a broken glass piece cannot glitter inside a dark room. Without real opulence existing in the spiritual realm, the imitation of such opulence is not possible. Why are we hankering after happiness? Because real, eternal happiness must be available somewhere. When we are thirsty in a desert, we may chase after the mirage; that does not satisfy us; but the real fresh cooling waters are elsewhere in reservoirs. A counterfeit note is proof of a real currency note. Imitation gold is proof of real gold. When we are infatuated by someone's beauty, we can understand that this perishable beauty is a reflection of the spiritual beauty. The material world is a reflection of the spiritual world.

The Qualification to access the Spiritual Truths: Three PhD students of Mathematics may be discussing about the proof of a Calculus theorem and discussing seriously. A layman can hardly make out anything from that discussion. Similarly Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna – all speak of a spiritual world that can be realized by a sincere practitioner of Bhakti Yoga. But how can a common man whose mind and senses are constantly soaked in the illusory worldly affairs of eating, sleeping,

mating and defending, with no performance of austerities expect to understand about the spiritual world? We need to begin by taking steps to approach a self-realized soul and make a spiritual inquiry.

One can easily observe the amazing similarity of descriptions given in different scriptures about the 'Kingdom of God'.

Christianity: And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever. [Rev.:22.5]

Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma: That abode of mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by electricity. One who reaches it never returns to this material world. [BG15.6]. I worship that transcendental seat, known as Svetadvipa where, as loving consorts, the Laksmis in their unalloyed spiritual essence practice the service of the All-Attractive Lord Krishna as their only lover - where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every gait is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant, effulgence is full of transcendental bliss and the supreme spiritual entities are all enjoyable and tasty, where numberless milk cows always emit transcendental oceans of milk; where there is eternal existence of transcendental time, who is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment. That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world. [Brahma Samhita 5.56]

Sikhism: By one-pointed love and devotion to God, one attains to that place which is eternal, changeless and where there is pure happiness. There one enjoys the qualities and pastimes of the Lord. There exists an eternal kingdom of the Lord. In that place there is no fear, no illusion nor bewilderment, nor miseries. And there, there is no birth and death. There is only pure eternal spiritual bliss in that abode. The devotees of the Lord in that abode subsist on the glories of the Supreme Soul, God. [GGS RagGaud Guarerei Mahala 5 Asatapaudiaa 4]

Zoroastrianism: Vohuman says to that soul, "From the mortal world (you have come). You are welcome here in this blissful eternal world". Vohuman tells the soul, "Oh Holy one! You are welcome in this world full of happiness having come from the world of misery". [A.G.Z.R., Ch.2 p.85]

The main feature of the spiritual world is that everyone there loves Krishna and loves each other with the fullness of their being. When we purify our hearts and awaken our innate love for Krishna, we become qualified to enter the spiritual world to take up our eternal service. Once attaining the spiritual world, our real Home, we souls never have to return to the material world. We are spiritual beings, but when the soul actually desires to enjoy this material world independently of Krishna, he comes to the material world.

avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas / tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante / tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

"That which the Vedantists describe as unmanifest and infallible, that which is known as the supreme destination, that place from which, having attained it, one never returns—that is My supreme abode."
—Sri Krishna, Bhagavad-gita 8.21

Discovery:

1. How can we have faith in the existence of a higher dimensional spiritual world? Explain with examples.
2. What are the differences between the spiritual and material world?

Understanding:

3. What qualification is needed to understand the reality of the spiritual world?
4. How do the various religions of the world explain the spiritual world?

Application:

5. How can we perceive the spiritual world while carrying out our daily activities in this material world?

Sri Namamrita

Lord Caitanya introduced the saṅkīrtana-yajña for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna]: In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things.”

The Lord created this material world for the conditioned souls to learn how to perform yajñas (sacrifice) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety. Then after finishing the present material body, they can enter into the kingdom of God. That is the whole program for the conditioned soul. By performance of yajña, the conditioned souls gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious and become godly in all respects. In this age of Kali, the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the names of God) is recommended by the Vedic scriptures, and this transcendental system was introduced by Lord Caitanya for the deliverance of all men in this age. Sankīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His devotional form (as Lord Caitanya) is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows, with special reference to the saṅkīrtana-yajña:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (S.B. 11.5.32)

Other yajñas prescribed in the Vedic literatures are not easy to perform in this age of Kali, but the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is easy and sublime for all purposes.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 3.10

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute 1 book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger, and share your experience with the group.

Preaching is the highest welfare activity:

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone. The sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend. Therefore, to act to revive this consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. One cannot be engaged in first-class welfare work without being liberated in the Supreme. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. He has no doubt because he is completely freed from all sins. This is the state of divine love.

A person engaged only in ministering to the physical welfare of human society cannot factually help anyone. Temporary relief of the external body and the mind is not satisfactory. The real cause of one's difficulties in the hard struggle for life may be found in one's forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. When a man is fully conscious of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is actually a liberated soul, although he may be in the material tabernacle.

Bg. 5.25

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

19. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Faith in the spiritual world:

- From statements in scriptures.
- Logical arguments:

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

20. Spiritual Relationships

Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gita [Chapter 4 text 3] that He is relating the supreme secret of the knowledge about God, the living entity and their mutual relationship to him (Arjuna) because he is His devotee and His friend. Therefore Bhagavad-gita is best understood by a person who has qualities similar to Arjuna's. That is to say that he must be a devotee in a direct relationship with the Supreme Person. As soon as one becomes a devotee of Krishna, he also has a direct relationship with the Supreme Person. That is a very elaborate subject matter, but briefly it can be stated that a devotee is in a relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in one of five different ways:

One may be a devotee in a passive state (shanta rasa – Neutrality)

One may be a devotee in an active state (dasya rasa - Servitude);

One may be a devotee as a friend (sakhya rasa - friendship);

One may be a devotee as a parent (vatsalya rasa – parental affection);

One may be a devotee as a conjugal lover (madhurya rasa – conjugal love).

Arjuna was in a relationship with the Supreme Personality Krishna as friend. Of course there is a gulf of difference between this friendship and the friendship found in the material world. This is transcendental friendship, which cannot be had by everyone. Everyone has a particular eternal relationship with the Supreme Divine Krishna, and that relationship is evoked by the perfection of devotional service. That is called svarupa. But in the present status of our life, not only have we forgotten Krishna, but we have forgotten our eternal relationship with Him. By the process of devotional service, one can revive that svarupa, and that stage is called svarupa-siddhi – perfection of one's constitutional position. So Arjuna was a devotee, and he was in touch with the Supreme Personality in friendship.

Loving Reciprocation between Krishna and His Devotees: The relationship between the Supreme Divine and His servitor is very sweet and transcendental. The servitor is always ready to render service to Krishna, and, similarly, Krishna is always seeking an opportunity to render some service to the devotee. He takes greater pleasure in His pure devotee's assuming the advantageous position of ordering Him than He does in being the giver of orders. Since He is master, everyone is under His orders, and no one is above Him to order Him. But when He finds that a pure devotee is ordering Him, He obtains transcendental pleasure, although He is the infallible master of all circumstances.

In the spiritual world, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna can perfectly reciprocate one's loving propensities in different relationships called mellows, or rasas. Basically there are twelve loving relationships, five of which are primary. One can love Krishna as the supreme unknown, as the supreme master, the supreme friend, the supreme child, and the supreme lover, as already described above.

The devotees surcharged with the ideas of their respective service, serve Krishna eternally and ultimately reach the goal of their respective ideals. They attain the real nature of their self, befitting their respective rasas. Those who are advocates of 'shanta rasa' attain the neutral roles of trees, water, flowers and serve silently in meditation. Those who are in 'dasya rasa' engage in varieties of services. Those in 'sakhya rasa' treat Krishna equally just as they treat one another and they are never afraid of Him, nor do they ever beg His pardon. The cowherd boy friends sometimes ride on Krishna's shoulders. Those in 'vatsalya rasa' like mother Yashoda and Nanda shower parental affection upon Krishna by feeding, maintaining, protecting and caring. The gopis are the topmost amongst all devotees. They are in 'madhurya rasa' (conjugal love) with Krishna and enjoy the most intimate relationships with Krishna.

Goloka Vrindavan is the highest planet in the spiritual world. Krishna enjoys various loving relationships by manifesting the sixty four arts like singing, playing instruments, dancing, painting, splashing water sports, setting ornaments, solving riddles etc. In order to go there, one has to

penetrate the cover of the material universe, penetrate the Brahmajyoti effulgence and then one reaches this supreme abode. In the brahmajyoti, there are also other planets called Vaikuntha planets. One has to become a pure devotee of Krishna by understanding Bhagavad-gita like Arjuna to be noticed by Him and transported to His abode.

The Intimate Love of Vrajabasis for Krishna: Just as when you heat sugar with water, it becomes more viscous; gradually it becomes more and more thicker and eventually candy and then rock candy. Similarly in dealings between Krishna and the devotee, there are different platforms of loving exchange.

According to the Upanishads, all living entities are dependent on the supreme living entity, the Personality of Godhead. As it is said [Katha Up. 2.2.13], *nityo nityānām cetanas cetanānām eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*: one eternal living entity supports all the other eternal living entities. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead maintains all the other living entities, they remain subordinate to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even when joined with Him in the reciprocation of loving affairs.

The Vrindavana pastimes demonstrate that although generally people worship God with reverence, the Supreme Person is more pleased when a devotee thinks of Him as his pet son, personal friend or most dear fiancée and renders service unto Him with such natural affection. Krishna becomes a subordinate object of love in such transcendental relationships.

In the course of exchanging transcendental love of the highest purity, sometimes the subordinate devotee tries to predominate over the predominator. One who lovingly engages with the Supreme Divine as if he were His mother or father sometimes supersedes the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Similarly, His fiancée or lover sometimes supersedes the position of Krishna. But such attempts are exhibitions of the highest love. Only out of pure love does the subordinate lover of the Supreme Personality of Godhead chide Him. Krishna, enjoying this chiding, takes it very nicely. The exhibition of natural love makes such activities very enjoyable. In worship of the Supreme with veneration there is no manifestation of such natural spontaneous love because the devotee considers Krishna as his superior.

Discovery:

1. What are the five primary rasas? Explain
2. What is svarupa? How can we revive our svarupa?

Understanding:

3. Explain the nature of loving relationship between Krishna and His devotees?
4. How is the love of Vrajabasis the highest form of love? What is it compared to?

Application:

5. How can we cultivate the mood of Vrajabasis in this modern day and age of Kaliyuga?

APPENDIX

Rasa	Activities	Qualities	Examples
Santa (Neutrality)	Meditation and worship of Brahman and Param-atma; Appreciating Krishna's beauty	Full attachment to Krishna	Sukadeva Goswami, Bilvamangala, Four Kumaras, Navayogendras
Dasya (Servitude)	Menial service, Prayers, Obeisances, fanning, carrying umbrella supplying betel, cleaning clothes	Full attachment to Krishna's Service	Brahma, Daruka, Uddhava, Pradyumna, Bhisma
Sakhya (Friendship)	Joking, fighting, playing, massaging, counseling, relaying confidential messages, singing, dancing	Full attachment to Krishna's Service, Relaxed intimacy	Sudama, Arjuna, Bhima, Ujjvala, Stoka Krishna
Vatsalya (Parental)	Bathing, dressing, decorating, smelling head, chastising, instructing, protecting	Full attachment to Krishna's Service, Relaxed intimacy, Maintenance	Yashoda-mata, Nanda Maharaj, Devaki, Vasudeva, Kunti, Rohini, Sandipani Muni
Madhurya (Conjugal)	Exchange of glances and sweet smiles, dancing, kissing, embracing, talks and arguments	Full attachment to Krishna's Service, Relaxed intimacy, Maintenance, offering the body	Radharani, Rukmini, Satyabhama, Lalita, Visakha, Candravali

Sri Namamrita

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally came as Lord Caitanya in order to distribute the process of chanting—the easiest means, in this age, to the highest perfection of life:

Out of many thousands of persons who are in self-knowledge as to what and who they are, only one or two may be actually liberated. And out of many thousands who are liberated, only one or two may understand what and who Kṛṣṇa is. So understanding Kṛṣṇa is not such an easy job. Thus in this age of Kali, an age characterized by ignorance and chaos, liberation is out of the reach of practically everyone. One has to go through the whole ordeal of becoming civilized, then religious, and then one has to perform charities and sacrifices and come to the platform of knowledge, then to the stage of liberation, and finally, after liberation, to the understanding of what Kṛṣṇa is.... Practically speaking, this process is not very easy in this age of Kali. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam a description is given of the people of this age. Their duration of life is said to be very short, they tend to be phlegmatic and slow and to sleep a great deal, and when they're not sleeping, they are busy earning money. At the most they only have two hours a day for spiritual activities, so what is the hope for spiritual understanding? It is also stated that even if one is anxious to make spiritual progress, there are many pseudospiritual societies to take advantage of him. People are also characterized in this age as being unfortunate. They have a great deal of difficulty meeting the primary demands of life—eating, defending, mating, and sleeping—necessities which are met even by the animals. Even if people are meeting these necessities in this age, they are always anxious about war, either defending themselves from aggressors or having to go to war themselves. In addition to this, there are always disturbing diseases and economic problems in Kali-yuga. Therefore Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa considered that in this age it is impossible for people to come to the perfectional stage of liberation by following the prescribed rules and regulations.

Thus out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and distributed the means to the highest perfection of life and spiritual ecstasy by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process of chanting is most practical, and it does not depend on whether one is liberated or not, or whether one's condition is conducive to spiritual life or not—whichever takes to this process becomes immediately purified. Therefore it is called pavitram (pure). Furthermore, for one who takes to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness process, the seeds of latent reactions to his sinful actions are all nullified. Just as a fire turns whatever we put into it to ashes, this process turns to ashes all the sinful reactions of our past lives.

Rāja-vidyā: The King of Knowledge

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends, and then share your experience with the group

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana movement is meant for making people happy:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His *saṅkīrtana* movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy.

Cc. Ādi 9.45

Preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness is showing real mercy to living entities:

“If a living entity is developed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is merciful to others, and if his spiritual knowledge of self-realization is perfect, he will immediately attain liberation from the bondage of material existence.”

In this verse the word *dayā jīvesu*, meaning mercy to other living entities, indicates that a living entity must be merciful to other living entities if he wishes to make progress in self-realization. This means he must preach this knowledge after perfecting himself and understanding his own position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Preaching this is showing real mercy to living entities. Other types of humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.

Bhāg. 4.29.1b

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

20. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Primary rasas and explanation:

- One may be a devotee in a passive state (shanta rasa – Neutrality)

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Cultivation of mood of residents of Vraja:

- Discuss following regulative principles of devotional service leading to pure chanting in the footsteps of Mahajanas.

