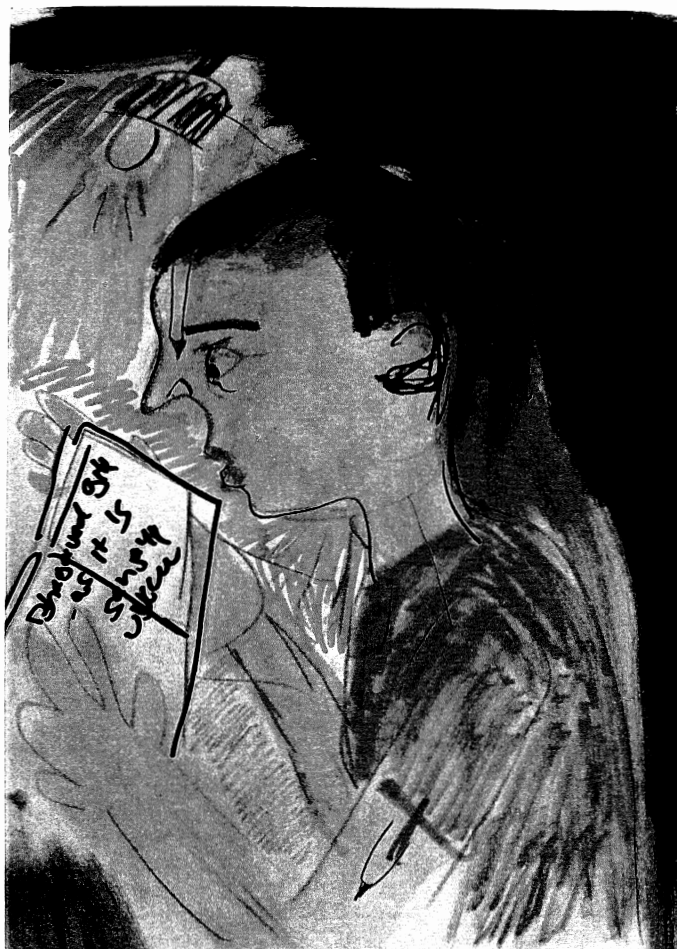


READING NOTES

While Reading - BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS - April 1995



I hope to read the verses and purports again and again
and attain great faith and happiness to share this
knowledge of Bhagavad Gita.

I pray to take to Bhagavad Gita as a hungry man
takes to delicious food.

I want to 'know' Bhagavad Gita
[not as a master of it but perpetually a student who
loves the Gita and always learns afresh from it]
and not merely study it as academic exercise.

I pray to keep it with me always
and hear the words of Krishna and the questions of Arjuna
and the comments of Srila Prabhupada...

In this way I can thrill to life at every moment
and as stated in the Eighth Chapter, I may successfully
think of Krishna at the time of death and go to Him.

by

Satsvarupa Das Goswami

CONTENTS:

Page:

Preface and Introduction	1 -
CHAPTER:	
1. Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra	9 -
2. Contents of the Gita Summarized	14 -
3. Karma-yoga	28 -
4. Transcendental Knowledge	34 -
5. Karma-yoga - Action in Krishna Consciousness	41 -
6. Dhyana-yoga	44 -
7. Knowledge of the Absolute	57 -
8. Attaining the Supreme	65 -
9. The Most Confidential Knowledge	71 -
10. The Opulence of the Absolute	80 -
11. The Universal Form	87 -
12. Devotional Service	92 -
13. Nature, the Enjoyer and Consciousness	96 -
14. The Three Modes of Material Nature	104 -
15. The Yoga of the Supreme Person	108 -
16. The Divine and Demoniatic Natures	112 -
17. The Divisions of Faith	116 -
18. Conclusion - The Perfection of Renunciation	118 -

READING NOTES - WHILE READING BHAGAVAD GITA AS IT IS

April 1995

April 23rd ..

Perhaps I can read Bhagavad Gita As It Is and take simple reading notes as I go along, mostly my appreciation and bringing my attention to hearing with faith [sraddah] in dealing with the mind's objections. This is not as ambitious as the compilations of favourite passages. But if I can accompany myself [by writing occasional notes] through a leisurely reading of Krishna's book, Prabhupada will be pleased with me.

"And I declare that he who studies this sacred conversation of ours worships Me by his intelligence". [18:70]

* * * * *

The 'Deluxe 1989 Edition' is a pleasure to look at and hold. I read the little summaries and the table of contents and 'Setting the Scene'. The first paragraph of the Preface shows Srila Prabhupada as a gentleman and scholar and of course, pure devotee of Krishna. He tells so nicely how it was unfortunate that the first Macmillan Edition was under four hundred pages and the original manuscript was minimised. We see how he was tolerant. He eagerly accepted the abridged publication and yet it was not a cause for full satisfaction.

I began this Gitopanisad re-reading in an odd moment in the back of the van, while waiting to board a ferry from England to Belgium. I wasn't able to do more serious reading and just picked out Bhagavad Gita As It Is from the bookshelf, to browse while waiting. It seems to have turned out to be something more than that, answering an inner need at the right time. So I'll suspend the re-reading of Caitanya Caritamrta for now.

"Time to board the boat" he said and I closed the book. But I packed it into my carry-on bag. On board, they gave us a cabin too small for the three of us. I waited there while they went off to see if we could get a bigger cabin. On the wall of the cabin where I waited, I noticed a rack containing 'New Testament and Psalms'. "Oh what's this?" I picked it out and looked at the contents. I was interested and thought for a moment of taking it to read. But then I remembered my rendezvous with Sri Krishna. So, no Gideons. But I can follow their advice for reading scripture: "Come to it with awe, read it with reverence, frequently, slowly, prayerfully".

When we talk about the good old days with Prabhupada, we refer

to our absolute trust in whatever he said. Now, some eighteen years after his disappearance, we read in the Gita Preface that the Krishna Consciousness Movement is gradually becoming the most popular movement in the world. Hard to believe? It didn't used to be hard. And what about "Lord Krishna first spoke Bhagavad Gita to the sun god some hundreds of millions of years ago".

I believe. I read. I want to believe and read better. Nistha, firm faith. And I beg for lively interest in what I read. It requires a discipline to stay with it even when it's rough going because your mind won't flow with it.

* * * * *

May 2nd ..

Reading the Introduction seems not so easy to me. Many ideas come quickly, one after another. They are well organised, but without the usual division of verse and purport I find it hard to swim on. Today [parked in a van at a 'P' stop, mild spring weather], I'd lingered on the opening page, re-reading it three times. At first it seems dogmatic or uninteresting to a degree that boggles my determination. I bounce off the surface of it. But now I look again... there is a need for a new edition of Gitopanisad because almost all existing English translations don't touch the spirit of Bhagavad Gita As It Is. Take it as directed by the speaker, Sri Krishna. He is mentioned on every page as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan. Then I stop and savour the names of other sastras where Krishna is upheld as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Brahma Samhita, Bhagavat Purana, [Krishna's tu bhagavan svayam].

Next, Prabhupada says we should understand Bhagavad Gita the way Arjuna understood it - as the devotee of the Lord, His direct student and His intimate friend. We need qualities similar to Arjuna's. [Prabhupada isn't trying to show off or exert his own style. Don't judge him as if he is doing that. Go with him as your teacher and accept the eternal parampara truths he espouses].

We each have an eternal, direct relationship with the Supreme Lord, known as svarupa siddhi. Now we have forgotten it, but Arjuna was in his direct relationship of friendship [sakhya]. Arjuna praises Lord Krishna as the Supreme abode, absolute, purest, etc in the 10th Chapter and this opinion is upheld by great acaryas, Vyasa, Narada, Asita and Devala. Lord Krishna is unknowable ultimately, even by demigods. We must approach Him [and His Bhagavad Gita] as His devotee if we are to know Him at all.

[Srila Prabhupada wastes no time and goes to the heart of the issue, that Bhagavad Gita is spoken by Lord Krishna who is the Supreme Truth and one cannot know Him unless one becomes a devotee of the Lord in the spirit of Arjuna and the previous acaryas].

"We should at least theoretically accept Sri Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead".

The Bhagavad Gita is meant to deliver mankind from his suffering in nescience. So first a person has to come to enquire why he is suffering, what is the meaning of existence etc. Those who ask these questions are the proper students for understanding Bhagavad Gita.

"Actually we are all swallowed by the tigress of nescience".

* * * * *

I read a few more pages of the Introduction by 10v light in the van before our 5.00am departure. You may judge this as a poor or merely fair reading, but why berate it? It is very nice that you had presence of mind to read before the day's riding begins.

There are five topics covered in the Gita and I remembered them: Iswara, jiva, prakrti, time or the manifestation of the universe and karma.

God is Supreme, we are His parts and parcels, superior prakrti. Don't say "I want to hear what Radha and Krishna are doing. Why this basic stuff?" Take it all in. If you read the Gita, it will be basic but also indications of what is the highest. Pure devotion to Krishna is the means and the end.

* * * * *

I am waiting for a half hour while Shamus is preparing breakfast. The van is parked by Mont Blanc and I have read one page of Bhagavad Gita and I intend to go on and read another. I just read a page out loud, remembering that this was recommended in a book on Lectio Divina.

"The world revolves because every living being thinks that he is the lord and creator of the material world". Sound exaggerated? Not so. We think we are doers, "I created this business, house, family, poem etc". But actually God, Krishna, is the Creator. He gives us abilities. We work under the

force of His material nature. We should cooperate with Him as the hand and other parts of the body cooperate to feed the stomach. Read on.

* * * * *

May 4th 8.00am ..

Sitting outside the locked house. Waiting for Sridam to arrive and let us in. I put a pillow on the ground and continue reading Gitopanisad Introduction. Familiar teachings, but I reach out to them with my intelligence. I desire to prayer, to enter.

Krishna is Saccid Ananda Vighraha as described in the first verse of Brahma Samitha. [I recall hearing Prabhupada speaking to Muslims in Tehran, telling them all world religions, including Islam, have only a vague idea of God. They usually describe Him in terms of some of His qualities which implies that He is a person. But Krishna consciousness teaches complete knowledge - who that Supreme Person is, His form, His name, His activities etc. He has a human-like form and we are all made in His image].

Let me meditate on Sri Krishna in that way. He is not an Indian God but the Cause of all Causes. He is Govinda, a cowherd boy, and yet the Supreme Controller.

Vedic knowledge is infallible.

I read on as best I can. If I can catch on... Prabhupada's presentation is the link of realisation [vijyana] between me and the Absolute. Without the Bhaktivedanta purport it all remains theoretical.

* * * * *

May 5th ..

I remember 1966, raw Steve I was, and asked what Swamaji would speak on after a week of Bhagavad Gita. Raymond told me that Swamaji said that everything was in the Bhagavad Gita. I had no idea that one could read and re-read a book like this for a whole lifetime.

My mind tells me that reading the Intro is hard. Maybe I am inclined for some little Lectoi Divina pauses. The verse and purport give natural breaks like that but the Intro is a

monolithic, unbroken sheet of prose.

You could read it one paragraph at a time, and read aloud or 'say' each word in your mind.

"Same old thing". By that do you mean the philosophy is hackneyed or your inability to appreciate it?

* * * * *

"...If we properly utilise the instructions of Bhagavad Gita, then our whole life will become purified, and ultimately we will be able to reach the destination which is beyond this material sky" [yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama].

Pure life is to take up sanatana dharma or activities of eternal nature.

How can I 'consider' sanatana? I sit hear reading about it. I don't refuse it or disbelieve it. I think "let me read Socrates on immortality". How to feel it? Live for it? I tell myself "well I am living for it, aren't I? I'm a sannyasi, a member of ISKCON". But that doesn't automatically put me in sanatana-consciousness.

"The English word religion is a little different from sanatana dharma".

Srila Prabhupada discusses sanatana dharma. "...we must discover the essential part of a living being, that part which is his constant companion. That ...is his eternal quality, and that eternal quality is his eternal religion".

"...There is no exception in the society of living beings to the activity of service".

"Factually we are related to the Supreme Lord in service".

One need not render service to demigods, which is done for satisfying material desires [and is therefore a kind of service to the senses, serving for material happiness]. We are actually meant for becoming happy by rendering service to Krishna in the eternal world, like the residents of Vrndavan. "The Lord descends to this mortal world to show his pastimes in Vrndavan, which are full of happiness".

* * * * *

I require faith. It seems that means I need to be captivated, attracted to the teachings. Be captivated by the Lord's offer to join Him in His sanatana abode. Faith can't be merely a duty or "because it's our religion" or "because I've already invested thirty years in this, how could I turn away from it?"

* * * * *

A strong but unwanted tendency is to read inattentively. Your mind roams elsewhere while your eyes scan a paragraph. Because you are so familiar with the concepts, it seems you can superficially 'read' them without paying attention. This is a waste of time. So for me to put in time on reading, means making the effort to pay attention. I can't do it twenty-four hours a day or for hours at a constant stretch. I need quality.

* * * * *

The Intro is good to read because it gives you a taste right away of the ultimate and overall conclusions of the Bhagavad Gita - transfer to Goloka. Thus when reading the early chapters, you will know what it's leading toward.

Review: We are not these bodies, but eternal spirit souls. Our eternal occupation is to serve the Supreme Lord in the sanatana abode. That is our happiness. We can go there.

Lord Krishna descends to this world and displays His pastimes to attract us back to Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada speaks of travel to material planets and contrasts it with going to the spiritual sky. Birth, death and old age all exist in the material planets. "All this information is given in Bhagavad Gita and we are given through its instruction, information on how to leave the material worlds and begin a truly blissful life in the spiritual sky".

* * * * *

Srila Prabhupada continues describing the spiritual world. One shouldn't think the Bhagavad Gita is telling us only about worldly duties. The beginning of the fifteenth chapter tells of the upside down tree. This is an example: The real world, is spiritual and the material world is its reflection.

Give up designations - I am a poet - and go back to the padam avayam. One who is situated in the service of the Lord can easily approach the Supreme abode.

"One should desire and hanker after that supreme kingdom, for when one attains that kingdom, he does not have to return to this material world".

How do you approach the abode of the Supreme Lord? By thinking of Krishna at the time of death, as described in Bhagavad Gita's eighth chapter. Don't disbelieve the Lord's description of transfer to the spiritual world just because it doesn't tally with our material conceptions.

Srila Prabhupada twice quotes Bhagavad Gita 8:6 on one page: Whatever state of being you remember when you quit your present body, you attain to that state. How can we transfer our thoughts from the material energy to the spiritual energy? Give up mundane literatures, books, magazines and novels and transfer to Vedic literature.

Krishna doesn't advise that we at once give up our worldly occupations. We have to work to live. But while working in varna and asrama, one can think of Krishna, by hearing Vedic literature and chanting Hare Krishna mantra. "If he doesn't practice remembering Krishna while he is struggling for existence, then it will be not possible for him to remember Krishna at the time of death".

It is possible to think of Krishna if we have love for Him. Then even while in this world's duties, we think of the Supreme. The acaryas give the example of a wife who thinks of her lover aside from her husband. "Similarly, we should always remember the Supreme lover, Sri Krishna, and at the same time perform our material duties very nicely".

Engage the mind and senses in the service of the Lord. [This is how we may develop love of Krishna]. "This is the art, and this is also the secret of Bhagavad Gita: Total absorption in the thought of Sri Krishna".

* * * * *

"If one has fifty years of life ahead of him, he should engage that brief time in cultivating this practice of remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead".

In the Introduction, Srila Prabhupada repeatedly tells us about transfer to the spiritual world as the goal.

May 6th ..

Grateful to be up early and reading Bhagavad Gita as my first act. I pray I can gain momentum for this. The result? "One must thus meditate on paramam purusam, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the spiritual kingdom, the spiritual sky, and thus attain Him".

... CHAPTER ONE ...

Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra:

I don't want merely academic study. I desire darshan, deep feeling. I can't demand it, but I come humbly, seeking faith.

"One will find in the Bhagavad Gita all that is contained in other scriptures, but the reader will also find things which are not to be found elsewhere".

[Elsewhere Srila Prabhupada writes that a devotee would ordinarily not be interested in the battle of Kuruksetra or any battle. But because Krishna is present and speaking they are interested and don't make a distinction between His speaking here and His activities at rasa lila. Of course there is a difference in rasa, but in the absolute sense they are one. We don't reject a drop of Krishna's pastimes or words. Surely what Krishna has to say to Arjuna is important for us].

"This is the specific standard of the Gita. It is the perfect theistic science because it is directly spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna".

You find you have to go over each verse at least twice. As Srila Prabhupada wrote in the Introduction, "the mind is always flying to this and that, but one must practice concentrating the mind always on the form of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, or on the sound of His name".

Some of Krishna's names are given in the purport to 1:15: Hrsikesa, Madhusudana, Govinda, Vasudeva, Devakinandana, Yasodanandana, Partha-sarathi.

When Krishna, Arjuna, Bhima etc blew their conchshells, it broke the hearts of the soldiers in Duryodhana's army. But the Pandava's army wasn't heartbroken on hearing the Kuru's conches. "This is due to the Pandavas and their confidence in Lord Krishna. One who takes shelter in the Supreme Lord has nothing to fear, even in the midst of the greatest calamity".

* * * * *

May 6th .. - [Outdoors at Table 5.00pm. Sunshining, second day of retreat]

It's good to read, even a little. I also like to be seen reading by my brothers. Some hikers go walking by. I don't want to be interrupted.

Read 1:23, Arjuna calls Krishna Acyuta, because He does not fail to carry out the orders of Arjuna as his chariot driver. "The relationship between the Lord and His servitor is very sweet and transcendental".

You can speak in a charming way saying it's charming that the Supreme Lord prefers to be ordered by His devotees rather than to give orders. You may lecture on this as an axiomatic truth. Say "only Krishna consciousness teaches such a concept of God in all details". But how do you actually feel this, what is your faith? I want to read touching that deeper level. I am already thinking "maybe I could finish reading the Gita in a month". But quality, please. This 1:23 seems to be the first verse in the chapter that you could pray with and linger with. The purport is profound. But what can I do more than recognise it or copy it down verbatim? So I move on. I take note [notice, consider briefly] that "when He finds that a pure devotee is ordering Him, He obtains transcendental pleasure, although He is the infallible master of all circumstances".

* * * * *

1:24 - Arjuna is called Gudakesa. "Either in waking or in sleep, a devotee of the Lord can never be free from thinking of Krishna's name, form, qualities and pastimes. Thus a devotee can conquer both sleep and ignorance simply by thinking of Krishna constantly".

* * * * *

May 7th ..

The first mention of Arjuna's being overwhelmed with compassion is 1:27. In 1:28 he speaks his mind to Krishna. In that purport Srila Prabhupada describes these symptoms as those of a saintly person [no criticism of it yet]. "Such symptoms... were not due to weakness but to a soft heartedness, a characteristic of a pure devotee of the Lord".