Quiz 5, Edifications 17-20

1. What happens when a person dies?
2. What is the nature of God?
3. What is the difference between a deity and an idol?
4. Why can't we see Krishna with our material eyes?
5. What is the difference between soul and Supersoul?
6. Where is the Supersoul situated?
7. What are the primary functions of the Supersoul?
8. How does the Supersoul guide a sincere seeker of Truth?
9. What are the differences between the spiritual and material world?
10. What qualification is needed to understand the reality of the spiritual world?
11. What are the five primary rasas?
12. What is svarupa?
13. Explain the nature of the loving relationship between Krishna and His devotees?
14. How is the love of Varjabasis the highest form of love?

ACTIVITY: MAHAPRABHU PASTIME NIGHT I

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Who is Lord Caitanya?
- 2) What is the purpose of Lord Caitanya's descent?
- 3) Talk about Lord Caitanya's parents.
- 4) How did Lord Caitanya start the Sankirtan mission to deliver the people of Kali yuga?

Quiz 5, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What happens when a person dies?

The soul leaves the body and accepts another body.

2. What is the nature of God?

God is the supreme spirit (sat, cit, ananda). Actually He is everything – spirit and matter- but you cannot see Him in his spiritual identity.

3. What is the difference between a deity and an idol?

An idol is made from an imaginary form of God, whereas a Deity is made from the authorized description of the Lord from the scriptures. During the Deity installation, a pure devotee invites the Lord in the Deity form, called as Prana Pratistha ceremony. A Deity is worshipped with love and devotion by the devotees.

4. Why can't we see Krishna with our material eyes?

One cannot see spirit with material eyes and God is the supreme spirit.

5. What is the difference between soul and Supersoul?

Supersoul is the localized aspect of Kṛṣṇa, and the soul is the individual living entity

6. Where is the Supersoul situated?

Krishna is situated as the Supersoul in the region of everyone's heart.

7. What are the primary functions of the Supersoul?

► The Supersoul is a witness to all the activities, Karma and desires of the living entity in different species of life.

► He reminds the living entity of the various desires in previous lives and awards the result of his Karma based on what the living being deserves.

► The Supersoul awards the different fruitive results, and inspiration to the living entity. Required knowledge is supplied to him, remembrance is given to him, and he also forgets about his past life.

► The Supersoul is always eagerly and patiently waiting for the spirit soul to turn towards Him. When the spirit soul is frustrated by his attempts to enjoy the illusions of this material world, the Supersoul, happily directs the soul to the proper association of Bhakti Yogis, and gives instructions from within to guide the soul back Home back to Godhead.

8. How does the Supersoul guide a sincere seeker of Truth?

The Supersoul happily directs the soul to the proper association of Bhakti Yogis, and gives instructions from within to guide the soul back Home back to Godhead.

9. What are the differences between the spiritual and material worlds?

► Material: temporary, illusory.

► Spiritual world: eternal, real, full of dynamic variety and rich with spiritual qualities, Krishna conscious, souls absorbed in ever-increasing happiness.

10. What qualification is needed to understand the reality of the spiritual world?

Begin by taking steps to approach a self-realized soul and make a spiritual inquiry.

11. What are the five primary rasas?

► One may be a devotee in a passive state (shanta rasa – Neutrality)

Those who are advocates of 'shanta rasa' attain the neutral roles of trees, water, flowers and serve silently in meditation.

► One may be a devotee in an active state (dasya rasa - Servitude)

Those who are in 'dasya rasa' engage in varieties of services.

► One may be a devotee as a friend (sakhya rasa - friendship)

Those in 'sakhya rasa' treat Krishna equally just as they treat one another and they are never afraid of Him, nor do they ever beg His pardon. The cowherd boy friends sometimes ride on Krishna's shoulders.

► One may be a devotee as a parent (vatsalya rasa – parental affection)

Those in 'vatsalya rasa' like mother Yashoda and Nanda shower parental affection upon Krishna by feeding, maintaining, protecting and caring.

► One may be a devotee as a conjugal lover (madhurya rasa – conjugal love).

The gopis are the topmost amongst all devotees. They are in 'madhurya rasa' (conjugal love) with Krishna and enjoy the most intimate relationships with Krishna.

12. What is svarupa?

Everyone has a particular eternal relationship with the Supreme Divine Krishna, and that relationship is evoked by the perfection of devotional service. That is called svarupa.

13. Explain the nature of the loving relationship between Krishna and His devotees?

The relationship between the Supreme Divine and His servitor is very sweet and transcendental. The servitor is always ready to render service to Krishna, and, similarly, Krishna is always seeking an opportunity to render some service to the devotee.

14. How is the love of Varajabasis the highest form of love?

It is natural, spontaneous and unconditional love.

Activity answer:

► **Who is Lord Caitanya** - He is Krishna Himself in the mood of Srimati Radharani.

► **Purpose of Lord Caitanya's descent** - not to kill demons like Krishna did, and other incarnations normally do, but rather, to kill the demoniac propensity in all of us and transform our hearts so we can receive pure love of God.

► Krishna's final instruction in the Bhagavad Gita is "Sarva dharman parityajya...." Abandon all varieties of religion and simply surrender unto Me", but Krishna does not explain HOW to surrender to Him. Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu has appeared to teach all of us HOW to surrender to Krishna, and develop pure love of Godhead.

► **Talk about Lord Caitanya's parents** - Jagannath Mishra and Saci devi.

► **How Lord Caitanya started the Sankirtan mission to deliver the people of Kali yuga.** – Discuss from Sri Caitanya Caritamrita.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

21. Guru – A Friend, Philosopher and Spiritual Guide

Sometimes when we talk about the importance of accepting a Guru, a bona fide spiritual master, we fear that we will have to blindly surrender our independent thinking to some authority. We may think, "Will it not be much better if I were to think for myself, relying on my own power of analysis, rather than merely accept someone else's opinions?" Before being so apprehensive about accepting spiritual authority, let us see a few examples from everyday life, where we accept authority without questioning:

- We consume the blue or yellow, or pills of any color prescribed by a doctor hoping to get well soon.
- As soon as we board a flight, we are entrusting our lives to the pilot. Do we check the pilot's credentials every time we board a flight?
- A child accepts his mother as an authority and comes to know of everyone and everything around him - his father, brother, sister, etc. - only through her.
- In a barber shop, we allow the barber to shave our beard with a knife, confident that he won't kill us.
- A student accepts the authority of textbooks prescribed by the board.

Thus, we see that we have no choice but to believe authorities in order to get knowledge. Even if we want to learn dance, or music, or athletics, or martial arts, or for that matter anything, we take training under a teacher or a coach. In other words, in order to gain mastery in any field, we agree to become an apprentice under an expert advanced in that field. Thus, we accept a teacher in every walk of life; then why not accept a teacher in spiritual life too?

Spiritual life is serious business, and any sincere seeker of truth can understand the need of accepting a bona fide Guru to get enlightenment. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shri Krishna, descended to this world, He also set an example for us by accepting Sandipani Muni as His guru. So, even the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the source of all knowledge and wisdom, accepts a guru to demonstrate the absolute necessity of accepting a guru.

Who is not a Guru?: Since the Guru must transmit the truths of Spiritual knowledge perfectly, he plays a crucial role in the life of a disciple. Regrettably, sometimes fake godmen try to cheat the innocent public in the name of Guru.

- They charge fees to give secret mantras and make false promises,
- They allow their students to disregard all regulative principles,
- They teach yoga as simple gymnastic exertion and not as a means of connecting one to God,
- They maintain that the purpose of yoga is material well-being,
- They defy the Vedas by declaring: 'I am God; You are God; Everyone is God' and so on.

The gullible masses blindly follow such fake godmen and are led to suffering in this life and the next. It is therefore necessary to first understand the symptoms of a bona fide guru -- that is, a spiritual master who has received pure knowledge and can impart it as a friend, philosopher and a spiritual guide.

Who is a Guru?: When we go to a jeweler's shop to purchase a diamond, we perform detailed research before executing the actual transaction. Perhaps, we would consult with some friends and experts in the business. Even after such consultations, we would try to get some warranty on the product to ensure that we are not cheated. Similarly, if we wish to get a professional degree, we would consider the reputation and authenticity of the institute that we plan to join.

One cannot test the genuineness of a spiritual authority by the language he speaks, by his physical appearance or by his nationality. Just like the genuineness of gold can be determined by certain specific tests, there are also tests to determine the genuineness of a spiritual authority as stated below:

The guru must have heard the Absolute Truth in a disciplic succession. The disciplic succession comprises of spiritual masters and disciples, coming from God Himself. The guru does not concoct some theory or philosophy of his own to promote himself in public. He repeats what he has heard from his guru in disciplic succession.

The Vedas were revealed to Brahma at the dawn of creation and not written down. It came down by word of mouth from one guru to the next down the line. It was only 5000 years ago the Vedas were put down in writing by Vyasadev keeping in mind the degraded nature of people in the age of Kali yuga. This knowledge has come down in a disciplic succession from Krishna to His disciple Brahma to his disciple Narada to his disciple Vyasa all the way to A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder-Acharya of ISKCON. Thus, through the unbroken disciplic succession, the original Vedic knowledge is available to us even today.

'The mantra that is not received in disciplic succession does not produce results. Therefore in the Age of Kali there are four such disciplic successions. They are the Sri, Brahma, Rudra and Sanaka sampradayas. In the Age of Kali, these four disciplic lines will appear out of Purusottama' (Padma Purana quoted in Prameya-ratnavali)

It is important to accept the Vedic knowledge through a disciplic succession, in order to avoid gross mis-interpretation of the Vedas. No one can become a doctor simply by studying medical books, rather he needs to study and practice under an expert doctor, before being awarded a medical degree. Similarly, without studying and practicing the Vedas under a bonafide Guru from a disciplic succession starting from the Lord Himself, one cannot understand the Vedic scriptures.

The guru must have realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation. Because he has heard, understood, practiced, and realized the Absolute Truth, he should be fixed in devotional service to the Supreme. He should be able to confirm the authenticity of the message he is presenting by the support of the scriptures and teachings of the great seers of truth of the present and the past.

The guru should know the essence of the scriptures, and not just be a Sanskrit scholar. He needs to know the essence of all scriptures as explained in the Bhagavad-gita (15.15) 'veda is ca sarvair aham eva vedyah': "The essence of the Vedas is to know Me (Krishna)." If he knows this essential principle of the teachings of all scriptures and lives according to this principle, he knows everything necessary for delivering his disciples.

The guru is beyond caste-creed-color-nationality and other such superficial differences. We should never think, "He is after all an African guru or an American guru—or an Indian guru". When we go to a doctor, do we see him as an Indian doctor or American doctor?" We only see if he is a qualified doctor with a degree. Similarly, it is said - "One who knows the science of Krishna should be accepted as a guru" (CC.Madhya 8.128). Instruction has to be taken from one who is in knowledge. It does not matter what his family or material identity is. His only qualification is that he must know the science of Krishna.

Discovery:

1. How are we dependent on different authorities in our daily life?
2. What are the qualities of a bonafide Guru?

Understanding:

1. What is the need of accepting a spiritual master?
2. How can we distinguish between a fake Guru and a bonafide Guru?

Application:

1. How can we make an eternal connection with a Guru?

Sri Namamrita

Nārada Muni mentions this *sādhana-bhakti* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Seventh Canto, First Chapter, verse 32. He says there to King Yudhiṣṭhira: “My dear King, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.” That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is the duty of the *ācārya*, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us an authorized program for this purpose, centered around the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. This chanting has so much power that it immediately attaches one to Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*. Somehow or other, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. The great saint Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, although a responsible king, fixed his mind on Kṛṣṇa, and similarly anyone who tries to fix his mind in this way will very rapidly make progress in successfully reviving his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Nectar of Devotion

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness. Share your experience with the group.

There are so many unwanted literatures full of materialistic ideas of sense gratification.... The people in general want to read (that is a natural instinct), but because their minds are polluted they want such literatures. Under the circumstances, transcendental literature like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will not only diminish the activities of the corrupt mind of the people in general, but also it will supply food for their hankering after reading some interesting literature. In the beginning they may not like it because one suffering from jaundice is reluctant to take sugar candy, but we should know that sugar candy is the only remedy for jaundice. Similarly, let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavaram*, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification. When men have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease.

Bhāg. 1.5.11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

21. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Dependence on authorities in material life:

- We have no option but to rely on authorities to gain knowledge.
- Even if we want to learn dance, music, athletics, martial arts or for that matter anything, we need to train under a teacher or coach. To gain mastery, we agree to become an apprentice under an expert in the chosen field.
- Thus, we accept a teacher in every walk of life.

Question #2.

Qualifications of a guru:

- A bonafide Guru must be from a disciplic succession starting from the Lord Himself.
- The guru must have realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation.
- He should be fixed in devotional service to the Supreme.
- He should be able to speak to the authenticity of the message being presented by quoting scriptures and teachings of the great seers of truth of present and the past.
- The guru should know the essence of the scriptures that Krishna is the Absolute Truth.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #3.

Need for spiritual master:

- Spiritual life is a serious business, and any sincere seeker of truth can understand the need of accepting a bona fide Guru to get enlightenment.
- When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shri Krishna, descended to this world, He also set an example for us by accepting Sandipani Muni as His guru. So, even the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the source of all knowledge and wisdom, accepts a guru to demonstrate the absolute necessity of accepting a guru.

Question #4.

Fake vs. bonafide guru:

- The guru must have gained the knowledge of the Absolute Truth through disciplic succession.
- The guru does not concoct some theory or philosophy of his own to promote himself in public. He repeats what he has heard from his guru in disciplic succession.

APPLICATION:

Question #5.

Connecting with guru:

- Discuss about Krishna as Caitya Guru, the process of connecting via sincere chanting in association of devotees.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

22. 4 Kinds of People Who Surrender To Krishna

FROM SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA CH. 7 TXT. 16
BY H.D.G.A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

**catur-vidhā bhajante mām / janāḥ sukr̥tino 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī / jñānī ca bharatarṣabha**

TRANSLATION

O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me — the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

PURPORT

Unlike the miscreants, these are adherents of the regulative principles of the scriptures, and they are called sukr̥tinaḥ, or those who obey the rules and regulations of scriptures, the moral and social laws, and are, more or less, devoted to the Supreme Lord. Out of these there are four classes of men — those who are sometimes distressed, those who are in need of money, those who are sometimes inquisitive, and those who are sometimes searching after knowledge of the Absolute Truth. These persons come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions. These are not pure devotees, because they have some aspiration to fulfill in exchange for devotional service. Pure devotional service is without aspiration and without desire for material profit. The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11) defines pure devotion thus:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ / jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-/ śīlanam bhaktir uttamā [Madhya 19.167]

"One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service."

When these four kinds of persons come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service and are completely purified by the association of a pure devotee, they also become pure devotees. As far as the miscreants are concerned, for them devotional service is very difficult because their lives are selfish, irregular and without spiritual goals. But even some of them, by chance, when they come in contact with a pure devotee, also become pure devotees.

Those who are always busy with fruitive activities come to the Lord in material distress and at that time associate with pure devotees and become, in their distress, devotees of the Lord. Those who are simply frustrated also come sometimes to associate with the pure devotees and become inquisitive to know about God. Similarly, when the dry philosophers are frustrated in every field of knowledge, they sometimes want to learn of God, and they come to the Supreme Lord to render devotional service and thus transcend knowledge of the impersonal Brahman and the localized Paramātmā and come to the personal conception of Godhead by the grace of the Supreme Lord or His pure devotee. On the whole, when the distressed, the inquisitive, the seekers of knowledge, and those who are in need of money are free from all material desires, and when they fully understand that material remuneration has nothing to do with spiritual improvement, they become pure devotees. As long as such a purified stage is not attained, devotees in transcendental service to the Lord are tainted with fruitive activities, the search for mundane knowledge, etc. So one has to transcend all this before one can come to the stage of pure devotional service.

Discovery:

1. Describe the four classes of pious men who surrender to Kṛṣṇa?

Understanding:

2. Why are people, who come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions, still not pure devotees?

Application:

3. Give examples from our history of devotees who fit into these four categories. Describe ways in which we can engage in pure devotional service in our day to day lives.

Sri Namamrita

A devotee engaged in chanting the holy name of the Lord should practice forbearance like that of a tree. Even if rebuked or chastised, he should not say anything to others to retaliate. For even if one cuts a tree, it never protests, nor even if it is drying up and dying does it ask anyone for water.

This practice of forbearance (tṛṇād api sunīcena) is very difficult, but when one actually engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the quality of forbearance automatically develops. A person advanced in spiritual consciousness through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra need not practice to develop it separately, for a devotee develops all good qualities simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 17.27–28

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Cook, offer and distribute prasadam to your friends

My dear Arjuna, one who is engaged in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly to every living entity, certainly comes to Me.

A devotee of Kṛṣṇa is friendly to everyone. Therefore it is said here that he has no enemy. How is this? A devotee situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows that only devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can relieve a person from all the problems of life. He has personal experience of this, and therefore he wants to introduce this system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, into human society. There are many examples in history of devotees of the Lord risking their lives for the spreading of God consciousness. The favorite example is Lord Jesus Christ. He was crucified by the nondevotees, but He sacrificed His life for spreading God consciousness.... Similarly, in India also there are many examples, such as Ṭhākura Haridāsa. Why take such risks? Because they wanted to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is difficult. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person knows that if a man is suffering, it is due to his forgetfulness of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the highest benefit one can render to human society is relieving one's neighbor from all material problems. In such a way, a pure devotee is engaged in the service of the Lord.

Bg. 11.55

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

22. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Four classes of men render devotional service unto Krishna:

- The distressed,
- The desirer of wealth,

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

23. 4 Kinds of People Who Do Not Surrender To Krishna

FROM SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA CH. 7 TXT. 15
BY H.D.G.A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

**na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ / prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā / āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ**

TRANSLATION

Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons do not surrender unto Me.

PURPORT

It is said in Bhagavad-gītā that simply by surrendering oneself unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality Kṛṣṇa one can surmount the stringent laws of material nature. At this point a question arises: How is it that educated philosophers, scientists, businessmen, administrators and all the leaders of ordinary men do not surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-powerful Personality of Godhead? Mukti, or liberation from the laws of material nature, is sought by the leaders of mankind in different ways and with great plans and perseverance for a great many years and births. But if that liberation is possible by simply surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then why don't these intelligent and hard-working leaders adopt this simple method?

The Gītā answers this question very frankly. Those really learned leaders of society like Brahmā, Śiva, Kapila, the Kumāras, Manu, Vyāsa, Devala, Asita, Janaka, Prahlaḍa, Bali, and later on Madhvācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Caitanya and many others — who are faithful philosophers, politicians, educators, scientists, etc. — surrender to the lotus feet of the Supreme Person, the all-powerful authority. Those who are not actually philosophers, scientists, educators, administrators, etc., but who pose themselves as such for material gain, do not accept the plan or path of the Supreme Lord. They have no idea of God; they simply manufacture their own worldly plans and consequently complicate the problems of material existence in their vain attempts to solve them. Because material energy (nature) is so powerful, it can resist the unauthorized plans of the atheists and baffle the knowledge of "planning commissions."

The atheistic planmakers are described herein by the word duṣkṛtinaḥ, or "miscreants." Kṛtī means one who has performed meritorious work. The atheist planmaker is sometimes very intelligent and meritorious also, because any gigantic plan, good or bad, must take intelligence to execute. But because the atheist's brain is improperly utilized in opposing the plan of the Supreme Lord, the atheistic planmaker is called duṣkṛtī. which indicates that his intelligence and efforts are misdirected.

In the Gītā it is clearly mentioned that material energy works fully under the direction of the Supreme Lord. It has no independent authority. It works as the shadow moves, in accordance with the movements of the object. But still material energy is very powerful, and the atheist, due to his godless temperament, cannot know how it works; nor can he know the plan of the Supreme Lord. Under illusion and the modes of passion and ignorance, all his plans are baffled, as in the case of Hiraṇyakaśipu and Rāvaṇa, whose plans were smashed to dust although they were both materially learned as scientists, philosophers, administrators and educators. These duṣkṛtinas, or miscreants, are of four different patterns, as outlined below.

(1) The mūḍhas are those who are grossly foolish, like hardworking beasts of burden. They want to enjoy the fruits of their labor by themselves, and so do not want to part with them for the Supreme. The typical example of the beast of burden is the ass. This humble beast is made to work very hard by his master. The ass does not really know for whom he works so hard day and night. He remains satisfied by filling his stomach with a bundle of grass, sleeping for a while under fear of being

beaten by his master, and satisfying his sex appetite at the risk of being repeatedly kicked by the opposite party. The ass sings poetry and philosophy sometimes, but this braying sound only disturbs others. This is the position of the foolish fruitive worker who does not know for whom he should work. He does not know that karma (action) is meant for yajña (sacrifice).

Most often, those who work very hard day and night to clear the burden of self-created duties say that they have no time to hear of the immortality of the living being. To such mūḍhas, material gains, which are destructible, are life's all in all — despite the fact that the mūḍhas enjoy only a very small fraction of the fruit of labor. Sometimes they spend sleepless days and nights for fruitive gain, and although they may have ulcers or indigestion, they are satisfied with practically no food; they are simply absorbed in working hard day and night for the benefit of illusory masters. Ignorant of their real master, the foolish workers waste their valuable time serving mammon. Unfortunately, they never surrender to the supreme master of all masters, nor do they take time to hear of Him from the proper sources. The swine who eat the night soil do not care to accept sweetmeats made of sugar and ghee. Similarly, the foolish worker will untiringly continue to hear of the sense-enjoyable tidings of the flickering mundane world, but will have very little time to hear about the eternal living force that moves the material world.

(2) Another class of duṣkṛtī, or miscreant, is called the narādhama, or the lowest of mankind. Nara means human being, and adhama means the lowest. Out of the 8,400,000 different species of living beings, there are 400,000 human species. Out of these there are numerous lower forms of human life that are mostly uncivilized. The civilized human beings are those who have regulative principles of social, political and religious life. Those who are socially and politically developed but who have no religious principles must be considered narādhamas. Nor is religion without God religion, because the purpose of following religious principles is to know the Supreme Truth and man's relation with Him. In the Gītā the Personality of Godhead clearly states that there is no authority above Him and that He is the Supreme Truth. The civilized form of human life is meant for man's reviving the lost consciousness of his eternal relation with the Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is all-powerful. Whoever loses this chance is classified as a narādhama. We get information from revealed scriptures that when the baby is in the mother's womb (an extremely uncomfortable situation) he prays to God for deliverance and promises to worship Him alone as soon as he gets out. To pray to God when he is in difficulty is a natural instinct in every living being because he is eternally related with God. But after his deliverance, the child forgets the difficulties of birth and forgets his deliverer also, being influenced by māyā, the illusory energy.

It is the duty of the guardians of children to revive the divine consciousness dormant in them. The ten processes of reformatory ceremonies, as enjoined in the Manu-smṛti, which is the guide to religious principles, are meant for reviving God consciousness in the system of varṇāśrama. However, no process is strictly followed now in any part of the world, and therefore 99.9 percent of the population is narādhama.

When the whole population becomes narādhama, naturally all their so-called education is made null and void by the all-powerful energy of physical nature. According to the standard of the Gītā, a learned man is he who sees on equal terms the learned brāhmaṇa, the dog, the cow, the elephant and the dog-eater. That is the vision of a true devotee. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, who is the incarnation of Godhead as divine master, delivered the typical narādhamas, the brothers Jagāi and Mādhāi, and showed how the mercy of a real devotee is bestowed upon the lowest of mankind. So the narādhama who is condemned by the Personality of Godhead can again revive his spiritual consciousness only by the mercy of a devotee.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in propagating the bhāgavata-dharma, or activities of the devotees, has recommended that people submissively hear the message of the Personality of Godhead. The essence of this message is Bhagavad-gītā. The lowest amongst human beings can be delivered by this submissive hearing process only, but unfortunately they even refuse to give an aural reception to

these messages, and what to speak of surrendering to the will of the Supreme Lord? Narādhama, or the lowest of mankind, will fully neglect the prime duty of the human being.

(3) The next class of duṣkṛtī is called māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ, or those persons whose erudite knowledge has been nullified by the influence of illusory material energy. They are mostly very learned fellows — great philosophers, poets, literati, scientists, etc. — but the illusory energy misguides them, and therefore they disobey the Supreme Lord.

There are a great number of māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ at the present moment, even amongst the scholars of the Bhagavad-gītā. In the Gītā, in plain and simple language, it is stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is none equal to or greater than Him. He is mentioned as the father of Brahmā, the original father of all human beings. In fact, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is said to be not only the father of Brahmā but also the father of all species of life. He is the root of the impersonal Brahman and Paramātmā; the Supersoul in every entity is His plenary portion. He is the fountainhead of everything, and everyone is advised to surrender unto His lotus feet. Despite all these clear statements, the māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ deride the personality of the Supreme Lord and consider Him merely another human being. They do not know that the blessed form of human life is designed after the eternal and transcendental feature of the Supreme Lord.

All the unauthorized interpretations of the Gītā by the class of māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ, outside the purview of the paramparā system, are so many stumbling blocks on the path of spiritual understanding. The deluded interpreters do not surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, nor do they teach others to follow this principle.

(4) The last class of duṣkṛtī is called āsurāṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ, or those of demonic principles. This class is openly atheistic. Some of them argue that the Supreme Lord can never descend upon this material world, but they are unable to give any tangible reasons as to why not. There are others who make Him subordinate to the impersonal feature, although the opposite is declared in the Gītā. Envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the atheist will present a number of illicit incarnations manufactured in the factory of his brain. Such persons, whose very principle of life is to decry the Personality of Godhead, cannot surrender unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Yāmunācārya Albandarū of South India said, "O my Lord! You are unknowable to persons involved with atheistic principles, despite Your uncommon qualities, features and activities, despite Your personality's being confirmed by all the revealed scriptures in the quality of goodness, and despite Your being acknowledged by the famous authorities renowned for their depth of knowledge in the transcendental science and situated in the godly qualities."

Therefore, (1) grossly foolish persons, (2) the lowest of mankind, (3) the deluded speculators, and (4) the professed atheists, as above mentioned, never surrender unto the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead in spite of all scriptural and authoritative advice.

Discovery:

1. Describe the four classes of miscreants who do not surrender to Kṛṣṇa?

Understanding:

2. Why don't intelligent hard working leaders surrender unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa although liberation is possible by adopting this simple process?

Application:

3. As aspiring devotees of Lord Caitanya, how can we approach these four classes to give them some form of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Sri Namamrita

When the mind is finally trained to the point where it will think of nothing but Kṛṣṇa, it will attain peace and will become very tranquil.

*praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ
yoginam sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ
brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam*

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

The mind is always concocting objects for happiness. I am always thinking, “This will make me happy,” or “That will make me happy. Happiness is here. Happiness is there.” In this way the mind is taking us anywhere and everywhere. It is as though we are riding on a chariot behind an unbridled horse. We have no power over where we are going but can only sit in horror and watch helplessly. As soon as the mind is engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process—specifically by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—then the wild horses of the mind will gradually come under our control.

On the Way to Kṛṣṇa

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Tell a friend about what you like in the Bhakti Vriksha gathering, and if the friend is interested, introduce them to the group.

In this material world, everyone is trying to counteract the onslaught of material nature, but everyone is ultimately fully controlled by material nature.... So-called scientists, philosophers, religionists and politicians should therefore conclude that they cannot offer facilities to the people in general. They should make vigorous propaganda to awaken the populace and raise them to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our humble attempt to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world is the only remedy that can bring about a peaceful and happy life. We can never be happy without the mercy of the Supreme Lord....

Bhāg. 7.9.19

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate*

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

*śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,
jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,
swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi*

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

*jaya nimāi jaya nitāi
jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

23. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Four classes of miscreants:

- who are grossly foolish,

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

24. 6 Opulences of God

By definition, God is the Supreme Being. There is no one equal to or greater than God in any quality, attributes or characteristics. For each of His qualities, God has a name. For example, the sun may be called as “sun” by an Englishman, as “sol” by a Spanish speaking person, as “Surya” by a Sanskrit speaking person. Yet when they speak these various names, they all refer to the same object – the sun.

Parasara Muni, a great sage and the father of Srila Vyasadeva, who compiled all the Vedic literatures, gave the following understanding of God:

Aishvaryasya samagrasya viryasya yashasah sriyah
jnana-vairagyayos chaiva sannaam bhaga itingana

Parashara Muni defines Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as one who is full or complete in six opulences – who has full or complete strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty and renunciation.

Aishwarya (Wealth): Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the proprietor of all riches. There are many rich men in the world, but no one can claim that he possesses all the wealth. Nor can anyone claim that no one is richer than he. We understand from the Srimad Bhagavatam, that when Krishna was present on this earth He had 16,108 wives, and each wife lived in a palace made of marbles and bedecked with jewels. The rooms were filled with furniture made of ivory and gold, and there was great opulence everywhere. These descriptions are all given vividly in the Srimad Bhagavatam. In the history of human society we cannot find anyone who had sixteen thousand wives or sixteen thousand palaces. Nor did Krishna go to one wife one day and another wife another day. No, He was personally present in every palace at the same time. This means that He expanded Himself in 16,108 forms. This is impossible for an ordinary man, but it is not at all very difficult for Krishna. If God is unlimited He can expand Himself in unlimited forms, otherwise there is no meaning to the word unlimited. God is omnipotent; He can maintain not only sixteen thousand wives but also sixteen million and still encounter no difficulty, otherwise there is no meaning to the word omnipotent. These are all attractive features. We experience in this material world that if a man is very rich, he is attractive. They are attractive even though they do not possess all the wealth of the world. How much more attractive, then, is God, Who is the possessor of all riches.