In the very next purport, 1:29, Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that Arjuna's symptoms of hairs standing on end and trembling are due to "material fear - namely, loss of life". Bow slipping from hand and burning sensation of the skin are also due to a material conception of life. They're not due to ecstasy. The sharp contrast between Arjuna described in the two purports reveals apparent contradictory or conflicting estimations of his case. They say that he is a complicated person or that contradictory emotions play within him. Thus he

admits that he is confused [aware of both duty and unwillingness to do duty] when he surrenders to Krishna. In the purport to 1:30 Srila Prabhupada raises the issue that is so essential to devotional service. We generally act for our own self interest and when it is opposed we foresee only pain and unhappiness, "when a man sees only frustration in his expectations, he thinks "why am I here?" Srila Prabhupada: "No one is interested in the Supreme Self... One's real self interest lies in Visnu or Krishna". This logic, of the need to give up one's own plan for happiness, seeing it as sense gratification, and submitting to Krishna's will, even though painful, has been used by ISKCON authorities to induce devotees to give up their wives and children, to tell lies while selling paintings and to neglect their sadanah etc. The principle is a core truth of Krishna consciousness - give up your own concept of religion [unhappiness, sense gratification] and surrender to Krishna. But it has to be applied by Krishna Himself or His absolute representative.

A similar issue is fighting, the specific issue for Arjuna. People have misused the authority of Krishna in Bhagavad Gita and sanctioned fighting wars for political causes. So how to apply these teachings lies with the expert transcendentalists. I don't claim to teach others, they must 'bite the bullet' in their own lives. I don't claim to know always in my own life what is right and wrong. It is not so easy to discern. In the case of my reclusive life of writing, I think it's right but I don't proclaim one hundred percent that I know I am acting on Krishna's authority.

* * * * *

In the purport to 1:31 Srila Prabhupada uses words that remind us of the verse 'na te viduh svartah gatim hi Visnu'.

"Govinda is not meant for satisfying our senses. If we try to satisfy the senses of Govinda, however, then automatically our senses are satisfied". This sounds extreme, even not possible for a conditioned soul. But we find that we can do it in the enthusiasm of Krishna conscious service. You become happy and satisfied serving the order of the spiritual master and putting aside all other personal considerations. Also Krishna does satisfy us and so we don't suffer. For example, devotees don't starve. They eat nicely. But first they offer all food to Govinda and they eat His remnants. Prabhupada taught us this art of serving Krishna.

As years go by there are various ramifications of this that make it a constant struggle and re-assessment. Young devotees renounce things for Krishna and sometimes later feel they

overdid it and they may have to make a compromise. What is liveable idealism and what is practical reality is sometimes difficult to know. Our actual capacity to surrender seems to change, seems to be more flexible - at least in outward ways - when we are young. But in other ways our conviction to abide by Krishna's will grows stronger with the years. I speak of this from personal experience and also as a sociological observation of devotees in ISKCON.

In these verses a conflict occurs between Arjuna's thinking and feeling and the will of Krishna. Arjuna's pacifism has caused a stumbling block for many readers of Bhagavad Gita. They sympathise with Arjuna and cannot agree with Lord Krishna when He induces Arjuna to fight. Another 'problem' is how to expertly apply the situation of Krishna and Arjuna to all subsequent devotees in their particular time, person and place. We have to ask in each case what is the person's actual duty [including their varnasrama]. And what is the actual position of that person who claims to be a representative of Krishna and who demands that we give up all considerations and accept him as non-different than the will of the Supreme Lord.

* * * * *

My morning reading starts off rough. This is the result of reading in a non-devotee book last night. I try to pay attention to the Bhagavad Gita but the thoughts and images of Spalding Grey are going through my mind in re-hash.

"According to Canakya Pandita, women are generally not very intelligent and therefore not trustworthy". [1:40 purport]

* * * * *

Arjuna is explaining the ill-effects of war. If the elders are killed in battle, the religious traditions will stop. Then women will become polluted and from that will come unwanted progeny. That will cause hellish life.

* * * * *

Reading can get very slovenly, like poor japa. The mind is the friend or the enemy. You just slide through a purport, sometimes not reading it all but bringing yourself to the next verse as if you have actually read the previous one.

... CHAPTER TWO ...

Contents of the Gita Summarized:

2:7 : This is the first verse in Bhagavad Gita that I have memorised. It's a dramatic turn of events in the 'story', that Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna as sisya to guru.

"But now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness".

[One doesn't surrender only one time to the spiritual master or need him only once, but daily, always].

"In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple and soul surrendered unto You please instruct me".

We may say "but now I am not perplexed at every step". Yes but why? Because of guru's grace.

Fire takes place in the forest of life. No-one has to set the fire. But samsara dava ... the spiritual master puts out the fire with the downpour of mercy from Krishna.

Up to this point, Arjuna didn't want to fight but 'he understood' that his affection for family members and his wish to protect them from death were the causes of his perplexities".

* * * * *

In the purport to 2:8, the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master are stated. 'Kiba vipra' and 'sat karma nipuno' verses are quoted. The spiritual master has to remove the grief and perplexity of the disciple - by solving the problems of life. the main qualification of the spiritual master is that he is "one hundred percent Krishna conscious". The problems of material existence are the fourfold miseries.

"He sought refuge in Krishna consciousness, and that is the right path for peace and harmony".

* * * * *

Verse 2:11 is another big one - "While speaking learned words you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead".

I read Jagadisa Goswami's study guide outline for Chapter 1. It was helpful. Arjuna's case can't be summed up in a simplistic way. He is described as both cowardly, materially attached, he turns to Krishna to satisfy his senses - and yet he is also described as saintly, beyond merely political motives and "such a kind and soft hearted person in the devotional service of the Lord, is fit to receive self knowledge".

Who can live up to this and not lament when a dear relative dies or when he is about to die? But we have seen devotees go through this in a commendable way, because of their knowledge of Krishna consciousness. As I write this, Sridam dasa in Italy is witnessing the dying of his sister. Sridam's wife says "he is very Krishna conscious now". The truths of Krishna consciousness come home to us.

"The body is born and is destined to be vanquished today or tomorrow; therefore the body is not as important as the soul".

* * * * *

Verse 2:12 is an extremely important proof [along with 15:5] for the eternal individuality of the self; both the supreme self and the individual atma are eternal and eternally separate [and yet one in quality]. This defeats the mayavadi theory of merging at the time of liberation.

* * * * *

After about forty-five minutes I find it hard to keep up sharp and willing attention. Limited attention span. Alright, I have to accept this. But be sure to come back later. Take more later. And especially take it on a deep and meaningful level. Be aware, if you turn to non-Vedic literature, that the same precious time could be spent with Bhagavad Gita or Srimad Bhagavatam. Save yourself for it.

* * * * *

May 10th ..

Start off reading and for five minutes so far it's hard going to control the mind. My mind replays what I read yesterday of Socrates in Phaedo and a story I heard of four devotees leaving an ISKCON temple to join a Christian movement. Come on, bring the mind to hear of Krishna's teachings on the immortality of the soul. And don't be so eager to hear [or read] other tidings.

Krishna says Arjuna should not lament. He is concerned for Bhisma and Drona. But they don't die. They will get new, young bodies next life.

If you're really convinced of the 'dehino 'smin' verse then you know you will have another life. And for a devotee it will be a better life. "So Bhisma and Drona, being noble souls, were surely going to have spiritual bodies in the next life, or at least life in heavenly bodies..."

I want a better body for Krishna consciousness, for serving Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada gives us in the purport, more information than Lord Krishna has so far given in the Bhagavad Gita verses. Be grateful for that. It's in no way a different teaching than Krishna's. But Prabhupada quickly removes mayavadi interpretations on the early verses. Krishna is the Supreme person, never under maya. Arjuna and all jivas are eternal fragments. When we read Bhagavad Gita As It Is we accept this method of learning. That is, at the pace of the purports. The purports are also based on acaryas like Baladeva Vidyabhusana and Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur.

* * * * *

'Matra sparsas te kaunteya...'

We must tolerate inconveniences and not give up our duty. Arjuna's duty was to fight. He was capable of it. Examples: A woman cooks in a hot kitchen even in summer and a man bathes in the winter. As I read I think "am I supposed to give the V.I.H.E. Courses even if I get headaches and feel the pressure of the classes and think I may have to cancel some?" I decide no. 'Matra sparsas' doesn't have to refer to any duty that anyone would like me to do. "One has to follow the prescribed rules and regulations... in order to rise up". Don't give up basics and some kind of appropriate duty. As usual the specific nature of one's duty has to be worked out carefully. It also changes during life, for example, as one enters old age. But the principle here is don't give up your duty, whatever it is, just because of "non permanent appearances and disappearances of happiness and distress".

In the next purport Srila Prabhupada gives the example of sannyasa, which has to be maintained despite the inconvenience of giving up family relations with wife and children.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna then gives examples which serve as arguments for the existence of the soul distinct from the material body. The

body will perish but the soul will not. A symptom of the soul's presence in the body is perceived as consciousness. Srila Prabhupada describes it as feeling pains and pleasure. Vedic references given in the purport to 2:17 support Lord Krishna's statement of the existence of the spirit soul in the body - who's influence spreads throughout the living body as consciousness.

These arguments can involve us in interaction with modern science as well as logic. Srila Prabhupada uses modern science to support Lord Krishna's statements but he is also well aware that most scientists reject the concept of the soul. Scientifically trained devotees like Sadaputa prabhu and others of the B.I. help us through the intricate controversies that arise. They also try to establish Bhagavad Gita on the basis of modern science, sometimes de-bunking the claims of the experimental methods of empirical science and sometimes using them in our favour. Ultimately we have to accept Bhagavad Gita not because of modern science, but because of its being sabda brahma, perfect knowledge spoken by the Supreme person.

* * * * *

May 11th ..

2:18 purport: "So from both view points there is no cause for lamentation, because the living entity as he is cannot be killed nor can the material body be saved for any length of time or permanently protected".

[It's an astounding proposal to our humanistic attitude - that there is a consideration higher than maintaining life in the body. "Arjuna was advised to fight and not sacrifice the cause of religion for material, bodily considerations". Religion here may refer to the ksatriya's duty and even more, it refers to following the will of the Supreme Lord as directly expressed by Sri Krishna].

"This however does not encourage the killing of the body. The Vedic injunction is 'ma himsyat sarva bhutani'; 'never commit violence to anyone...'