Virya (Strength): Similarly, Krishna has unlimited strength. His strength was present from the moment of His birth. It is not that He grew up and became God. Even when Krishna was a little baby, He killed the powerful demon, Putana. At the age of seven, Krishna lifted the huge Govardhan Hill to protect the Vrajavasis from thunderous rain storms for seven days and seven nights. This is not a feat of a mere human, but the Supreme Person Himself.

Yasha (Fame): Krishna has unlimited fame. We are devotees of Krishna and know Him and glorify Him, but apart from us, many millions in the world, are aware of the fame of the Bhagavad-Gita. In all countries all over the world the Bhagavad-Gita is read by philosophers, psychologists and religionists. The fame of the Bhagavad-Gita is Krishna's fame.

Sri (Beauty): Beauty, another opulence, is possessed unlimitedly by Krishna. Krishna Himself is very beautiful. The name Krishna means “the All Attractive”. This planet is an insignificant planet within the universe, yet within this planet, one person has many attractive features. We can just imagine, then, how many attractive features must be possessed by Krishna, who is the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation. How beautiful must He be – He who has created all beauty.

Jnana (Knowledge): We find Krishna's knowledge right and perfect. He spoke the Bhagavad-Gita 5000 years ago on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. But since 5000 years, all great philosophers, great thinkers have been deeply delving into the Bhagavad-Gita and have still not found the width and depth of this knowledge. Not one statement of the Bhagavad-Gita has been proven as false. There have been no amendments made, nothing has been added or nothing has been deleted. Krishna did not do any prior preparation and then deliver it in front of Arjuna. Without any preparation, He spoke

the Bhagavad Gita and thousands of years later, all of us are taking shelter in this. This is just a tiny sample of His profound knowledge. No other knowledge has stood the test of time for such a long period of time.

Vairagya (Renunciation): At the same time, Krishna possesses full renunciation. So many things are working under Krishna's direction in this material world, but actually Krishna is not present here. A big factory may continue to function, although the owner may not be present. Similarly, Krishna's potencies are working under the direction of His assistants, the demigods. Thus Krishna is aloof from the material world. This is all described and revealed in the scriptures. One of the greatest testimonies of Krishna's renunciation is that He took the position of the charioteer of Arjuna.

Somebody may be very beautiful, but not powerful. Somebody may be powerful but not wealthy, somebody may be wealthy, but not renounced, and somebody may be very much renounced, but not very famous. But God by definition is He who possesses all of these six opulences to an unlimited degree eternally, time after time. So, anyone who possesses all these six opulences can be called as God and he can be rightfully called as Bhagavan.

God, therefore, has many names according to His activities, but because He possesses so many opulences, and because with these opulences He attracts every one, He is called Krishna. The Vedic literature asserts that God has many names, but "Krishna" is the principal name.

Srila Prabhupada says, "Any glorious or beautiful existence should be understood to be but a fragmental manifestation of Krishna's opulence, whether it be in the spiritual or material world. Anything extraordinarily opulent should be considered to represent Krishna's opulence." (Purport Bhagavad Gita As It Is, Chapter 10 verse 41).

Discovery:

1. What is the meaning of the word "Bhagavan"?

Understanding:

2. Describe the six opulences of God. Discuss how Krishna possesses each of these six opulences.

Application:

3. Discuss how we can constantly remember and meditate on these opulences of Krishna in our everyday life.

Sri Namamrita

Lord Caitanya introduced the saṅkīrtana-yajña for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna]: In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things.”

The Lord created this material world for the conditioned souls to learn how to perform yajñas (sacrifice) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety. Then after finishing the present material body, they can enter into the kingdom of God. That is the whole program for the conditioned soul. By performance of yajña, the conditioned souls gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious and become godly in all respects. In this age of Kali, the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the names of God) is recommended by the Vedic scriptures, and this transcendental system was introduced by Lord Caitanya for the deliverance of all men in this age. Sankīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His devotional form (as Lord Caitanya) is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows, with special reference to the saṅkīrtana-yajña:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (S.B. 11.5.32)

Other yajñas prescribed in the Vedic literatures are not easy to perform in this age of Kali, but the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is easy and sublime for all purposes.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 3.10

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute 1 book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger, and share your experience with the group.

Preaching is the highest welfare activity:

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone. The sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend. Therefore, to act to revive this consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. One cannot be engaged in first-class welfare work without being liberated in the Supreme. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. He has no doubt because he is completely freed from all sins. This is the state of divine love.

A person engaged only in ministering to the physical welfare of human society cannot factually help anyone. Temporary relief of the external body and the mind is not satisfactory. The real cause of one's difficulties in the hard struggle for life may be found in one's forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. When a man is fully conscious of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is actually a liberated soul, although he may be in the material tabernacle.

Bg. 5.25

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

24. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Bhagavan:

- One who is full or complete in six opulences – who has full or complete strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty and renunciation

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Six opulences and Krishna:

- **Aishwarya (Wealth):** Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the proprietor of all riches. There are many rich men in the world, but no one can claim that he possesses all the wealth. We understand from the Srimad Bhagavatam, that when Krishna was present on this earth He had 16,108 wives, and each wife lived in a palace made of marbles and bedecked with jewels. The rooms were filled with furniture made of ivory and gold, and there was great opulence everywhere. These are all attractive features. We experience in this material world that if a man is very rich, he is attractive. They are attractive even though they do not possess all the wealth of the world. How much more attractive, then, is God, Who is the possessor of all riches.
- **Virya (Strength):** Krishna has unlimited strength. His strength was present from the moment of His birth. When Krishna was a little baby, he killed the powerful demon, Putana. At the age of seven, Krishna lifted the huge Govardhan Hill.
- **Yasha (Fame):** Krishna has unlimited fame. We are devotees of Krishna and know Him and glorify Him, but apart from us, many millions in the world, are aware of the fame of the Bhagavad-Gita.
- **Sri (Beauty):** Beauty, another opulence, is possessed unlimitedly by Krishna. Krishna Himself is very beautiful. The name Krishna means “the All Attractive”. This planet is an insignificant planet within the universe, yet within this planet, one person has many attractive features.
- **Jnana (Knowledge):** We find Krishna’s knowledge right and perfect. He spoke the BG 5,000 years ago, but is still relevant in today’s world.
- **Vairagya (Renunciation):** At the same time, Krishna possesses full renunciation. So many things are working under Krishna’s direction in this material world, but actually Krishna is not present here. Thus Krishna is aloof from the material world.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Remembering Krishna and meditating on his opulences:

- Discuss that Krishna’s opulences are spiritual and infinite, and there is no difference between His opulences and Krishna (Bhagavan). In this material world, when we witness any one or more of these opulences, we can remember Krishna as the source of these opulences. We can take these opportunities to meditate on Krishna’s opulences.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

25. 6 Kinds of Incarnations

The expansions of Lord Krsna who come to the material creation are called avatars. The word 'avatara' means 'one who descends' (from Sanskrit avatarati) and in this case the word specifically refers to one who descends from the spiritual sky. In the spiritual sky there are innumerable Vaikuntha planets, and from these planets the expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead come into this universe.

There are six kinds of incarnations: (1) the purusa-avatars, (2) the lila-avatars, (3) the guna-avatars, (4) the manvantara-avatars, (5) the yuga-avatars, and (6) the saktyavesa-avatars.

1. Purusa-avatars: Krsna first incarnates as the three purusa-avatars, namely the Maha-Visnu or Karanodakasayi avatara, the Garbhodakasayi avatara and the Ksirodakasayi avatara. This is confirmed in the Satvata-tantra: "For material creation, Lord Krsna's plenary expansion assumes three Visnus. The first one, Maha Visnu, creates the total material energy, known as mahat-tattva. The second, Garbhodakasayi Visnu, enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third, Ksirodakasayi Visnu, is diffused as the all-pervading Supersoul in all the universes and is known as Paramatma. He is present even within the atoms. Anyone who knows these three Visnus can be liberated from material entanglement." (Satvata-tantra quoted in Bg. 7.4 purport)

a) **MAHA VISNU** lies on the Causal Ocean which appears in one corner of the spiritual world. He manifests the mahat tattva (or the sum total of material energy). It is into this mahat tattva that He exhales all of the seedlike universes through the pores of His skin. These seedlike universes then expand as the different material elements form coverings around them. Each of the coverings is ten times thicker than the previous covering and forms a shell-like covering. When Maha Visnu impregnates the living entities by His glance into the material nature, it begins to manifest its various energies.

b) When the universes have thus developed in the womb of material nature, Maha Visnu expands as **GARBHODAKASAYI VISNU**, Who enters into each universe with the living entities of that particular universe and thus activates each universe by His presence. He lies down on Ananta Sesa who lies on the Garbha ocean, which is the perspiration from the Lord's body and half fills the universe. From His navel comes a lotus bud which is the total form of the living entities' fruitive activity. The lotus grows dissipating the darkness of the universe. On top of the lotus Brahma, the first living being appears. Situated on the lotus, Brahma could not understand anything. He began entering the stem and climbed down to find its origin. Not finding anything, Brahma again returned to the top of the lotus where he heard the word ta-pa (austerity). Hearing the sound Brahma underwent penance for one thousand celestial years; (6x30x12x1000 earthly years). Being very pleased with Brahma's tapasya, the Lord manifested the Vaikuntha planets to him. Seeing Vaikuntha, Brahma became very happy and bowed to the Lord. Being very pleased with Brahma the Lord shakes his hand and reveals how to create the universe.

c) To maintain the universe Garbhodakasayi Visnu expands as **KSIRODAKASAYI VISNU**, Who is the all-pervading Supersoul (Paramatma). By His entering into every atom He maintains the whole universe. His abode is Svetadvipa, an island in the ocean of milk.

2. Lila-avatars: They are mainly the dasa-avatars namely

Matsya - The Fish incarnation. He appeared to show special mercy to Satyavrata Muni.

Kurma - The Tortoise incarnation. He appeared to become the resting place of the Mandara Hill, used as a churning rod by the demons and demigods to produce nectar.

Varaha - Sukara or the Boar incarnation – He appeared to rescue the planet Earth and killed the demon Hiranyaksa.

Vamana - The dwarf incarnation. Assuming the form of a dwarf brahmacari the Lord visited the fire sacrifice of Bali Maharaja. He begged three steps of land and with those steps He took over the entire universe. He is the son of Kasyapa and Aditi.

Nrsimha - The half-man half-lion incarnation. He appeared to protect His dear devotee Prahlada and killed his demoniac father, Hiranyakasipu.

Parashurama - Bhrgupati, the son of Jamadagni Muni and Renuka. He annihilated the ksatriyas twenty-one times because of their rebellion against the brahmanas.

Rama - Lord Ramacandra, son of King Dasaratha and Kausalya. He came to perform pleasing work for the demigods, protect His devotees and kill Ravana and his followers.

Balarama - The first plenary expansion of the Lord. He acts as Lord Krsna's older brother in Their pastimes in Vrndavana.

Buddha - The son of Anjana. He appeared in the province of Gaya in the beginning of Kali-yuga to delude those who are inimical to the faithful. He also appeared to stop animal slaughter in the name of Vedic sacrifices by preaching non-violence and by not accepting Vedic authorities.

Kalki - The son of brahmana Visnu-yasa. He will appear in the village Sambhala at the end of Kali-yuga. He will mount a horse, Devadatta, and taking His sword, will kill millions upon millions of degraded barbarian humans. During one day of Brahma there are twenty-five Lila-avatars

3. **Guna-avatars:** (incarnations of the qualitative modes of nature)

They are Brahma (rajo-guna), Visnu (sattva-guna) and Siva (tamo-guna).

4. **Manvantara-avatars:** There are fourteen manvantara-avatars who appear during the fourteen ruling periods of Manus (manvantaras) in one day of Brahma (kalpa).

5. **Yuga-avatars:** The four yuga-avatars are also described in Srimad-Bhagavatam. In the Satya-yuga, the incarnation of God is white; in the Treta-yuga He is red; in the Dvapara-yuga, He is blackish; and in the Kali-yuga He is also blackish, but sometimes, in a special Kali-yuga, His color is yellowish as in the case of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

6. **Saktyavesa-avatars:** There is no limit to the saktyavesa-avatars. The saktyavesa incarnations are of two kinds - direct and indirect. When the Lord Himself comes, He is called saksat, or a direct saktyavesa-avatara, and when He empowers some living entity to represent Him that living entity is called an indirect or avesa incarnation.

Examples of direct or saksat-avatars are the Sesa incarnation and the Ananta incarnation. In Ananta the power for sustaining all planets is invested, and in the Sesa incarnation the power for serving the Supreme Lord is invested.

Examples of indirect avatars are the four Kumaras, Narada, Prthu, Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed, Srila Prabhupada!

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the incarnation for this age of Kali, as confirmed in many places throughout the purāṇas, the Mahābhārata, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the Upaniṣads. The summary of His appearance is given in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (CC Madhya 6.99) as follows:

kali-yuge līlāvatāra nā kare bhagavān

ataeva 'tri-yuga' kari' kahi tāra nāma

In this age of Kali, the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bhagavān) does not appear as a līlāvatāra, an incarnation to display pastimes. Therefore He is known as tri-yuga. Unlike other incarnations, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appears in this age of Kali as a devotee of the Lord. Therefore He is called a concealed incarnation (channāvatāra).

Discovery:

1. What are the six broad classifications of avatāras?

Understanding:

2. "In this Age of Kali there is no līlā-avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but there is certainly a yuga-avatāra". Explain this statement.

Application:

3. How can we practically recognize an avatāra?

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally came as Lord Caitanya in order to distribute the process of chanting—the easiest means, in this age, to the highest perfection of life:

Out of many thousands of persons who are in self-knowledge as to what and who they are, only one or two may be actually liberated. And out of many thousands who are liberated, only one or two may understand what and who Kṛṣṇa is. So understanding Kṛṣṇa is not such an easy job. Thus in this age of Kali, an age characterized by ignorance and chaos, liberation is out of the reach of practically everyone. One has to go through the whole ordeal of becoming civilized, then religious, and then one has to perform charities and sacrifices and come to the platform of knowledge, then to the stage of liberation, and finally, after liberation, to the understanding of what Kṛṣṇa is.... Practically speaking, this process is not very easy in this age of Kali. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam a description is given of the people of this age. Their duration of life is said to be very short, they tend to be phlegmatic and slow and to sleep a great deal, and when they're not sleeping, they are busy earning money. At the most they only have two hours a day for spiritual activities, so what is the hope for spiritual understanding? It is also stated that even if one is anxious to make spiritual progress, there are many pseudospiritual societies to take advantage of him. People are also characterized in this age as being unfortunate. They have a great deal of difficulty meeting the primary demands of life—eating, defending, mating, and sleeping—necessities which are met even by the animals. Even if people are meeting these necessities in this age, they are always anxious about war, either defending themselves from aggressors or having to go to war themselves. In addition to this, there are always disturbing diseases and economic problems in Kali-yuga. Therefore Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa considered that in this age it is impossible for people to come to the perfectional stage of liberation by following the prescribed rules and regulations.