"For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time". Srila Prabhupada referred to this 'na jayate' in de-bunking the scientists claims that they can 'create life'. Life is never created but eternally exists. The appearance of the birth of bodies is the occasion of the transmigrating soul entering the new body for a new life - and subsequently he grows to old age, death etc. But the soul "has not come into being... he is not slain when the body is slain".

Don't read these pages seeking 'scientific' or material proofs. The proof is sastra, Krishna's word and can be observed in life accordingly.

Srila Prabhupada lectured on these verses in America in 1965 and 1966, establishing that Krishna's order to Arjuna to fight and kill is not irreligious. Normally, to kill is highly irreligious, abominable and punishable by the state and by the law of karma. But when Krishna asks us to do something it can never be irreligious. To follow His order is sometimes difficult for us. We require to surrender to Him and His instructions coming through the guru. Admittedly it is sometimes difficult to know what to do in very specific cases, after the disappearance of the spiritual master. Seek out from sastra and supersoul in you heart and by consultation with available vaisnavas, what is your highest duty.

Two birds on the same tree of the body is described in Two Upanisads. One bird is absorbed in anxiety as the enjoyer of the fruit of the tree. "But if... he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord and knows His glories - at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties".

* * * * *

In the purport 2:25 Srila Prabhupada stresses that ultimate authority in the existence of the soul is hearing from sastra. Here he gives the example, "there are many things we have to accept solely on the grounds of superior authority".

* * * * *

It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this we should not grieve for the body.

We may feel a little impatient reading this section and think it is not the nectar of pure bhakti; it is jnana. But Lord Krishna is teaching so it is bhakti. It leads to the ultimate conclusion of the soul satisfied in service to the Supreme. Also at the time of death, this knowledge is necessary to give one mental strength and to overcome fears and doubts and grief and attachment [illusion]. We don't die. Be convinced of this. Remember Krishna's personal teaching of this to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita second chapter. Religion without philosophy is sentimental.

* * * * *

May 12th ..

Lord Krishna's strong arguments appear in verses 2:26-27 etc. Don't lament the death of the body. Don't neglect your ksatriya's duty. Don't neglect the will of God. "By avoiding the discharge of his proper duty, he would not be able to stop the death of his relatives and he would be degraded due to his selection of the wrong path of action".

* * * * *

Yesterday M. and I discussed the importance of reading Srila Prabhupada's books. It's a prime way to serve him. It is not, however, the only way to reciprocate. In addition to reading we must obey and practice Krishna consciousness.

Also, I am aware that reading is a subtle art. Don't look always for expected emotions or products as a result of reading time. Do it faithfully, wholeheartedly - in the act itself is the reward.

* * * * *

"... the soul is eternal... the body's like a dress; therefore why lament the changing of the dress? The material body has no factual existence in relation to the eternal soul. It is something like a dream". [2:28 purport]

Whether one is atheist or theist "there is no cause for lamentation for loss of the body".

* * * * *

Verse 2:29 states that some look on the soul as amazing. It's not easy to come to this standard of transcendental knowledge. The easiest way to do it is to accept the statements of Bhagavad Gita spoken by the greatest authority. "But it also requires a great deal of penance and sacrifice, either in this life or in the previous ones, before one is able to accept Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna can be known as such by the causeless mercy of the pure devotee, and by no other way.

In verse 2:38 Lord Krishna says that Arjuna should fight "for the sake of fighting". Srila Prabhupada writes "Arjuna should fight for the sake of fighting because He desires the battle". That's why there shall be no sin in such fighting. It's not merely the ksatriya code 'fight for fighting' [whereas the artists say 'art for art's sake' or the jnanas say 'knowledge for knowledge sake'] - but because Krishna wants it. This is not explicitly stated in this particular verse, Krishna hints at it. The inner meaning, is consistent with later statements in the Bhagavad Gita and Prabhupada brings it out right here. Srila Prabhupada calls it "the indirect hint" given by Krishna to Arjuna in this verse.

* * * * *

Verse 2:39 forms a division in the topics and begins a new topic. Thus far Lord Krishna says I have taught knowledge of the soul by 'sankhya'. Now I will explain it by buddhi-yoga, work without bondage to karma.

Arjuna's conceptions to either fight or not fight were based on his sense gratification, "even at a sacrifice of wisdom and duty".

Liberation-seeking is also a kind of sense gratification, "the last snare of maya".

So Krishna will now tell Arjuna how to work in buddhi-yoga or karma-yoga, "the practice of devotional service only for the sense gratification of the Lord". [It's also described in Bhagavad Gita 10:10].

To act in the consciousness of vyavasatmika or service to Krishna [2:41] one needs to be guided by the Krishna conscious spiritual master and take his order as one's mission in life.

* * * * *

These verses force me to a self-examination - do I act for my sense gratification or for satisfying Lord Krishna under the order of the spiritual master? This also makes me think of how ISKCON leaders use these verses in asking subordinates to do all sorts of activities, such as selling paintings. As a result of misuse or mistake in a leader's applying these verses on behalf of Krishna, we become cynical. Somehow or

other we have to work under higher authorities to please the senses of Lord Krishna as Krishna was asking Arjuna to do.

[We have to be very careful and cautious if we dare to assume to represent Krishna and teach subordinates as if they are Arjuna, and order them to fight. One has to be certain he is sending the right person to the right battlefield].

* * * * *

May 14th ..

"All the purposes of the Vedas can be served to one who knows the purposes behind them". [2:46]

Since verse 2:42 Lord Krishna has been talking about the Vedas. He advises Arjuna to become transcendental to karma kandiya [2:45]. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada tells us what Lord Krishna will later tell Arjuna, namely in verses 15:5 and 15:7, that all souls are part and parcel of Krishna and He is the object of the Vedanta [Veda] study. Srila Prabhupada recommends chanting of the holy names of the Lord as the practice of the highest vedantist.

* * * * *

In 2:47 Lord Krishna introduces karma, vikarma and akarma which Srila Prabhupada describes as prescribed duties, capricious work and inaction. Lord Krishna advises him to do prescribed duties and fight - "such disinterested obligatory duties doubtlessly lead one to the path of liberation".

In 2:48 Lord Krishna introduces yoga. Control the senses, do duties without attachment to success or failure. "Indirectly, Arjuna was advised to act as Krishna told him".

* * * * *

Academic scholars and even neophyte devotees are sometimes doubtful of Srila Prabhupada's purports when he seems to say more than the verse says literally and sometimes he seems to even translate the verse in a way that is beyond the literal meaning of the sanskrit. We see it occurring here. But it's not against the spirit of Lord Krishna's words. Srila

Prabhupada sometimes speeds up the teachings in the purport, bringing us to the full bhakti Lord Krishna will teach later. Bhagavad Gita has been translated hundreds of times in a way to deny Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to deny surrender unto Him as the goal of the Bhagavad Gita. So Srila Prabhupada and the Krishna conscious acaryas get to work right away dismantling the mayavadi and non-devotee interpretations and make it clear that even in the second chapter Lord Krishna is starting to teach, indirectly, the path of devotion. See the purport to verse 2:49 where Prabhupada describes buddhi-yoga as work in Krishna consciousness without bondage.

Continuing to use the phrase buddhi-yoga [2:45-50-51] which Srila Prabhupada translates as Krishna consciousness, devotional service, Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna how to work without attaining the results of work [karmic reaction and samsara] and thus "attain the state beyond all miseries". Srila Prabhupada explains that state as param padam, Vaikuntha. He cites Srimalad Bhagavatam 10:14:58, 'sama srita... param padam'.

* * * * *

May 15th ..

I wish I could read more in Bhagavad Gita As It Is and less in other books and gain more faith and taste in sastra. I imagine myself becoming 'lost' in sastra for many hours, entering its truth, convinced. That could happen to me. Let me now at least take my regular, modest dose and hope to increase it.

"By thus engaging in devotional service to the Lord, great sages or devotees free themselves from the results of work in the material world. In this way they become free from the cycle of birth and death and attain the state beyond all miseries [by going back to Godhead]. [2:51]

Ignorant people don't know the world is full of misery and that there is no relief from it no matter how they try to adjust and no matter what body they have. Becoming on an equal level with the Lord is illusory and sets you up for more samsara. Serve Lord Krishna and go back to Godhead.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna says go beyond the rituals [2:52]. Madhavendra Puri did that. Essence is devotional service. This is tempting but it doesn't mean I can give up the regulative practices of bhakti, temple attendance and deity worship, hearing Srimad Bhagavatam etc. Yet it does indicate that a certain ritualism, even in name of sadhana bhakti, ought to be eventually replaced with service essence. "The Vedic rites and rituals are imperative for neophytes: Comprehending all kinds of prayer three times a day, taking a bath early in the morning, offering respects to the forefathers etc. But when one is fully in Krishna consciousness and is engaged in His transcendental loving service, one becomes indifferent to all these regulative principles because he has already attained perfection.

'The flowery language of the Vedas' refers to descriptions of life on the heavenly planets.

* * * * *

What are the symptoms of a Krishna conscious person? Arjuna asks. "The most important is how the man in Krishna consciousness speaks; for speech is the most important quality of any man". I speak and write as a fool sometimes when I don't go straight to Krishna katha. "The immediate symptoms of a Krishna conscious man is that he speaks on Krishna and matters relating to Him".

* * * * *

The Krishna conscious devotee gives up desires for sense gratification and is satisfied in himself. [2:55]

I like the sound of this sentence, "satisfied in himself by realizing himself as the eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord... always happy in his natural position of eternally serving the Supreme Lord".

More symptoms of one in Krishna conscious samadhi: He's free from attachment, fear and anger.

Purport to 2:56 describes an ideal devotee such as Srila Prabhupada in his attempt to spread Krishna consciousness. Fixed in mind... accepts miseries as from the Lord, has minimised reactions... when happy he gives credit to the Lord... and for the service of the Lord he is always daring and active. Beyond attachment and detachment. Not angry if attempts are not successful.

[How eloquent and nectarian and important these purports are. One shouldn't think that because Bhagavad Gita as It Is is the ABC of spiritual life, that we don't need it anymore. The purports are more than ABC, and they're not baby knowledge, they describe the highest state of pure surrender in Krishna consciousness].

* * * * *

"There is always some upheaval in the material world which may be good or evil". A devotee is not agitated by it.

* * * * *

Like the tortoise, the devotee uses his senses [in the service of the Lord] only when he needs them, otherwise he withdraws them. He must follow the do's and the do not's of scriptural injunctions. [That is not the same as the superficial ritualism mentioned earlier]

But ultimately he follows restraint from sense gratification because of the higher taste. Verse 2:59 may seem to minimise the importance of rules and regulations. But no. We need to follow the rules. We are among the less intelligent. We do have a taste for maya and so the rules protect us.

The mind engaged in Krishna consciousness can overcome the strong allure of material attachment.

* * * * *

May 16th ..

In verse 2:61 Lord Krishna says, 'mat parah', "in relationship with Me". Thus, control of the senses is best achieved by fixing the consciousness on Lord Krishna in devotional service. Ambarisa Maharaja did this and remained tolerant in the face of Durvasa's attack.

Verse 2:62: Even the slightest thought of sense pleasure can agitate the mind as one may seek to gratify those desires. But in Krishna consciousness one transcends the pull of the sense objects by higher taste. Haridas Thakur chanted Hare Krishna and passed the test when allured by Maya devi.

In purport to text 2:63 Srila Prabhupada explains how the devotee doesn't try to stop his sense activities but engages them in the service of the Lord. Brother Aelred stated how this aspect of Krishna consciousness gave him great relief from a misconception some Christian aesthetes have had [and Buddhists and impersonalistic yogis etc] that the senses are always material and are inimical to spiritual life; thus they develop an anti-body kind of renunciation. Srila Prabhupada says, "whereas an impersonalist tries to avoid good eatables, a devotee... after offering good eatables to the Lord... takes the remnants, called prasadam. Thus everything becomes spiritualised and there is no danger of a downfall". Devotional service gives us a support not available in the impersonalist path.

* * * * *

What does Srila Prabhupada mean when he says a devotee acts under the direction of Krishna [and he is thus transcendental to attachment and detachment] "in spite of his being attached to the sensual platform?" I think it means, even before a devotee is entirely liberated, by following the 'regulative principles of freedom', he agrees to do what Krishna wants. But how is that different than externally controlling the senses? [a process which is doomed to fail, as pointed out in 2:59]. The devotee's control is not just to renounce according to a program of self denial. But under the guidance of the spiritual master he uses his senses and mind in Krishna's service - by chanting, hearing and doing some work for Krishna. Thus these active bhakti engagements done with firm vow [drdha vrata] enable him to not fall down, even though he may still not be liberated.

* * * * *

Verse 2:66 discusses peace and happiness, highly desirable goals. One who is not connected with Lord Krishna in devotional service cannot attain peace "and how can there be any happiness without peace?"

* * * * *

May 18th 1:00am ..

Each reading session, same struggle and if you persist, same success. It starts out with the wild mind like a bronco, not

wanting to concentrate, settle on, and submissively accept - and believe it - the verses and purports. So you get on his case and tell him "go back and read that over again. Quiet down. I want you to read well".

Writing these notes helps. Pin it down. Purport 2:66 says "disturbance is due to want of an ultimate goal". So unless you are in Krishna consciousness there cannot be a final goal for the mind. Verse 5:29 will tell us Krishna is the goal of all works. Accept that, at least theoretically for a start and work for it.

* * * * *

In his purport 2:68, Srila Prabhupada gives a good definition of sadakha. He engages his senses in the service of Lord Krishna under the guidance of a spiritual master. He understands that "only by Krishna consciousness is one established in intelligence". He is working at perfection, controlling his senses by the only method that will work. Otherwise, even if one of the senses is allowed to roam [2:67] it can carry away a man's intelligence.

* * * * *

2:70 was always important to me, describing how rivers of material desires still enter the mind and body of a devotee but he remains unagitated by them and indifferent to them - and doesn't act on them - because of his fixed Krishna consciousness which is compared to the ocean "which is ever being filled but is always still". Be satisfied in your service in Krishna consciousness. The material world bombards our senses [naked billboards etc.] and you cannot just shut it all out. The mind may want to dwell on it... impressions stored from the past... but also because of beautiful women before us or lures for fame etc. - but we don't get swept away, we have lost all inclination for that, peaceful, fully engaged in Krishna consciousness.

* * * * *

I check off within myself whether I have the qualities of a person who can attain peace, as mentioned in 2:71 - he has given up all desires of material sense gratification [the higher kaman], he has given up all sense of proprietorship [nirmamah] and he's free of false ego [nirahankarah]. Work for

it. Don't cultivate these things. Be free of them in Krishna consciousness.

2:72 last verse in the chapter, concludes that one should be unbewildered, as described in previous verses, [the pure devotee devoid of material desires] then even at the hour of death, one can enter into the kingdom of God [brahma nirvana].

There is another life after this one. One can enter the kingdom of God even in this lifetime by full engagement in Krishna consciousness.

... CHAPTER THREE ...

Karma Yoga:

The purport to 3:1 can be pinching for me with its reference to trying to avoid the fight by going to a secluded place and chanting Hare Krishna. This is a misunderstanding that spiritual life means inertia or retirement from active life and practice of penance in a secluded place. This is not what Lord Krishna wanted for Arjuna. Arjuna placed the matter before his master. We want to do the same. Srila Prabhupada is instructing us in this chapter in karma yoga or work in Krishna consciousness.

[Don't renounce duties or action. Which action to pursue in Krishna consciousness? My writing life is also a form of action. One sometimes doubts it, wants to give it up and always chant Hare Krishna or always read. It may even be admitted that I'm still impure but that's a reason to continue work not to stop it. So work or niskarma-karma. That's what Lord Krishna is teaching Arjuna in this chapter].

* * * * *

"It is not a question of embodied life, but it is the nature of the soul to be always active". I have always liked that sentence. This describes action as not merely a burden for the conditioned soul who has to work since he's got a 'donkey' body and he lives in this world of labour-for-all. But all souls, even liberated in spiritual bodies in the spiritual world, all are active by nature. We have to change the nature of the work not try the impossible - inaction.

* * * * *

The thrust of the early verses in this chapter, in favour of purifying oneself by work, the frank admission that we are still impure but it's best to 'work it out' in varnasrama duties, and the condemnation of the pretender-yogi who avoids such work while hankering for sense gratification - these all pack a punch of prokarma yoga. Some take these verses and exalt karma yoga even above bhakti. But what's actually happening here is Lord Krishna is teaching the gradual process.

Srila Prabhupada doesn't always make an unnecessary distinction between karma yoga and pure bhakti, work for Krishna.

There is a stage, sannyasa, where one has no more material propensities and is ready to fully engage himself in activities

of pure devotional service, especially preaching and chanting and hearing. At this stage it's not wrong if he renounces all other work and accepts alms [charity] to maintain himself. Lord Krishna is not condemning bona fide sannyasa. [Sukadeva Goswami will glorify this stage and describe a severe state of renunciation - "are there no torn clothes lying on the street? etc" - whereby one doesn't even have to flatter wealthy men for one's maintenance. But here in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 3. Lord Krishna isn't discussing that stage.

* * * * *

The 'great art of doing work' is described in 3:9. 'Yajnarthat karmano nyatra', work for Visnu. It must be done under the guidance of the spiritual master.

"While in the material world they can live very comfortably without anxiety and after finishing the present material body they can enter into the kingdom of God". [3:10purport]

That's a very optimistic description of how to go back to Godhead in one human life. You don't have to live many lives as a sannyasi. In one life you can go from grhastha to renounced and back to Godhead - by performing yajna. Which yajna for this age? Sankirtana, the chanting of the names of God. "Sankirtana yajna and Krishna consciousness go well together".

Taking material goods from nature without offering yajna is thievery. [I think the American Indians had the concept of yajna, prayers etc. even in hunting]. Modern man exploits the earth for economical development and sense gratification. Yajna is Krishna conscious ecology.

* * * * *

May 20th ..

Bhagavad Gita 3:13-14 are about offering food to the Lord. Absolutely necessary or else we eat sin. Two acts connected to cooking are the offering and the growing of the food. Food comes from agriculture which is dependent on rain which is dependent on sankirtana yajna.

For regulating activities, such as how to perform work as yajna, we must follow the laws of the Vedas which are 'brahmaksara samudbhavam', directly breathed from the Supreme Lord. [3:15]

[Yajna is to satisfy the demigods who are agents of the Supreme Lord and who supply necessities for human enjoyment and maintenance. Demigods are satisfied when Lord Krishna is directly pleased in yajna].

* * * * *

All the goals of yajna are achieved by one who is fully acting in Krishna consciousness under proper guidance. He is also not concerned with material goals derived from yajnas. His only duty is to please Lord Krishna in devotional service and that achieves everything for him. [3:16-19]

Ideal leaders perform duties as an example to others. They are also conversant with all relevant scriptures.

* * * * *

Use your will to read. Especially in the beginning [beginning of spiritual life or beginning of each cold reading session], don't wait for 'it' [a special feeling] to occur. God helps those who help themselves. Begin reading with whatever available intelligence and faith and attention you have.

Lord Krishna has advised Arjuna about work, work for yajna, Visnu. Now he describes how He also works to set an example. We should all follow the Lord's example and practice according to scriptures and varna and asrama. But we cannot imitate Krishna's extraordinary lila.

A learned person shouldn't tell the ignorant, attached persons to stop work but by his own working in devotion, he should engage them in activities "[for the gradual development of Krishna consciousness]". But "a slightly developed Krishna conscious person may directly be engaged in the service of the Lord without waiting".