Thus out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and distributed the means to the highest perfection of life and spiritual ecstasy by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process of chanting is most practical, and it does not depend on whether one is liberated or not, or whether one's condition is conducive to spiritual life or not— whoever takes to this process becomes immediately purified. Therefore it is called pavitram (pure). Furthermore, for one who takes to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness process, the seeds of latent reactions to his sinful actions are all nullified. Just as a fire turns whatever we put into it to ashes, this process turns to ashes all the sinful reactions of our past lives.

Rāja-vidyā: The King of Knowledge

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends, and then share your experience with the group

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana movement is meant for making people happy:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His *saṅkīrtana* movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy.

Cc. Ādi 9.45

Preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness is showing real mercy to living entities:

“If a living entity is developed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is merciful to others, and if his spiritual knowledge of self-realization is perfect, he will immediately attain liberation from the bondage of material existence.”

In this verse the word *dayā jīvesu*, meaning mercy to other living entities, indicates that a living entity must be merciful to other living entities if he wishes to make progress in self-realization. This means he must preach this knowledge after perfecting himself and understanding his own position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Preaching this is showing real mercy to living entities. Other types of humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.

Bhāg. 4.29.1b

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

25. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six broad classifications:

- Purusa-avatars
 - the Maha-Visnu or Karanodakasayi avatara, the Garbhodakasayi avatara and the Ksirodakasayi avatara for material creation
- Lila-avatars
 - mainly the dasa-avatars
- Guna-avatars
 - Brahma (rajo-guna), Visnu (sattva-guna) and Siva (tamo-guna)
- Manvantara-avatars
 - fourteen ruling periods of Manus (manvantaras) in one day of Brahma (kalpa)
- Yuga-avatars
 - In the Satya-yuga, the incarnation of God is white; in the Treta-yuga He is red; in the Dvapara-yuga, He is blackish; and in the Kali-yuga He is also blackish, but sometimes, in a special Kali-yuga, His color is yellowish
- Saktyavesa-avatars
 - Examples of saktyavesa-avatars - direct or saksad-avatars are the Sesa incarnation and the Ananta incarnation; indirect avatars are: four Kumaras, Narada, Prthu etc.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Kali, līlā-avatāra and yuga-avatāra:

- Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not mentioned as a līlā-avatāra because He is an incarnation in disguise (channa-avatāra). In this Age of Kali there are no līlā-avatāras.
- In the four yugas — Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali — the Lord incarnates in four colors: white, red, black and yellow respectively. These are the colors of the incarnations in different millenniums.
- Accepting the color yellow (pīta), as well as other characteristics, the Lord incarnated as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (as yuga avatāra) as confirmed by Garga muni.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Recognizing an avatāra:

- By studying the words of saintly people, the spiritual master, and śāstra (according to the symptoms of avatāra described in the śāstra), one can understand who is an avatara and who is not.
- From personal characteristics - bodily features, nature and form.
- From marginal characteristics - Knowledge of His activities.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

26. 6 Kinds of Loving Exchanges Amongst Devotees

FROM THE NECTAR OF INSTRUCTION 4
BY H.D.G. A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

dadāti pratigrhṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti prcchati
bhuñkte bhojayate caiva
ṣaḍ-vidharṇ prīti-lakṣaṇam

TRANSLATION

Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting prasada and offering prasada are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another.

PURPORT

In this verse Srila Rupa Gosvami explains how to perform devotional activities in the association of other devotees. There are six kinds of activities: (1) giving charity to the devotees, (2) accepting from the devotees whatever they may offer in return, (3) opening one's mind to the devotees, (4) inquiring from them about the confidential service of the Lord, (5) honoring prasada, or spiritual food, given by the devotees, and (6) feeding the devotees with prasada. An experienced devotee explains, and an inexperienced devotee learns from him. This is guhyam ākhyāti prcchati. When a devotee distributes prasada, remnants of food offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in order to maintain our spirit of devotional service we must accept this prasada as the Lord's grace received through the pure devotees. We should also invite pure devotees to our home, offer them prasada and be prepared to please them in all respects. This is called bhuñkte bhojayate caiva.

Even in ordinary social activities, these six types of dealings between two loving friends are absolutely necessary. For instance, when one businessman wishes to contact another businessman he arranges a feast in a hotel, and over the feast openly expresses what he wishes to do. He then inquires from his business friend how he should act, and sometimes presents are exchanged. Thus whenever there is a dealing of priti, or love in intimate dealings, these six activities are executed. In the previous verse, Srila Rupa Gosvami advised that one should renounce worldly association and keep company with the devotees (saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ). The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees. This Society was started single-handedly, but because people are coming forward and dealing with the give-and-take policy, the Society is now expanding all over the world. We are glad that people are donating very liberally to the development of the Society's activities, and people are also eagerly accepting whatever humble contribution we are giving them in the shape of books and magazines dealing strictly with the subject matter of Krishna consciousness. We sometimes hold Hare Krishna festivals and invite life members and friends to participate in the feasting by accepting prasada. Although most of our members come from the higher rungs of society, they nonetheless come and take whatever little prasada we are able to offer them. Sometimes the members and supporters inquire very confidentially about the methods of performing devotional service, and we try to explain this. In this way our Society is successfully spreading all over the world, and the intelligentsia of all countries is gradually appreciating our Krishna conscious activities. The life of the Krishna conscious society is nourished by these six types of loving exchange among the members; therefore people must be given the chance to associate with the devotees of ISKCON because simply by reciprocating in the six ways mentioned above, an ordinary man can fully revive his dormant Krishna consciousness. In Bhagavad-gita (2.62) it is stated, saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ: one's desires and ambitions develop according to the company one keeps. It is often said that a man is

known by his company, and if an ordinary man associates with devotees, he will certainly develop his dormant Krishna consciousness. The understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is innate in every living entity, and it is already developed to some extent when the living entity takes a human body. It is said in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.107):

nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya

"Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, the living entity naturally awakens." Since Kṛṣṇa consciousness is inherent in every living entity, everyone should be given a chance to hear about Kṛṣṇa. Simply by hearing and chanting -- sravanam kirtanam -- one's heart is directly purified, and one's original Kṛṣṇa consciousness is immediately awakened.

Not only is the chanter of the mahā-mantra purified, but the heart of anyone who happens to hear the transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is also cleansed. Even the souls embodied in lower animals, insects, trees and other species of life also become purified and prepared to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious simply by hearing the transcendental vibration. This was explained by Ṭhākura Haridāsa when Caitanya Mahāprabhu inquired from him how living entities lower than human beings can be delivered from material bondage. Haridāsa Ṭhākura said that the chanting of the holy names is so powerful that even if one chants in the remotest parts of the jungle, the trees and animals will advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness simply by hearing the vibration. This was actually proved by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself when He passed through the forest of Jhārikhaṇḍa. At that time the tigers, snakes, deer and all other animals abandoned their natural animosity and began chanting and dancing in saṅkīrtana. Of course, we cannot imitate the activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but we should follow in His footsteps. We are not powerful enough to enchant the lower animals such as tigers, snakes, cats and dogs or entice them to dance, but by chanting the holy names of the Lord we can actually convert many people throughout the world to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Contributing or distributing the holy name of the Lord is a sublime example of contributing or giving charity (the dadāti principle). By the same token, one must also follow the pratigṛhṇāti principle and be willing and ready to receive the transcendental gift. One should inquire about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and open his mind in order to understand the situation of this material world. Thus the guhyam ākhyāti prcchati principles can be served.

Discovery:

1. What are the six loving exchanges among devotees?

Understanding:

2. How is distributing the holy name of the Lord a sublime example of contribution or giving in charity?

Application:

3. How can we practice these six loving exchanges with devotees in our daily lives?

Sri Namamrita

Nārada Muni mentions this *sādhana-bhakti* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Seventh Canto, First Chapter, verse 32. He says there to King Yudhiṣṭhira: “My dear King, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.” That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is the duty of the *ācārya*, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us an authorized program for this purpose, centered around the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. This chanting has so much power that it immediately attaches one to Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*. Somehow or other, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. The great saint Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, although a responsible king, fixed his mind on Kṛṣṇa, and similarly anyone who tries to fix his mind in this way will very rapidly make progress in successfully reviving his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Nectar of Devotion

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness. Share your experience with the group.

There are so many unwanted literatures full of materialistic ideas of sense gratification.... The people in general want to read (that is a natural instinct), but because their minds are polluted they want such literatures. Under the circumstances, transcendental literature like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will not only diminish the activities of the corrupt mind of the people in general, but also it will supply food for their hankering after reading some interesting literature. In the beginning they may not like it because one suffering from jaundice is reluctant to take sugar candy, but we should know that sugar candy is the only remedy for jaundice. Similarly, let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavaram*, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification. When men have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease.

Bhāg. 1.5.11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

26. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six loving exchanges:

- (1) giving charity to the devotees, (2) accepting from the devotees whatever they may offer in return, (3) opening one's mind to the devotees, (4) inquiring from them about the confidential service of the Lord, (5) honoring prasada, or spiritual food, given by the devotees, and (6) feeding the devotees with prasada.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Nāma dhāna:

- Not only is the chanter of the mahā-mantra purified, but the heart of anyone who happens to hear the transcendental vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is also cleansed.
- Even the souls embodied in lower animals, insects, trees and other species of life also become purified and prepared to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious simply by hearing the transcendental vibration.
- We are not powerful enough to enchant the lower animals such as tigers, snakes, cats and dogs or entice them to dance, but by chanting the holy names of the Lord we can actually inspire many people throughout the world to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- Contributing or distributing the holy name of the Lord is a sublime example of contribution or giving charity (the dadāti principle).

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Practicing loving exchanges:

- Share how we can apply these 6 principles in our daily lives.

Quiz 6, Edifications 21-26

1. What are the qualities of a bonafide Guru?
2. What is the method of accepting Vedic knowledge?
3. Describe the four classes of pious men who surrender to Kṛṣṇa?
4. “People who come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions, are still not pure devotees” State True or False. Why?
5. Give examples of the four classes of pious men.
6. Give examples of the four classes of miscreants.
7. What is the meaning of the word “Bhagavan”?
8. Describe the six opulences of God.
9. What are the six broad classifications of avatāras?
10. “In this Age of Kali there is no līlā-avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but there is certainly a yuga-avatāra” State True or False. Why?
11. What is the process for recognizing an avatāra?
12. What are the six loving exchanges among devotees?

ACTIVITY: KRISHNA PASTIME NIGHT II

Share the pastime of lifting Sri Govardhan and chastising Kaliya from the Krishna Book.

Quiz 6, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What are the qualities of a bonafide Guru?

- ▶ A bonafide Guru must be from a disciplic succession starting from the Lord Himself.
- ▶ The guru must have realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation.
- ▶ He should be fixed in devotional service to the Supreme.
- ▶ He should be able to confirm the authenticity of the message he is presenting by the support of the scriptures and teachings of the great seers of truth of the present and the past.
- ▶ The guru should know the essence of the scriptures that Krishna is the Absolute Truth.

2. What is the method of accepting Vedic knowledge?

Following the Disciplic Succession

3. Describe the four classes of pious men who surrender to Kṛṣṇa?

- ▶ those who are sometimes distressed,
- ▶ those who are in need of money,

■ Those who are always busy with fruitive activities come to the Lord in material distress and at that time associate with pure devotees and become, in their distress, devotees of the Lord. Those who are simply frustrated also come sometimes to associate with the pure devotees and become inquisitive to know about God.

- ▶ those who are sometimes inquisitive,
- ▶ and those who are sometimes searching after knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

■ Similarly, when the dry philosophers are frustrated in every field of knowledge, they sometimes want to learn of God, and they come to the Supreme Lord to render devotional service and thus transcend knowledge of the impersonal Brahman and the localized Paramātmā and come to the personal conception of Godhead by the grace of the Supreme Lord or His pure devotee.

4. "People who come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions, are still not pure devotees" State True or False. Why?

TRUE

▶ Persons come to the Supreme Lord for devotional service under different conditions are not pure devotees, because they have some aspiration to fulfill in exchange for devotional service.

▶ Pure devotional service is without aspiration and without desire for material profit.

▶ The Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11) defines pure devotion thus: (anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyāṁ / jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam; ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-/ śīlanāṁ bhaktir uttamā)

"One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service."

5. Give examples of the four classes of pious men.

- ▶ the distressed: **Gajendra**
- ▶ the desirer of wealth: **Dhruva Maharaj**
- ▶ the inquisitive: **sages assembled in the Naimiṣāraṇya Forest, headed by the sage Śaunaka**
- ▶ he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute: **Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda and Sanat-kumāra**

6. Give examples of the four classes of miscreants.

- ▶ who are grossly foolish,

- ▶ They want to enjoy the fruits of their labor by themselves, and so do not want to part with them for the Supreme.
- ▶ who are lowest among mankind,
 - ▶ Those who are socially and politically developed but who have no religious principles must be considered narādhama.
- ▶ whose knowledge is stolen by illusion,
 - ▶ Those persons whose erudite knowledge has been nullified by the influence of illusory material energy. They are mostly very learned fellows — great philosophers, poets, literati, scientists, etc. — but the illusory energy misguides them, and therefore they disobey the Supreme Lord.
- ▶ and those who partake of the atheistic nature of demons,
 - ▶ This class is openly atheistic.

7. What is the meaning of the word “Bhagavan”?

One who is full or complete in six opulences – who has full or complete strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, beauty and renunciation

8. Describe the six opulences of God.

▶ **Aishvarya (Wealth):** Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the proprietor of all riches. There are many rich men in the world, but no one can claim that he possesses all the wealth. We understand from the Srimad Bhagavatam, that when Krishna was present on this earth He had 16,108 wives, and each wife lived in a palace made of marbles and bedecked with jewels. The rooms were filled with furniture made of ivory and gold, and there was great opulence everywhere.

These are all attractive features. We experience in this material world that if a man is very rich, he is attractive. They are attractive even though they do not possess all the wealth of the world. How much more attractive, then, is God, Who is the possessor of all riches.

▶ **Virya (Strength):** Krishna has unlimited strength. His strength was present from the moment of His birth. Even when Krishna was a little baby, He killed the powerful demon, Putana. At the age of seven, Krishna lifted the huge Govardhan Hill.

▶ **Yasha (Fame):** Krishna has unlimited fame. We are devotees of Krishna and know Him and glorify Him, but apart from us, many millions in the world, are aware of the fame of the Bhagavad-Gita.

▶ **Sri (Beauty):** Beauty, another opulence, is possessed unlimitedly by Krishna. Krishna Himself is very beautiful. The name Krishna means “the All Attractive”. This planet is an insignificant planet within the universe, yet within this planet, one person has many attractive features.

▶ **Jnana (Knowledge):** We find Krishna’s knowledge right and perfect. He spoke the Bhagavad-Gita 5000 years ago on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

▶ **Vairagya (Renunciation):** At the same time, Krishna possesses full renunciation. So many things are working under Krishna’s direction in this material world, but actually Krishna is not present here. Thus Krishna is aloof from the material world.

9. What are the six broad classifications of avatāras?

- ▶ Purusa-avatars
 - a. the Maha-Visnu or Karanodakasayi avatara, the Garbhodakasayi avatara and the Ksirodakasayi avatara for material creation
- ▶ Lila-avatars
 - b. mainly the dasa-avatars
- ▶ Guna-avatars
 - c. Brahma (rajo-guna), Visnu (sattva-guna) and Siva (tamo-guna)
- ▶ Manvantara-avatars

d. fourteen ruling periods of Manus (manvantaras) in one day of Brahma (kalpa)

► Yuga-avatars

e. In the Satya-yuga, the incarnation of God is white; in the Treta-yuga He is red; in the Dvapara-yuga, He is blackish; and in the Kali-yuga He is also blackish, but sometimes, in a special Kali-yuga, His color is yellowish

► Saktyavesa-avatars

f. Examples of saktyavesa-avatars - direct or saksad-avatars are the Sesa incarnation and the Ananta incarnation; indirect avatars are: four Kumaras, Narada, Prthu etc.

10. “In this Age of Kali there is no līlā-avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but there is certainly a yuga-avatāra” State True or False. Why?

TRUE

► Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not mentioned as a līlā-avatāra because He is an incarnation in disguise (channa-avatāra). In this Age of Kali there are no līlā-avatāras.

► In the four yugas — Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali — the Lord incarnates in four colors: white, red, black and yellow respectively. These are the colors of the incarnations in different millenniums.

► Accepting the color yellow (pīta), as well as other characteristics, the Lord incarnated as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (as yuga avatāra) as confirmed by Garga muni.

11. What is the process for recognizing an avatāra?

► By studying the words of saintly people, the spiritual master and the śāstra. According to the symptoms described in the śāstra, one can understand who is an avatāra and who is not.

► From personal characteristics - bodily features, nature and form.

► From marginal characteristics - Knowledge of His activities.

12. What are the six loving exchanges among devotees?

(1) giving charity to the devotees, (2) accepting from the devotees whatever they may offer in return, (3) opening one's mind to the devotees, (4) inquiring from them about the confidential service of the Lord, (5) honoring prasada, or spiritual food, given by the devotees, and (6) feeding the devotees with prasada.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

27. 6 Unfavorable Principles for Devotional Service

FROM THE NECTAR OF INSTRUCTION 2
BY H.D.G.A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyarṇ ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati

TRANSLATION

One's devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities: (1) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) over endeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) Practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Krishna consciousness; and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements.

1. Eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required: Everyone needs possessions like food, money and other things in order to maintain his body, but one should not accumulate more than necessary for one's personal requirement. Living entities lower on the evolutionary scale do not eat or collect more than necessary. Consequently in the animal kingdom there is generally no economic problem or scarcity of necessities.

2. Over endeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain: Although we are in need of a certain economic development, it is only allowed for essential things in life. The real goal of life is to realize the Absolute Truth. As soon as we don't direct our endeavors in this direction, we will simply increase our artificial demands. Therefore we have to guard ourselves from worldly endeavors. By God's arrangement, anyone in any part of the world can live very peacefully if he has some land and a milk cow. There is no need for man to move from one place to another to earn a livelihood, for one can produce food grains locally and get milk from cows. That can solve all economic problems.

3. Talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters: Those who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness like to read heaps of newspapers, solve riddles, read novels, etc. They are simply wasting their time with useless activities. In this way materialistic people waste valuable time and energy. Old people spend their days with playing cards, fishing, television and speculations about social and political topics. All these activities belong to the prajalpa category, and should be avoided by intelligent people.

4. Practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically. Those who are interested in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness should not be eager to follow rules and regulations in order to have economic success but they should faithfully follow the rules and regulations given in the scriptures and follow the order of the spiritual master in order to advance in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. Unfortunately people accept religion for material prosperity because of atyāhāra, or an excessive desire for such prosperity. True religion, however, instructs people to be satisfied with the bare necessities of life while cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

5. Associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness: There are two kinds of non-devotees; those who are against Kṛṣṇa's supremacy and those who are absorbed in material sense gratification. One should strictly avoid such association. We should live only in association with Kṛṣṇa-conscious devotees and always be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service in their association. Consequently materialistic persons form various associations and clubs to enhance their

endeavors. For example, in the business world we find such institutions as the stock exchange and chamber of commerce. Similarly, we have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to give people an opportunity to associate with those who have not forgotten Kṛṣṇa.

6. Being greedy for mundane achievements: Desires for mystic powers, merging into Brahman, whimsically striving for wealth, etc., are all in the category of greed. All attempts for material or pseudo-spiritual achievements are obstacles in devotional service. Modern warfare waged between capitalists and communists is due to their avoiding the advice of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī regarding atyāhāra. Modern capitalists accumulate more wealth than necessary, and the communists, envious of their prosperity, want to nationalize all wealth and property. Thus unless all wealth comes under the administration of Kṛṣṇa, there can be no solution to the economic problem of mankind.

Discovery:

1. What are the six unfavorable principles for devotional service?

Understanding:

2. With examples, explain how these six unfavorable principles are responsible for many of the current world problems?

Application:

3. Human life is meant for plain living and high thinking. How can we decrease taking part in these unfavorable activities?

Sri Namamrita

A devotee engaged in chanting the holy name of the Lord should practice forbearance like that of a tree. Even if rebuked or chastised, he should not say anything to others to retaliate. For even if one cuts a tree, it never protests, nor even if it is drying up and dying does it ask anyone for water.

This practice of forbearance (tṛṇād api sunīcena) is very difficult, but when one actually engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, the quality of forbearance automatically develops. A person advanced in spiritual consciousness through the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra need not practice to develop it separately, for a devotee develops all good qualities simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 17.27–28

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Cook, offer and distribute prasadam to your friends

My dear Arjuna, one who is engaged in My pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly to every living entity, certainly comes to Me.

A devotee of Kṛṣṇa is friendly to everyone. Therefore it is said here that he has no enemy. How is this? A devotee situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows that only devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can relieve a person from all the problems of life. He has personal experience of this, and therefore he wants to introduce this system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, into human society. There are many examples in history of devotees of the Lord risking their lives for the spreading of God consciousness. The favorite example is Lord Jesus Christ. He was crucified by the nondevotees, but He sacrificed His life for spreading God consciousness.... Similarly, in India also there are many examples, such as Ṭhākura Haridāsa. Why such risk? Because they wanted to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is difficult. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person knows that if a man is suffering, it is due to his forgetfulness of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the highest benefit one can render to human society is relieving one's neighbor from all material problems. In such a way, a pure devotee is engaged in the service of the Lord.

Bg. 11.55

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

27. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six unfavorable principles for devotional service:

- (1) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) over endeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) Practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Krishna consciousness; and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Examples in current world:

- Living entities lower on the evolutionary scale do not eat or collect more than necessary. Consequently in the animal kingdom there is generally no economic problem or scarcity of necessities.
- By God's arrangement, anyone in any part of the world can live very peacefully if he has some land and a milk cow. There is no need for man to move from one place to another to earn a livelihood, for one can produce food grains locally and get milk from cows. That can solve all economic problems
- Those who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa-consciousness like to read heaps of newspapers, solve riddles, read novels, etc. They are simply wasting their time with useless activities. In this way materialistic people waste valuable time and energy. Old people spend their days with playing cards, fishing, television and speculations about social and political topics.
- Unfortunately people accept religion for material prosperity because of atyāhāra, or an excessive desire for such prosperity. True religion, however, instructs people to be satisfied with the bare necessities of life while cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- In the business world we find such institutions as the stock exchange and chamber of commerce. Similarly, we have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to give people an opportunity to associate with those who have not forgotten Kṛṣṇa.
- Modern warfare waged between capitalists and communists is due to their avoiding the advice of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī regarding atyāhāra. Modern capitalists accumulate more wealth than necessary, and the communists, envious of their prosperity, want to nationalize all wealth and property. Thus unless all wealth comes under the administration of Kṛṣṇa, there can be no solution to the economic problem of mankind.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Practicing loving exchanges:

- Share how we can decrease these six activities that are unfavorable to devotional service.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

28. 6 Favorable Principles for Devotional Service

FROM THE NECTAR OF INSTRUCTION 3
BY H.D.G.A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

TRANSLATION

There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles (such as śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam [SB 7.5.23] — hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa), (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

1. **BEING ENTHUSIASTIC:** Every endeavor in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is performed with intelligence. The devotees are expert in engaging everything in Kṛṣṇa's service. The practice of devotional service has nothing to do with selfish meditation, but means practical activity in spiritual life. Without enthusiasm, one cannot be successful. Even in the material world one has to be very enthusiastic in his particular field of activity in order to become successful. A student, businessman, artist or anyone else who wants success in his line must be enthusiastic. Similarly, one has to be very enthusiastic in devotional service. Enthusiasm means action, but action for whom? The answer is that one should always act for Kṛṣṇa.

2. **ENDEAVORING WITH CONFIDENCE:** The devotee thinks "avasya raksibe Kṛṣṇa": Kṛṣṇa will certainly help and protect me, so that I can successfully execute my devotional service. The devotees find the correct means by which everything can be utilized in the service of the Lord (nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate).

3. **PATIENCE:** One should not be impatient when executing one's devotional service but accept the orders of the spiritual master, patiently execute them and always feel dependent on the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes Srila Prabhupada used to give the following example in this regard: a newly wed girl naturally may expect a child from her husband, but she cannot hope to get it right after the marriage. In other words, it takes time, until the results are manifested.

4. **ACTING ACCORDING TO REGULATIVE PRINCIPLES** (such as sravanam kirtanam): The devotee is expected to enthusiastically follow the 4 regulative principles and observe positive regulations like the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

5. **ABANDONING ASSOCIATION WITH NON-DEVOTEES:** In order to become successful in devotional service one has to give up the association of unwanted persons. This includes karmis, jnanis and other non-devotees. Sri Caitanya defines a Vaisnava as someone who gives up the association with worldly people.

6. **FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PREVIOUS ACARYAS:** In Kṛṣṇa-consciousness we follow a daily program (sadhana) which includes getting up early in the morning, chanting, reading of Srimad Bhagavatam etc., and thus we are following the previous spiritual masters, who were expertly engaged in devotional service every single moment in their lives.

Discovery:

1. What are the six favorable principles for devotional service?

Understanding:

2. With examples, explain how these six favorable principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service?

Application:

3. How can we apply these six favorable principles in our daily lives?

Sri Namamrita

When the mind is finally trained to the point where it will think of nothing but Kṛṣṇa, it will attain peace and will become very tranquil.

*praśānta-manasaṁ hy enaṁ
yoginam sukham uttamam
upaiti śānta-rajasaṁ
brahma-bhūtam akalmaṣam*

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

The mind is always concocting objects for happiness. I am always thinking, “This will make me happy,” or “That will make me happy. Happiness is here. Happiness is there.” In this way the mind is taking us anywhere and everywhere. It is as though we are riding on a chariot behind an unbridled horse. We have no power over where we are going but can only sit in horror and watch helplessly. As soon as the mind is engaged in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process—specifically by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—then the wild horses of the mind will gradually come under our control.

On the Way to Kṛṣṇa

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Tell a friend about what you like in the Bhakti Vriksha gathering, and if the friend is interested, introduce them to the group.

In this material world, everyone is trying to counteract the onslaught of material nature, but everyone is ultimately fully controlled by material nature.... So-called scientists, philosophers, religionists and politicians should therefore conclude that they cannot offer facilities to the people in general. They should make vigorous propaganda to awaken the populace and raise them to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our humble attempt to propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world is the only remedy that can bring about a peaceful and happy life. We can never be happy without the mercy of the Supreme Lord....

Bhāg. 7.9.19

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate*

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

*śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,
jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,
swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi*

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

*jaya nimāi jaya nitāi
jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

28. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six favorable principles for devotional service:

- (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles (such as śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam [SB 7.5.23] — hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa), (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Examples related to favorable principles:

- Even in the material world one has to be very enthusiastic in his particular field of activity in order to become successful. A student, businessman, artist or anyone else who wants success in his line must be enthusiastic. Similarly, one has to be very enthusiastic in devotional service. Enthusiasm means action, but action for whom? The answer is that one should always act for Kṛṣṇa.
- The devotees find the correct means by which everything can be utilized in the service of the Lord.
- Sometimes Srila Prabhupada used to give the following example in this regard: a newly wed girl naturally may expect a child from her husband, but she cannot hope to get it right after the marriage. In other words, it takes time, until the results are manifested.
- The devotee is expected to enthusiastically follow the 4 regulative principles and observe positive regulations like the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- One has to give up the association of karmis, jñanis and other non-devotees.
- Follow a daily program (sadhana) which includes getting up early in the morning, chanting, reading of Srimad Bhagavatam etc., and thus we are following the previous spiritual masters.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Practicing loving exchanges:

- Share how we can implement these six principles that are favorable to devotional service.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

29. 6 Enemies of the Mind

FROM SRI PREMA BHAKTI CHANDRIKA CH.2 TEXT 8
BY SRILA NAROTTAMA DAS THAKUR

The six enemies; lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy and the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch reside in my body but I am unable to control them. Although I hear and understand repeatedly that one should serve Krishna with all his senses, still I cannot accept this fact with firm determination.

One should not trust his mind, which is so fickle that it can give way to enemies at any moment. The mind is always accompanied by six enemies—namely, kama, krodha, mada, moha, matsarya and bhaya—that is, lust, anger, intoxication, illusion, envy and fear. Although the mind may be merged in spiritual consciousness, one should always be very careful in dealing with it, just as one is careful in dealing with a snake. One should never think that his mind is trained and that he can do whatever he likes. One interested in spiritual life should always engage his mind in the service of the Lord so that the enemies of the mind, who always accompany the mind, will be subdued. If the mind is not engaged in Krsna consciousness at every moment, there is a chance that it will give way to its enemies. In this way we become victims of the mind.

Chanting the Hare Krsna mantra engages the mind at the lotus feet of Krsna constantly; thus the mind's enemies do not have a chance to strike.

Continuing from the book, Sri Prema Bhakti Chandrika, Srila Narottama Das Thakur in ch.2 text 10, talks about how we can dovetail these enemies of the mind:

"Lust I will engage in offering the fruits of my work to Lord Krsna. Anger I will direct towards the enemies of the devotees. Greed I will engage by being greedy to hear the topics of Lord Hari in the association of the saintly devotees. Bewilderment will be manifested because I cannot immediately attain my worshipable Lord. Madness will be there when I madly glorify the transcendental attributes of Lord Krsna. In this way I will engage each of these in the service of Lord Krsna."

Lust is obsession born of the tendency to control. We can dovetail lust by engaging the fruits of our endeavor in Krishna's service.

We can dovetail Pride by being proud of Krishna, His opulences and the mercy of Sri Guru and the Vaishnavas.