* * * * *

Bewildered souls think they are the doer; they don't know that they and everything in the world is under the control of Lord Krishna [3:27], through His material energy.

One in knowledge doesn't work in a sense gratificatory way. He knows the difference between guna karma and work for Krishna

[3:28]. He dovetails his acts in devotional service. "He knows that his material condition of life is under the supreme control of the Lord; consequently he is not disturbed by all kinds of material reactions, which he considers to be the mercy of the Lord".

* * * * *

In verse 3:29 Lord Krishna advises the wise not to unsettle ignorant persons who are engaged in material duties. But in the purport Srila Prabhupada says, "the devotees are more kind than the Lord because they understand the purpose of the Lord". So they take the risk and approach ignorant persons and try to engage them in acts of Krishna consciousness.

* * * * *

"Therefore, O Arjuna, surrendering all your works unto Me, with full knowledge of Me, without desires for profit, with no claims to proprietorship, and free from lethargy, fight".
[3:30]

Twice in his purport, Srila Prabhupada states that it may be a little difficult to follow the Lord's stern order not to claim proprietorship and not to be attached to relatives and to one's own body, but one has to carry out the Lord's order as if in military discipline, "without feverish mentality or lethargy".

In verse 3:30 Krishna directly asks Arjuna to surrender [based on the instruction that one should work in an exemplary way, in Krishna consciousness] and fight. The Lord's instructions are in one sense theoretical but now He makes it clear how He wants His devotee to carry them out in the practical field of action.

* * * * *

Last lines in the purport to 3:31 are among my most favourite. Lord Krishna says that those who act according to His injunctions become free from karmic reaction. Srila Prabhupada mercifully states that even if in the beginning of Krishna consciousness a devotee can't fully carry out Lord Krishna's injunctions, as long as he is faithful and doesn't resent His instructions - "and works sincerely without consideration of defeat and hopelessness, he will surely be promoted to the stage of pure Krishna consciousness".

Those who are disobedient to the Supreme Personality of Godhead are punished [3:32]. That may sound too 'fundamental' for sophisticated people in the year 2000, but it's a fact. Why are people disobedient and therefore ignorant of their self and the Supreme? It is due to a 'vacant heart'.

* * * * *

Verse 3:33 regarding "what can repression accomplish?" is for those who are not yet fully in Krishna consciousness. They should not give up their occupational duties and become yogis or transcendentalists artificially. This point is similar to what Lord Krishna said in the opening verses of the chapter. In ISKCON, devotees have often undergone re-evaluation of whether they are affected by the modes or not and what position they should take accordingly. Are we transcendental to varnasrama or not? How should we earn our money? What material desires that we find within ourselves should we subdue and which desires should we allow? But if we allow them, then how do we dovetail them?

Verse 3:34 and purport state that even those sense pleasures, such as sex, which are regulated in Vedic society, shouldn't be indulged in with the enjoying spirit, even when approved by religion's codes. "Practice of sense gratification under regulation may also lead one to go astray - as much as there is always the chance of an accident, even on the royal roads". Be detached from the rules [even while following them]. Be attached to the spirit of Krishna consciousness. Jagadisa Goswami's Bhagavad Gita Study Guide Outline states for verse 3:34, "Arjuna has refused to fight due to attraction and repulsion under the influence of the sense objects".

In purport to 3:35 Srila Prabhupada uses the word 'psychophysical' nature which has been such a useful term to describe our particular nature while in a conditioned state. We can't ignore our particular psychological nature; we ought to have self-knowledge on that level [as well as the more important self-knowledge], aham brahmasmi nitya Krishna dasa. The brahman shouldn't act as a ksatriya. "Everyone has to cleanse his heart by a gradual process, not abruptly". These teachings are very clear but it requires sometimes excruciating discrimination to know whether one shall transcend and not apply varna and asrama in one's life or whether one should act as those who are to be governed by codes for conditioned souls. Sometimes trial and error is inevitable. Guidance by a spiritual master is crucial.

* * * * *

In verse 3:36 Arjuna asks why a person who is originally pure soul is impelled to commit sins, "as if engaged by force".

In verse 3:37 Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada describe how the jiva's original love of Krishna gets transformed into lust by contact with the material nature. This lust, when unsatisfied [as always happens], gets transformed into wrath, "the all-devouring, sinful enemy of this world". Misuse of free will transforms the service attitude into the propensity for sense enjoyment. When we get repeatedly baffled by our prolonged lustful activities, we will enquire into the Supreme and our real position.

This instruction is very important and at the root of our conditioned nature. Srila Prabhupada used to say we should always ask ourselves, "am I about to do such and such act out of sense gratification or is it service to Krishna?"

Lust and wrath can be spiritualised.

* * * * *

In the human form of life, one can conquer lust by Krishna consciousness. In tree life and birds and beasts it's not possible. So how foolish to indulge in lust for us humans. Let us restrain; tolerate the 'itching sensation'. Do only that which leads to full Krishna consciousness. As we approach death, jettison all material desires as useless baggage.

"While one enjoys sense gratification it may be that there is some feeling of happiness, but actually that so called feeling of happiness is the ultimate enemy of the sense enjoyer". [3:39 purport]

The spirit soul becomes addicted to enjoying the material senses and mistakes this as true happiness. [3:40 purport]

From Jagadisa Goswami's summary of Verse 40: "Lust resides in the senses and the mind" [which is the reservoir of ideas for sense gratification].

"When love of God deteriorates into lust, it is very difficult to return to the normal condition. Nonetheless, Krishna consciousness is so powerful that even a late beginner can become a lover of God by following the regulative principles of devotional service, so from any stage of life, or from the time of understanding it's urgency..." [3:41 purport]

... CHAPTER FOUR ...

Transcendental Knowledge:

4:1 is hard for the materialist to swallow. One must accept the fabulously old age of the sun god, Manu's and the existence of Bhagavad Gita in human society for two million years. Let's avoid the mundane wranglers, neo-Darwinists etc. [Bhaktivedanta Institute has sufficiently discredited them].

* * * * *

When I come to read one of my favourite purports 4:4, I was sorry to find myself go through it with little attention and therefore little bhakti. No doubts arose in the statements that Srila Prabhupada made about Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but I felt such great distance from it that I might as well have been asleep or not reading at all. It seems I must go back then and read it again. No use in turning pages and claiming I read them if it's done so poorly.

"Therefore, when Krishna Himself speaks about Himself, it is auspicious for all the worlds. To the demons, such explanations by Krishna Himself may appear to be strange... but those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself. The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Krishna because they're always eager to know more and more about Him".

* * * * *

"The Personality of Godhead said: Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them, but you cannot, O subduer of the enemy!" [4:5] This verse, printed as the epithet to an edition of 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead' under a heading 'Krishna's Remembering', struck me strongly when I read it in the early 1960's.

Devotees of the Lord sometimes forget His nature but when they are reminded by the Lord, "by the divine grace", a devotee quickly remembers the infallible condition of the Lord.

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord says that He appears in this world in every millenium in His original transcendental form. [I wish to see, that form, I say to myself, and yet I am afraid to surrender to

Him, afraid He will make me change my service and give up my attachments and it will be too painful to do so. How foolish I am. Without Krishna and His direction in my life, I suffer in this world and the next. At least let me keep exposing myself to His words and teachings and not be resentful, even if I cannot surrender fully to Him at once. Let me associate with devotees and not find fault in them and beg for a drop of mercy so that I may be attached to Krishna and do the needful and so that I may go back to His eternal service].

* * * * *

The tiny mind doubts, "how could there be a person Krishna, God, who has the same eternal body of youth? It doesn't seem possible. Where is the proof of this? All I read is some analogies". Constantly the agnostic group challenges and they will never know Him. This is explained more in the ninth chapter and it's already been explained in this chapter 4:3, that "because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science" - therefore Krishna is teaching Arjuna.

There are two kinds of persons, demons and devotees. Better get on the side of Krishna and stay there and hear and serve and pray for the mercy to understand.

"There is no God, maybe I am God, we are all God" - Prabhupada has driven all these foolish theories away. Let me keep hearing and do so. "Only the Lord can manufacture a system of religion". [4:7]

The Lord Himself appears to banish the demons and their atheistic philosophies. "The Vedic principles push one towards complete surrender unto Him and whenever such principles are disturbed by the demoniac, the Lord appears".

"It is not a fact that the Lord appears only on Indian soil."

* * * * *

Why Krishna descends into the world is described in verses 4:7-8. "Therefore the prime purpose of the Krishna avatara is to satisfy His unalloyed devotees". He protects them from the demons and also "Lord Sri Krishna descends for the specific purpose of mitigating the anxieties of the pure devotees who are very anxious to see Him in His original Vrndavan pastimes". [4:8 purport]

Verse 4:9 tells us the importance of knowing the transcendental nature of Krishna's appearance, janma and activities [karma, Krishna karma]. Srila Prabhupada says that this has already been explained in 4:6 [He appears in every age in His transcendental eternal form].

Now it is stated that if you do understand this and accept it with full faith, then you will be liberated from material bondage and return "to the kingdom of God immediately after quitting this present material body".

"The Vedic version 'tat tvam asi' is actually applied in this case". Impersonalists use this aphorism, 'you are that too' to assert that each of us is also the same one supreme absolute impersonal, and there is no separate existence of the Personality of Godhead. But the actual application of 'tat tvam asi' is to approach the Supreme Lord Krishna and say to Him "You are the same Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead". When one does this he "is certainly liberated instantly" and his going back to Godhead is guaranteed.

* * * * *

"So, by the slow process of devotional service, under the guidance of the spiritual master..." [There are similar statements that devotional service is gradual. Step by step. And yet there are other statements that speak of taking to it as soon as the urgency occurs, and there is the example of King Katvanga who surrendered in one moment].