We can dovetail greed by always being greedy for Krishna's devotional service, hearing the topics about Krishna.

Anger can be dovetailed by using it against those who criticize or offend the Lord and His devotees. Like Hanuman burnt down the city of Lanka out of his spiritual anger towards Ravana for kidnapping Mother Sita, thus giving pain to his worshipable Lord, Sri Rama.

Illusion or bewilderment due to attachment to material things can be purified by becoming attached to Krishna.

Lust, pride, greed, anger and illusion can be dovetailed in the service of Krishna. However, envy cannot be dovetailed. We have to completely uproot this negative emotion, to fully appreciate spiritual emotions and relish pure Krishna Consciousness.

Discovery:

1. What are the enemies of the mind?

Understanding:

2. Why can't envy be dovetailed in service of Krishna?

Application:

3. How can we dovetail lust, anger, greed, illusion, and pride in the service of Krishna?

Sri Namamrita

Lord Caitanya introduced the saṅkīrtana-yajña for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna]: In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things.”

The Lord created this material world for the conditioned souls to learn how to perform yajñas (sacrifice) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety. Then after finishing the present material body, they can enter into the kingdom of God. That is the whole program for the conditioned soul. By performance of yajña, the conditioned souls gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious and become godly in all respects. In this age of Kali, the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the names of God) is recommended by the Vedic scriptures, and this transcendental system was introduced by Lord Caitanya for the deliverance of all men in this age. Sankīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His devotional form (as Lord Caitanya) is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows, with special reference to the saṅkīrtana-yajña:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (S.B. 11.5.32)

Other yajñas prescribed in the Vedic literatures are not easy to perform in this age of Kali, but the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is easy and sublime for all purposes.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 3.10

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute 1 book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger, and share your experience with the group.

Preaching is the highest welfare activity:

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone. The sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend. Therefore, to act to revive this consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. One cannot be engaged in first-class welfare work without being liberated in the Supreme. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. He has no doubt because he is completely freed from all sins. This is the state of divine love.

A person engaged only in ministering to the physical welfare of human society cannot factually help anyone. Temporary relief of the external body and the mind is not satisfactory. The real cause of one's difficulties in the hard struggle for life may be found in one's forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. When a man is fully conscious of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is actually a liberated soul, although he may be in the material tabernacle.

Bg. 5.25

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

29. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six enemies:

- The six enemies; lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Envy:

- We cannot be envious of somebody and use it for Krsna's service.
- Material envy is with malice. When we are envious in the material world, we want to put others down. We want to either do better than others or achieve something better than them, and the way we do it is by diminishing what they are doing.
- Envy means thinking that "I am the source of all service to Krishna. Everything is emanating from me".

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Dovetailing the six enemies:

- We can dovetail lust by engaging the fruits of our endeavor in Krishna's service.
- We can dovetail Pride by being proud of Krishna, His opulences and the mercy of Sri Guru and the Vaishnavas.
- We can dovetail greed by always being greedy for Krishna's devotional service, hearing the topics about Krishna.
- Anger can be dovetailed by using it against those who criticize or offend the Lord and His devotees.
- Illusion or bewilderment due to attachment to material things can be purified by becoming attached to Krishna.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

30. 6 Divisions of Surrender

Kṛṣṇa concludes the Bhagavad Gita by saying,

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear. (Bhagavad Gita 18.66) So, what does Krishna mean by “surrender”? How can we identify if we are surrendering to Krishna? If we do not understand the real meaning of surrender, we may become misguided to perform sinful activities in the name of surrender to the Lord.

Real Surrender is to lovingly follow the instructions of the Lord in one’s life, not a temporary sentimental state of mind.

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Madhya Lila – 22.100, explains the divisions of surrender, which is the benchmark of the process of surrender.

ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopīṛtve varaṇaṁ tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgaṭiḥ

TRANSLATION

“The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one’s guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility.

PURPORT

One who is fully surrendered is qualified with the six following characteristics: (1) The devotee has to accept everything that is favorable for the rendering of transcendental loving service to the Lord. (2) He must reject everything unfavorable to the Lord’s service. This is also called renunciation. (3) A devotee must be firmly convinced that Kṛṣṇa will give him protection. No one else can actually give one protection, and being firmly convinced of this is called faith. This kind of faith is different from the faith of an impersonalist who wants to merge into the Brahman effulgence in order to benefit by cessation of repeated birth and death. A devotee wants to remain always in the Lord’s service. In this way, Kṛṣṇa is merciful to His devotee and gives him all protection from the dangers found on the path of devotional service. (4) The devotee should accept Kṛṣṇa as his supreme maintainer and master. He should not think that he is being protected by a demigod. He should depend only on Kṛṣṇa, considering Him the only protector. The devotee must be firmly convinced that within the three worlds he has no protector or maintainer other than Kṛṣṇa. (5) Self-surrender means remembering that one’s activities and desires are not independent. The devotee is completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa, and he acts and thinks as Kṛṣṇa desires. (6) The devotee is meek and humble.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the Bhagavad-gītā (15.15):

sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the Vedas I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.” Situated in everyone’s heart, Kṛṣṇa deals differently according to the living entity’s position. The living entity’s position is to be under the protection of the illusory energy or under Kṛṣṇa’s personal protection. When a living entity is fully surrendered, he is under the direct protection of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa gives him all intelligence by which he can advance in spiritual realization. The nondevotee, however, being under the protection of the illusory energy, increasingly forgets his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes it is asked how Kṛṣṇa causes one to forget. Kṛṣṇa personally

causes His devotee to forget material activities, and through the agency of māyā Kṛṣṇa causes the nondevotee to forget his devotional service to the Lord. This is called apohana.

Discovery:

1. What are the six divisions of surrender?

Understanding:

2. Explain the principle of apohana?

Application:

3. How can we develop faith in Kṛṣṇa and progress towards full-surrender?

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally came as Lord Caitanya in order to distribute the process of chanting—the easiest means, in this age, to the highest perfection of life:

Out of many thousands of persons who are in self-knowledge as to what and who they are, only one or two may be actually liberated. And out of many thousands who are liberated, only one or two may understand what and who Kṛṣṇa is. So understanding Kṛṣṇa is not such an easy job. Thus in this age of Kali, an age characterized by ignorance and chaos, liberation is out of the reach of practically everyone. One has to go through the whole ordeal of becoming civilized, then religious, and then one has to perform charities and sacrifices and come to the platform of knowledge, then to the stage of liberation, and finally, after liberation, to the understanding of what Kṛṣṇa is.... Practically speaking, this process is not very easy in this age of Kali. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam a description is given of the people of this age. Their duration of life is said to be very short, they tend to be phlegmatic and slow and to sleep a great deal, and when they're not sleeping, they are busy earning money. At the most they only have two hours a day for spiritual activities, so what is the hope for spiritual understanding? It is also stated that even if one is anxious to make spiritual progress, there are many pseudospiritual societies to take advantage of him. People are also characterized in this age as being unfortunate. They have a great deal of difficulty meeting the primary demands of life—eating, defending, mating, and sleeping—necessities which are met even by the animals. Even if people are meeting these necessities in this age, they are always anxious about war, either defending themselves from aggressors or having to go to war themselves. In addition to this, there are always disturbing diseases and economic problems in Kali-yuga. Therefore Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa considered that in this age it is impossible for people to come to the perfectional stage of liberation by following the prescribed rules and regulations.

Thus out of His causeless mercy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and distributed the means to the highest perfection of life and spiritual ecstasy by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process of chanting is most practical, and it does not depend on whether one is liberated or not, or whether one's condition is conducive to spiritual life or not— whoever takes to this process becomes immediately purified. Therefore it is called pavitram (pure). Furthermore, for one who takes to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness process, the seeds of latent reactions to his sinful actions are all nullified. Just as a fire turns whatever we put into it to ashes, this process turns to ashes all the sinful reactions of our past lives.

Rāja-vidyā: The King of Knowledge

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Share the Hare Krishna Mahamantra with one of your friends, and then share your experience with the group

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana movement is meant for making people happy:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the most benevolent personality in human society because His only desire is to make people happy. His *saṅkīrtana* movement is especially meant for the purpose of making people happy.

Cc. Ādi 9.45

Preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness is showing real mercy to living entities:

“If a living entity is developed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is merciful to others, and if his spiritual knowledge of self-realization is perfect, he will immediately attain liberation from the bondage of material existence.”

In this verse the word *dayā jīvesu*, meaning mercy to other living entities, indicates that a living entity must be merciful to other living entities if he wishes to make progress in self-realization. This means he must preach this knowledge after perfecting himself and understanding his own position as an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Preaching this is showing real mercy to living entities. Other types of humanitarian work may be temporarily beneficial for the body, but because a living entity is spirit soul, ultimately one can show him real mercy only by revealing knowledge of his spiritual existence.

Bhāg. 4.29.1b

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

30. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Six divisions of surrender:

- The acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one's guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility.

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Apohana:

- The living entity's position is to be either under the protection of the illusory energy or under Krishna's personal protection.
- When a living entity is fully surrendered, he is under the direct protection of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa gives him all intelligence by which he can advance in spiritual realization.
- The nondevotee, however, being under the protection of the illusory energy, increasingly forgets his relationship with Kṛṣṇa.
- Sometimes it is asked how Kṛṣṇa causes one to forget. Kṛṣṇa personally causes His devotee to forget material activities, and through the agency of māyā Kṛṣṇa causes the nondevotee to forget his devotional service to the Lord. This is called apohana.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Development of faith:

- Share how we can develop the conviction that within the three worlds we have no protector or maintainer other than Kṛṣṇa.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

31. 9 Stages of Bhakti

FROM ŚRĪ CAITANYA CARITĀMṚTA MADHYA 23.14-15

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā ruciḥ tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudāñcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ

TRANSLATION

In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of sādhana-bhakti, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

1. śraddha: faith
2. sadhu-sanga: association with devotees
3. bhajana-kriya: performance of devotional service
4. anārtha nivṛtti: decreasing of unwanted attachments
5. niṣṭha: steadiness
6. ruci: taste
7. asakti: attachment
8. bhava: love
9. prema: pure love for Kṛṣṇa

In the Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu, Nectar of Devotion, the science of devotional service is explained as follows: In the beginning stage there must be a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will lead one to the platform of desiring to associate with spiritually advanced persons. The next step is to become initiated by an authorized spiritual master and to perform devotional service under his guidance. Through the execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one will become free from all material attachments, achieve steadiness in self realization and find taste in hearing about Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This taste leads one to further attachment in Kṛṣṇa consciousness which is called bhava or the preliminary stage of pure love of Godhead. Pure love to the Lord is called prema or the supreme perfectional stage in life.

Discovery:

1. What are the nine stages of bhakti?

Understanding:

2. What is the importance of each of these stages and how does a devotee mature from śraddhā and prema?

Application:

3. What steps can we take to aspire for a spiritual master? OR If we already have a spiritual master, how can we become more fixed in his service.

Sri Namamrita

Nārada Muni mentions this *sādhana-bhakti* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Seventh Canto, First Chapter, verse 32. He says there to King Yudhiṣṭhira: “My dear King, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.” That is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is the duty of the *ācārya*, the spiritual master, to find the ways and means for his disciple to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us an authorized program for this purpose, centered around the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. This chanting has so much power that it immediately attaches one to Kṛṣṇa. That is the beginning of *sādhana-bhakti*. Somehow or other, one has to fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa. The great saint Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, although a responsible king, fixed his mind on Kṛṣṇa, and similarly anyone who tries to fix his mind in this way will very rapidly make progress in successfully reviving his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Nectar of Devotion

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Read a chapter from Srila Prabhupada's book and share something that you liked with a friend of yours who does not know anything about Krishna Consciousness. Share your experience with the group.

There are so many unwanted literatures full of materialistic ideas of sense gratification.... The people in general want to read (that is a natural instinct), but because their minds are polluted they want such literatures. Under the circumstances, transcendental literature like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will not only diminish the activities of the corrupt mind of the people in general, but also it will supply food for their hankering after reading some interesting literature. In the beginning they may not like it because one suffering from jaundice is reluctant to take sugar candy, but we should know that sugar candy is the only remedy for jaundice. Similarly, let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavaram*, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification. When men have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease.

Bhāg. 1.5.11

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihwā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihwā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

31. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

DISCOVERY:

Question #1.

Nine stages:

- 1. sraddha: faith
- 2. sadhu-sanga: association with devotees
- 3. bhajana-kriya: performance of devotional service
- 4. anartha nivrtti: decreasing of unwanted attachments
- 5. nistha: steadiness
- 6. ruci: taste
- 7. asakti: attachment
- 8. bhava: love
- 9. prema: pure love for Krsna

UNDERSTANDING:

Question #2.

Progressing through 9 stages:

- In the beginning stage there must be a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will lead one to the platform of desiring to associate with spiritually advanced persons. The next step is to become initiated by an authorized spiritual master and to perform devotional service under his guidance.
- Through the execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one will become free from all material attachments, achieve steadiness in self realization and find taste in hearing about Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- This taste leads one to further attachment in Krsna consciousness which is called bhava or the preliminary stage of pure love of Godhead. Pure love to the Lord is called prema or the supreme perfectional stage in life.

APPLICATION:

Question #3.

Steps in aspiring for spiritual master:

- To aspire for a spiritual master, one should listen to lectures from various gurus, and see whose words impact us the most.
- The disciple makes the instructions of the spiritual master his/her life and soul.

Kirtan – Musical Meditations

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvati Gosvāmi. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my obeisances to Sri Krishna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Sri Advaita, Gadādhara, Srivāsa and all others in the line of devotion.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

This mantra is a spiritual call for shelter which means please engage me in Your loving service.

HARE is the divine feminine Potency which is all-accepting, all-forgiving and all-loving.

KRISHNA is the all attractive personal source of beauty, power and truth.

RAMA is the reservoir of ecstatic spiritual pleasure, the joy of giving and serving.

32. 9 Processes of Bhakti

FROM ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATAM 7.5.23-24
BY H.D.G.A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

śrī-prahrāda uvāca
śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanāṁ vandanaṁ dāsyāṁ
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam

TRANSLATION

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) — these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.

PURPORT

When Prahlāda Mahārāja was asked by his father to say something from whatever he had learned, he considered that what he had learned from his spiritual master was the best of all teachings whereas what he had learned about diplomacy from his material teachers, Śaṇḍa and Amarka, was useless. Bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra ca (Bhāg. 11.2.42). This is the symptom of pure devotional service. A pure devotee is interested only in devotional service, not in material affairs. To execute devotional service, one should always engage in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, or Lord Viṣṇu. The process of temple worship is called arcana. How to perform arcana will be explained herein. One should have complete faith in the words of Kṛṣṇa, who says that He is the great well-wishing friend of everyone (suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām). A devotee considers Kṛṣṇa the only friend. This is called sakhyam.

The word śravaṇa refers to giving aural reception to the holy name and descriptions of the Lord's form, qualities, entourage and pastimes as explained in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā and similar authorized scriptures. After aurally receiving such messages, one should memorize these vibrations and repeat them (kīrtanam). Smaraṇam means trying to understand more and more about the Supreme Lord, and pāda-sevanam means engaging oneself in serving the lotus feet of the Lord according to the time and circumstances. Arcanam means worshiping Lord Viṣṇu as one does in the temple, and vandanam means offering respectful obeisances. Man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru [Bg. 18.65]. Vandanam means namaskuru — offering obeisances or offering prayers. Thinking oneself to be nitya-kṛṣṇa-dāsa, everlastingly a servant of Kṛṣṇa, is called dāsyam, and sakhyam means being a well-wisher of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa wants everyone to surrender unto Him because everyone is constitutionally His servant. Therefore, as a sincere friend of Kṛṣṇa, one should preach this philosophy, requesting everyone to surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. Ātma-nivedanam means offering Kṛṣṇa everything, including one's body, mind, intelligence and whatever one may possess.

One's sincere endeavor to perform these nine processes of devotional service is technically called bhakti.

There are various devotees who have perfected their lives by following one of these nine processes of Bhakti.

1. HEARING (sravanam): Maharaja Pariksit (the last seven days of his life, he constantly heard the Srimad Bhagavatam).
2. CHANTING (kirtanam): Sukadeva Goswami (spoke the Bhagavatam to Maharaja Pariksit)
3. REMEMBERING (Visnu smaranam): Prahlada Maharaja (never forgot Krsna despite constant tortures from his father- Hiranyakashipu)
4. SERVING THE LORD'S LOTUS FEET (pada sevanam): Laxmi, the Goddess of Fortune, is always engaged in serving the lotus feet of the Lord.
5. DEITY-WORSHIP (arcanam): Maharaja Prthu used all of his royal possessions in order to offer them in pure devotion to the Lord.
6. PRAYING (vandanam): Akura offered prayers to Krsna when he was traveling to Vrndavana in order to see Krsna.
7. EXECUTING ORDERS (dasyam): Hanuman, the intimate servant of Ramacandra executed all of Sri Ramacandra's orders despite all kinds of difficulties.
8. SERVING AS A FRIEND (sakhyam): Arjuna was so close to Krsna, that the Lord offered Himself to become his chariot driver and serve Arjuna and his brothers in various ways.
9. COMPLETE SURRENDER (atma nivedanam): Bali Maharaja gave Sri Vamanadeva his entire kingdom, his possessions as well as his own body, although his own spiritual master was against it.

Maharaj Ambarisa perfected his life by following all the nine processes of Bhakti. By the mercy of the Founder Acharya of our society, HDG AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, these nine processes of Bhakti have been offered to us at all our ISKCON Centers.

Discovery:

1. What are the nine processes of bhakti?

Understanding:

2. With examples, explain how devotees have perfected their lives by following one of these nine processes of bhakti?

Application:

3. How can we engage in all these 9 processes in our daily lives?

Sri Namamrita

Lord Caitanya introduced the saṅkīrtana-yajña for the deliverance of all men in this age of Kali:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna]: In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you all desirable things.”

The Lord created this material world for the conditioned souls to learn how to perform yajñas (sacrifice) for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu, so that while in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety. Then after finishing the present material body, they can enter into the kingdom of God. That is the whole program for the conditioned soul. By performance of yajña, the conditioned souls gradually become Kṛṣṇa conscious and become godly in all respects. In this age of Kali, the saṅkīrtana-yajña (the chanting of the names of God) is recommended by the Vedic scriptures, and this transcendental system was introduced by Lord Caitanya for the deliverance of all men in this age. Sankīrtana-yajña and Kṛṣṇa consciousness go well together. Lord Kṛṣṇa in His devotional form (as Lord Caitanya) is mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as follows, with special reference to the saṅkīrtana-yajña:

*kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*

“In this age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.” (S.B. 11.5.32)

Other yajñas prescribed in the Vedic literatures are not easy to perform in this age of Kali, but the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is easy and sublime for all purposes.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 3.10

Sharing is the Essence

Assignment: Distribute 1 book of Srila Prabhupada to your friend or a stranger, and share your experience with the group.

Preaching is the highest welfare activity:

One who is beyond duality and doubt, whose mind is engaged within, who is always busy working for the welfare of all sentient beings, and who is free from all sins, achieves liberation in the Supreme.

Only a person who is fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be said to be engaged in welfare work for all living entities. When a person is actually in the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of everything, then when he acts in that spirit he acts for everyone. The sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer, the supreme proprietor, and the supreme friend. Therefore, to act to revive this consciousness within the entire human society is the highest welfare work. One cannot be engaged in first-class welfare work without being liberated in the Supreme. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. He has no doubt because he is completely freed from all sins. This is the state of divine love.

A person engaged only in ministering to the physical welfare of human society cannot factually help anyone. Temporary relief of the external body and the mind is not satisfactory. The real cause of one's difficulties in the hard struggle for life may be found in one's forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord. When a man is fully conscious of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is actually a liberated soul, although he may be in the material tabernacle.

Bg. 5.25

Prasadam Honoring Prayers

mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave

svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate

O king, for those with little pious credit, faith in *mahā-prasāda*, Sri Govinda, the holy name, and the Vaisṇavas never arises. [Mahābhārata]

śarīra abidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl,

jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore

tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudurmati,

tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre

kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay,

swa-prasād-anna dilo bhāi

sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo,

preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi

O Lord, this material body is a place of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths leading to death. Somehow we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is the most voracious and uncontrollable. It is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Krishna, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify You—Sri Sri Rādhā and Krishna—and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda.

jaya nimāi jaya nitāi

jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda

śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare

hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

32. Answer Guide for Servant Leader

Discovery:

Question #1.

Nine processes:

- Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words).

Understanding:

Question #2.

Examples of devotees:

- 1. HEARING (sravanam): Maharaja Pariksit (the last seven days of his life, he constantly heard the Srimad Bhagavatam).
- 2. CHANTING (kirtanam): Sukadeva Goswami (spoke the Bhagavatam to Maharaja Pariksit)
- 3. REMEMBERING (Visnu smaranam): Prahlada Maharaja (never forgot Krsna despite constant tortures from his father- Hiranyakashipu)
- 4. SERVING THE LORD'S LOTUS FEET (pada sevanam): Laxmi, the Goddess of Fortune, is always engaged in serving the lotus feet of the Lord.
- 5. DEITY-WORSHIP (arcanam): Maharaja Prthu used all of his royal possessions in order to offer them in pure devotion to the Lord.
- 6. PRAYING (vandanam): Akrura offered prayers to Krsna when he was traveling to Vrndavana in order to see Krsna.
- 7. EXECUTING ORDERS (dasyam): Hanuman, the intimate servant of Ramacandra executed all of Sri Ramacandra's orders despite all kinds of difficulties.
- 8. SERVING AS A FRIEND (sakhyam): Arjuna was so close to Krsna, that the Lord offered Himself to become his chariot driver and serve Arjuna and his brothers in various ways.
- 9. COMPLETE SURRENDER (atma nivedanam): Bali Maharaja gave Sri Vamanadeva his entire kingdom, his possessions as well as his own body.

Application:

Question #3.

Processes we can adopt:

- Share steps like listening to lectures, chanting, decorating deities at home altar etc.

Note: If a discussion point comes up, that we can also achieve perfection by following 1 of these 9 processes like Parikshit Maharaj, then the answer should be: we cannot follow the process with the same intensity like Parikshit Maharaj (he did not eat, sleep, or take a break, and intensely heard Srimad Bhagavatam for 7 days and 7 nights). The first 2 processes (Sravanam, Kirtanam) are the most essential, because if we don't have proper Shravan and Kirtan, the other 7 processes will not follow. So, Srila Prabhupad stressed the importance of chanting the Mahamnatra and hearing the mantra attentively, then the other 7 processes will automatically follow.

Quiz 7, Edifications 27-32

1. What are the six unfavorable principles for devotional service?
2. What are the six favorable principles for devotional service?
3. What are the enemies of the mind?
4. “Envy cannot be dovetailed in service of Krishna”. State True or False. Why?
5. What are the six divisions of surrender?
6. Explain the principle of apohana?
7. What are the nine stages of bhakti?
8. What are the nine processes of bhakti?
9. With examples, explain how devotees have perfected their lives by following one of the nine processes of bhakti?

ACTIVITY: MAHAPRABHU PASTIME NIGHT II

Share the pastime of Jagai and Madhai from Sri Caitanya Caritamrita.

Quiz 7, Answer Guide for Servant Leader

1. What are the six unfavorable principles for devotional service?

(1) Eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) over endeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) Practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Krishna consciousness; and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements.

2. What are the six favorable principles for devotional service?

(1) Being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles (such as śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam [SB 7.5.23] — hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa), (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous ācāryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

3. What are the enemies of the mind?

Lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy

4. “Envy cannot be dovetailed in service of Krishna”. State True or False. Why?

We cannot be envious of somebody and use it for Kṛṣṇa’s service. Material envy is with malice. When we are envious in the material world, we want to put others down. We want to either do better than others or achieve something better than them, and the way we do it is by diminishing what they are doing. Envy means thinking that “I am the source of all service to Kṛṣṇa. Everything is emanating from me.

5. What are the six divisions of surrender?

The acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one’s guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility.

6. Explain the principle of apohana?

The living entity’s position is to be under the protection of the illusory energy or under Kṛṣṇa’s personal protection. When a living entity is fully surrendered, he is under the direct protection of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa gives him all intelligence by which he can advance in spiritual realization. The nondevotee, however, being under the protection of the illusory energy, increasingly forgets his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes it is asked how Kṛṣṇa causes one to forget. Kṛṣṇa personally causes His devotee to forget material activities, and through the agency of māyā Kṛṣṇa causes the nondevotee to forget his devotional service to the Lord. This is called apohana.

7. What are the nine stages of bhakti?

1. Sraddha: faith, 2. sadhu-sanga: association with devotees, 3. bhajana-kriya: performance of devotional service, 4. anartha nivṛtti: decreasing of unwanted attachments, 5. nistha: steadiness, 6. ruci: taste, 7. asakti: attachment, 8. bhava: love, 9. prema: pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

8. What are the nine processes of bhakti?

Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words).

9. With examples, explain how devotees have perfected their lives by following one of the nine processes of bhakti?

1. HEARING (sravanam): Maharaja Parikṣit (the last seven days of his life, he constantly heard the Srimad Bhagavatam).

2. CHANTING (kirtanam): Sukadeva Goswami (spoke the Bhagavatam to Maharaja Parikṣit)

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4. SERVING THE LORD'S LOTUS FEET (pada sevanam): Laxmi, the Goddess of Fortune, is always engaged in serving the lotus feet of the Lord.

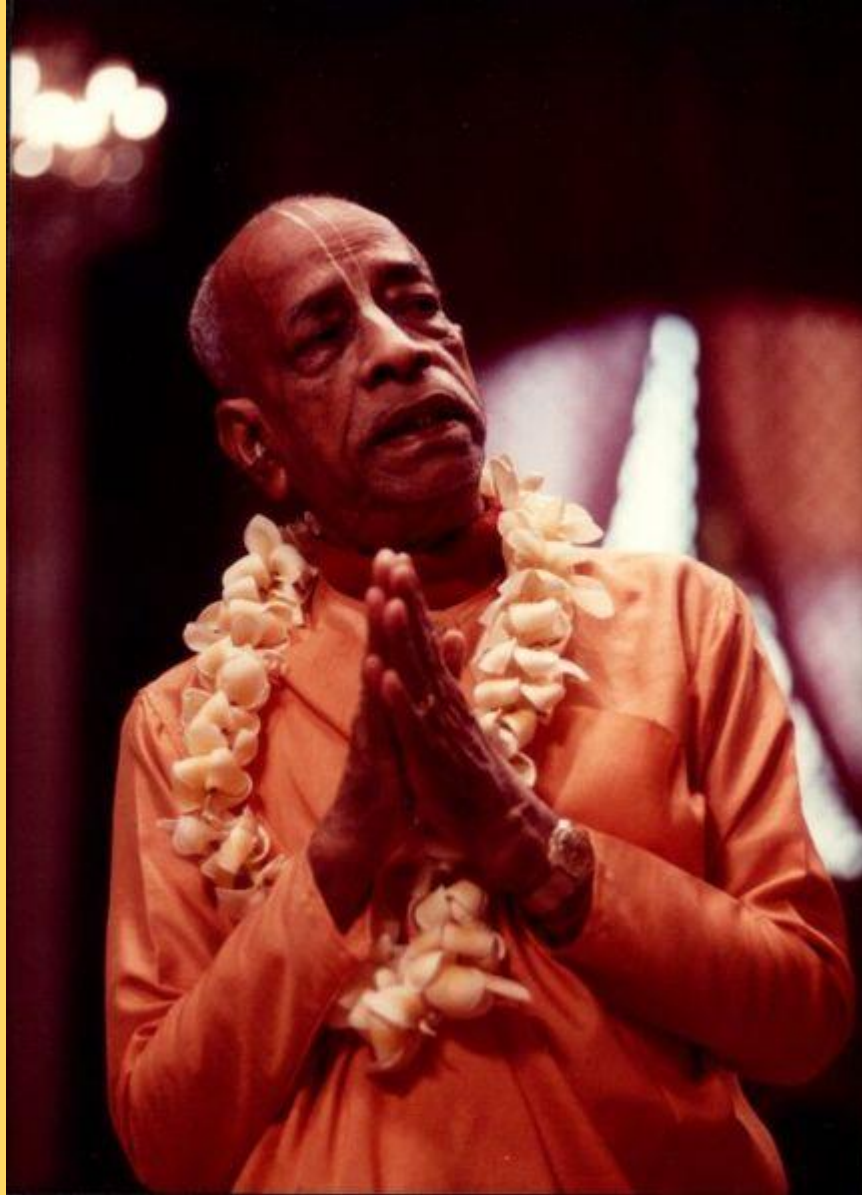
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7. EXECUTING ORDERS (dasyam): Hanuman, the intimate servant of Rāmacandra executed all of Sri Rāmacandra's orders despite all kinds of difficulties.

8. SERVING AS A FRIEND (sakhyam): Arjuna was so close to Kṛṣṇa, that the Lord offered Himself to become his chariot driver and serve Arjuna and his brothers in various ways.

9. COMPLETE SURRENDER (atma nivedanam): Bali Maharaja gave Sri Vamanadeva his entire kingdom, his possessions as well as his own body.



**uḍumbara-ṽrkṣa yena phale sarva aṅge
ei mata bhakti-ṽrkṣe sarvatra phala lāge**

-Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 9.25

“This tree of devotional service is not of this material world. It grows in the spiritual world, where there is no distinction between one part of the body and another. It is something like a tree of sugar, for whichever part of such a tree one tastes, it is always sweet. The tree of bhakti has varieties of branches, leaves and fruits, but they are all meant for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead”.