* * * * *

"Everyone is searching for Krishna in the different aspects of His manifestations". [4:11 purport]

Krishna's pure devotees reciprocate with Him according to their desires in a particular relationship both in the spiritual world and material world.

In verse 4:12 Lord Krishna states that people are mostly not interested in Krishna consciousness but in fruitive success. We are very fortunate to have come to Krishna consciousness where our sights are raised to the eternal goal of back to Godhead and the practical method of purifying ourselves to reach that goal.

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord is not affected by work like the jivas, nor does He aspire for karma phala. "One who understand this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work". [4:14]

"To retire from the activities of Krishna consciousness and to sit aloof making a show of Krishna consciousness is less important than actually engaging in the field of activities for the sake of Krishna". [4:15 purport]

[If this purport about 'not returning from the field' worries me, I should assure myself that my non-managerial action is also a kind of Krishna conscious activity and is not 'retiring from the activities of Krishna consciousness... aloof... making a show of Krishna consciousness'. Writing and reading could be called 'lazy intelligence' which Srila Prabhupada recommended as superior to active intelligence and inactive foolishness].

* * * * *

Everyone has to act. Krishna will teach Arjuna about action, karma and forbidden action, vikarma and about a type of work that doesn't occur reaction [akarma]. That is, He will recommend action in Krishna consciousness.

Action in Krishna consciousness is devoid of sense gratification. He knows he is the eternal servant of Lord Krishna and works like that. He works to the best of his ability as duty, out of love for Krishna. He is not even attached to his personal maintenance. He's not anxious to secure possessions or protect what he has. He maintains himself like that part in a machine, so he can be fit to serve Krishna. Because of his behaviour and mentality he is free from all reactions to sins.

"He does not allow anyone's service to hamper his own service in Krishna consciousness... he doesn't hesitate to act in any way for the satisfaction of Krishna". [4:22 purport]

His works 'merge into transcendence'.

Jagadisa Goswami's outline: "A Krishna conscious person understands that Krishna works through him and he gives up all sense of independence". [4:21]

[I may have to admit I haven't reached this stage completely where I am always one hundred percent sure that whatever I do or think is Krishna working through me and not my own desires and my attempt to dovetail them as much as possible in Krishna consciousness. In a recent B.T.G. article Visaka dasi said she

realized many verses in Bhagavad Gita describing the pure devotee do not apply to her. She is a neophyte trying to purify her desires through Krishna conscious family life, she said].

The "Absolute Truth covered by maya is called matter. Matter dovetailed for the cause of the Absolute Truth regains its spiritual quality". [4:24 purport]

[This is a good definition of what is spirit and what is matter].

* * * * *

The materially conditioned soul can get out of his entanglement by activities [yajna, sacrifices] in Krishna consciousness. The more such activities are performed, "the more the atmosphere becomes spiritualised by complete absorption".

As I'm reading this morning, I am encouraging myself to go on with this most important activity of studying Bhagavad Gita As It Is. I am thankful the self wants to do it. I don't want to miss out. Life is for this. I am reading the section on sacrifice. So study is mentioned also: "Having accepted strict vows, some become enlightened by... studying the Vedas". Study of Bhagavad Gita As It Is is more direct than study of Vedanta and Upanisads. As will be stated at the end, "one who studies this sacred conversation of ours worships Me by his intelligence". [18:70]

Yogis control the breathing to increase life duration so to attain perfection in spiritual realization. "The intelligent yogi is interested in attaining perfection in one life, without waiting for the next". I cannot hope to practice this but must use my time without wasting any. Srila Prabhupada says a Krishna conscious person is always in the service of Krishna, "so at the end of life, he is naturally transferred to the transcendental plain of Lord Krishna; consequently he makes no attempt to increase his longevity". [4:29 purport]

This is encouraging and I shouldn't minimise what Prabhupada is saying. But it's also a fact that I shouldn't presume I'm already fully Krishna conscious and that I'm simply waiting to transfer back to Godhead. I have to strive and struggle to overcome material desires. I need to increase my attraction to Krishna. Vaisnavas often express the humble attitude in their prayers, that they may not go back to Godhead and thus they hope to get a better life next time. Maharaja Pariksit said: "I pray that if I should again take my birth in the material world I will have complete attachment to the unlimited Lord

Krishna, association with His devotees and friendly relations with all living beings". [SB 1:19:16]

* * * * *

Yajna gives you better next lives and ultimately liberation, "and the highest perfection of liberated life is to associate with the Supreme Lord". [4:31]

"Sacrifice performed in knowledge is better than the mere sacrifice of material possessions". [4:33]

* * * * *

Just approach a spiritual master. [4:34] "One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master". What's the test? It will involve our submission and service. Tests are specific and we will have to learn it from the spiritual master. We cannot entirely know in advance what the test will be. "Both blind following and absurd enquiries are condemned".

When you have real knowledge from a spiritual master you will never again fall into the illusion that the living beings are apart from the Supreme Lord, Krishna. [4:35] We have forgotten our purpose which is to render eternal service to Krishna.

[We are not apart from Krishna. We think we are and that's our big illusion. It takes shape in different bodies that we assume, man, animals, demigods, wherein we pursue purposes apart from service to Krishna. The whole world is in this delusion and impersonal liberation is another form of the same maya].

* * * * *

"Even if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners, when you are situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will be able to cross over the ocean of miseries". [4:36]

Material life is compared to an ocean in which we will perish sooner or later no matter how good a swimmer we are. Krishna consciousness is the boat to carry us across. "The boat of Krishna consciousness is very simple, but at the same time the most sublime". [Simple means we take shelter in Krishna and

that's our solution to all troubles].

"In this world there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge". [4:38]

Purport: "When one is situated in transcendental knowledge he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself".

* * * * *

Verse 4:39 describes a sraddhavan, a faithful man. He also controls his senses, is dedicated to transcendental knowledge and so attains param santim.

"Doubtful persons have no status whatsoever in spiritual emancipation". [4:40]

"Therefore the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. "Armed with yoga, O Bharata, stand and fight". [4:42]

Purport: The beginning of Chapter 4. taught of the transcendental activities of the Supreme Lord as discussed by the Lord Himself. "In spite of such instructions, one who does not understand the real nature of the Lord as the eternal, blissful, all knowing Personality of Godhead is certainly fool number one", the real purpose of the sacrifice as taught in this chapter is self realization, knowing one's constitutional position, "but one who doubts the authority of Krishna falls back". Study scriptures under a bona fide spiritual master".

... CHAPTER FIVE ...

Karma Yoga - Action in Krishna Consciousness:

Which is better, renunciation or work? [Seems to be a repeat of Arjuna's question at the beginning of chapter 3.] Srila Prabhupada explains in the purport to 5:1 that Chapter 4. in which there is praise of knowledge over sacrificial acts which lack knowledge, caused Arjuna confusion. Karma yoga is better than renunciation of work.

* * * * *

Sense gratification activities will cause us to transmigrate: Nunam pramattah kurute vikarma... "Therefore, jnana... is not sufficient for liberation. One has to act in the status of spirit soul, otherwise there is no escape from material bondage". [5:2 purport]

Krishna conscious actions purify the heart; using matter in the service of Krishna is better than phalgu vairagya.

* * * * *

A devotee knows he is part and Krishna is the whole.

Sankhya philosophy finds the root of the material world as Visnu. Devotional service is to water that root. Aim of both is the same.

Vaisnava sannyasis act in Krishna consciousness, "in multiple engagements in the transcendental service of the Lord". But without material reaction. They study Srimad Bhagavatam in a devotional way. Mayavadis stress Vedanta-sutra study, but when it becomes tedious they take to Srimad Bhagavatam but in the wrong way, and sometimes they enter philanthropic and altruistic material works. Vaisnava sannyasis are happy in their duties "and they have the guarantee of entrance into the kingdom of God". [5:6 purport]

A Krishna conscious person is transcendental to work and doesn't identify with his senses as self. "Although he appears to be acting with his body and senses, he is always conscious of his actual position which is spiritual engagement". [5:8-9 purport]

"Even one's material body, being a gift of the Lord for carrying out a particular type of action, can be engaged in Krishna consciousness. It is then beyond contamination by

sinful reactions". [5:8-9 purport]

Verse 5:12 states that a person acting in Krishna consciousness attains peace. No reaction to his actions, which are thus absolute. "This is the secret of Krishna consciousness - realization that there is no existence besides Krishna is the platform of peace and fearlessness".

The soul is embodied due to ignorance and is forced to act by the material modes. "The waves of the ocean are tossing him and he has no control over them. His best solution is to get out of the water by transcendental Krishna consciousness. That alone will save him from all turmoil". [5:14 purport]

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord doesn't assume anyone's activities. He is not responsible for our actions although only by His will are we able to carry out our desires. Ignorant living beings blame the Lord.

"Desire is a subtle form of conditioning for the living entity. The Lord fulfils His desire as He deserves; Man proposes and God disposes".

When one is enlightened his knowledge reveals everything "as the sun lights up everything in the day time". [5:16 verse]

"Identity with individuality [soul and Supersoul] in spiritual life is real knowledge".

"The Supersoul is present in all bodies without distinction". Vidya vinaya sampanne. [5:18 verse]

"Equanimity of mind... is the sign of self realization". [5:19] This means when you don't identify with the body, your own or others and you see the Supreme in all bodies. You then are eligible to enter the spiritual sky after death.

One who realizes that he is spirit soul and the Supreme is his Lord, doesn't rejoice or lament over occurrences related to his body. [5:20]

* * * * *

"But a person engaged in Krishna consciousness can work with greater vigour without sex pleasure, which he avoids..."

spiritual realization and sex pleasure go ill together". [5:21 purport]

"Knowing well the joys of transcendental pleasure, how can a liberated soul agree to enjoy false pleasure?" [5:22]

"The more one is addicted to material pleasures, the more he is entrapped by material miseries".

* * * * *

Verse 5:24 is memorable for its stress on the inner life: "One whose happiness is within, who is active and rejoices within, and whose aim is inward is actually the perfect mystic. He is liberated in the Supreme, and ultimately he attains the Supreme".

Srila Prabhupada says that unless one can realize happiness within he can't retire from external acts for sense enjoyment.

Verse 5:25 maintains that the liberated person is "busy working for the welfare of all living beings". This means Krishna consciousness, since the sufferings of humanity are due to forgetfulness of Krishna. A Krishna conscious preacher is liberated, has no doubts about the supremacy of Krishna, is freed from all sins.

Even while in this world, the devotee thinks of Krishna and serves Him [liberated from fruitive acts and desires]. [5:26]

Astanga-yoga is preliminarily mentioned in Verses 5:27-28.

Verse 5:29 is the much-quoted statement, the basis of what Srila Prabhupada called the 'peace formula', knowledge that Lord Krishna is the Supreme proprietor of all planets, the actual person to whom all sacrifices should be offered for His enjoyment and a friend of all. One who knows these three things "attains peace from the pangs of material miseries". This formula is necessary for peace both individually and collectively.

A purport summary of the chapter 5:29 describes direct Krishna consciousness as performable even while in the material world and thus one attains liberation from material bondage. "Krishna consciousness brings one into spiritual life even while one is within the jurisdiction of matter, for it is an arousing of spiritual existence by practise in the material world... Everything depends on one's practical performance of duties in Krishna consciousness".

... CHAPTER SIX ...

Dhyana Yoga:

Sa Sannyasi ca yogi ca... He is a sannyasi who is unattached to fruits of work and works as he is obligated. [6:1]

Everyone's duty is to act in Krishna consciousness, just as the hand works for the good of the whole body. "...the living entity who acts for the satisfaction of the Supreme whole and not for personal satisfaction is the perfect sannyasi".

"A person acting in Krishna consciousness works for the satisfaction of the whole, without self-interest" [6:1]. One who acts for the satisfaction of Krishna is the true yogi and sannyasi.

[Question: In each individual case, how does one know the difference between spiritually beneficial self-interest and that which is material? Who shall tell me what is in the interest of the whole and what is false self-satisfaction? A spiritual or religious authority in an institution has to be careful he doesn't order subordinates to serve the whole by serving him, unless he is certain that he is acting as Krishna's representative when he orders them. Loss of faith here is hard to repair. Nevertheless the principle is clearly taught by Lord Krishna in 6:1 that a devotee serves the whole, serves Krishna and renounces all attempts to enjoy the result of his acts. Na danam na janam...]

* * * * *

I have to ask myself what is selfish activity in my life. Can I give it up and act for the pleasure of Krishna? Unless I can do that, I am not a sannyasi or real devotee. "For one can never become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification". [6:2]

"The real aim is for a living entity to give up all selfish satisfaction and be prepared to satisfy the Supreme..." 6:2 purport]

We make think that by following the four rules I am automatically free from sense gratification. But that is not necessarily so. I can still indulge in sense gratification while following the four rules.

[We continue to have a self even when we are in Krishna consciousness, but now it's realized as eternal servant of Krishna. There is also joy realized in the self. But it's not selfish. "When a person is fully engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, he is pleased in himself and thus

he is no longer engaged in sense gratification or fruitive activities". [6:4]

Yoga is compared to a ladder with different rungs rising from lowest material condition to topmost spiritual perfection. The eightfold yoga system starts yama niyama etc but direct service in Krishna consciousness puts one at once "from the beginning on the platform of meditation". So by Krishna consciousness a devotee avoids the need for a difficult and tedious early stages of astanga yoga practise, which is very difficult in this age.

* * * * *

These opening verses [6:1-4] stress giving up sense gratification and fruitive gain, whether you practise astanga yoga or bhakti yoga. One has to be determined about this. Krishna consciousness provides the means to live the renounced life of yoga, otherwise "one must be engaged in sense gratification, since one cannot live without engagement".

* * * * *

Deliver yourself by the help of the mind, don't degrade yourself [6:5]. Mind is either friend or enemy. Mind attached to enjoying sense objects has to be controlled. [We tell the mind "no" when it wants to get sense enjoyment for the tongue, eyes, ears etc. We tell the mind it should be engaged in Krishna consciousness].

"The word hi is used... that one must do this". If the mind dwells on the thoughts of sense gratification then you will enter the feeling and willing stages.

Is the mind a friend or the enemy? The mind is the friend when it's trained to draw away from attachment to sense objects - "Not attracted to the glitter of material nature".

"One should not degrade oneself..."

How to do it? Best way is to engage the mind in Krishna consciousness.

Purport to 6:6 states that the mind is finally controlled in yoga when one follows the dictation of paramatma. This is attained in Krishna consciousness and thus the devotee is unaffected by dualities of material nature.

[As with so many statements in Bhagavad Gita, we ask ourselves whether we have already attained this state - following dictation of Supreme and free from effects of heat and cold, honour and dishonour - or is this still for us an unattained ideal? Srila Prabhupada speaks confidently of the devotee in Krishna consciousness and his liberated status, his superiority over the yogi. Am I that devotee? If the answer is "not fully, not yet", then it's my goal; it's the path of bhakti yogi I am on and not another path or yoga rung].

* * * * *

June 20th ..

"For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity". [6:7]

This reminds me of orthodox Christian prayer where they say you must find your heart in prayer. Once you find the heart, God is there and is revealed to you. Srila Prabhupada speaks of receiving dictation from the Supreme. A devotee does this when he dedicates himself to following the order of the spiritual master. In such samadhi, "the devotee of the Lord is unaffected by dualities... distress and happiness, cold and heat etc".

* * * * *

6:8 mentions jnana and vijnana. One who has both - acquired knowledge and realization - is trpatma, self-satisfied. "Mere book knowledge without realization of the Supreme is useless".

Srila Prabhupada says one must be fortunate to associate with a realized person who is satisfied in pure devotional service. If you have only academic knowledge you become "easily deluded and confused by apparent contradictions".

* * * * *

"The yogi should live alone in a secluded place and always carefully control his mind". 6:10]

Srila Prabhupada: "Krishna consciousness means, concisely, to be always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord". [I remember 1966 how I used this phrase "transcendental loving service" and how it captured my mind. How my young

spirit was attracted to the extreme proposal of always being in Krishna consciousness, no matter where you were. And I recall how I carried this out in a way that disturbed my family].

"One should always think of Krishna and not forget Him even for a moment... In order to concentrate the mind one should always remain in seclusion".

Srila Prabhupada describes the direct Krishna consciousness of the devotee who achieves the same purposes as the yogi. "...he is always alone having nothing to do with persons not in Krishna consciousness".

* * * * *

Verses 6:11-12 teach explicitly astanga yoga, sacred place, secluded, sitting place, control of mind on one point. This is not usually possible in Kali Yuga and the harinama verse states that the chanting of the holy name is the only means of deliverance.

* * * * *

Verses 6:13-14 give more technical instruction for astanga meditation and the goal, mat parah, "meditate on Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life".

Srila Prabhupada: "One who has no program to realize this visnu murti is uselessly engaged in mock yoga practise".

Freedom of sex life is necessary. This is also practised in household life with regulated sex. In bhakti the devotee "loses sexual attraction, being engaged in the superior service of the Lord".

* * * * *

Verse 6:15 describes the ultimate goal of yoga, attaining 'nirvana paramam... mat samstham' - the kingdom of God, by cessation of material existence.

Nirvana doesn't mean entering into the 'void', which is only a myth. "There is no void anywhere in the creation of the Lord". Planets in spiritual sky are param dhamas.

Yoga is not for cheap results. Devotee achieves his goal of back to Godhead.

[I am reading along, thinking I'll be able to give adequate lectures on Bhagavad Gita and I'll become convinced. Won't be confused. Krishna consciousness is real yoga and is the goal of life. Don't be diverted from it for even a moment. Resort to ninefold practises, celibacy etc].

* * * * *

A yogi doesn't sleep or eat too much or too little. He is always alert in the discharge of his Krishna conscious duties and so "any unnecessary time spent sleeping is considered a great loss". Ideals are Srila Rupa Goswami [sleeping two hours a day] and Haridas Thakur [not sleeping or eating until he finished his japa quota of 300,000 names]. [6:17]

* * * * *

The Krishna conscious yogi doesn't practise simple abnigation which is impractical, especially for those who are not sannyasis. So "transcendental engagement of the senses and mind" is advised, as done by Maharaja Ambarisa.

* * * * *

In samadhi one sees the self, rejoices in the self and "even in the greatest difficulty he is never shaken" [6:20-23]. Transcendental pleasure implies the existence of knowledge and the knower realized through transcendental senses - not losing all identity of self and eternal position of living entity. This ultimate goal of yoga in transcendental pleasure is easily achieved by bhakti yoga.

"A Krishna conscious person is so happy in his occupation that he does not aspire after any other happiness".

"He is callous towards incidental occurrences - such as accidents, disease, scarcity and even the death of a most dear relative - but he is always alert to execute his duties in Krishna consciousness".

* * * * *

Practise with determination. Follow the example of the sparrow who lost her eggs in the waves of the ocean. If one follows with determination, "the Lord will surely help, for God helps those who help themselves".

* * * * *

Don't think about or dwell on sense gratification. Step by step go from pratyahara [ceasing sense activities] to samadhi [trance].

* * * * *

June 22nd ..

Grateful, precious time to read. I am not in "ecstasy"? Never mind. Read as best you can.

"One should think of no pleasure aside from the pleasure of the Supreme Self". Does this thought come first for me or only second? For example, when I do creative writing. Sometimes we please ourselves and then give a donation to Lord Krishna. Or we dovetail our acts so they don't go in vain. But here Srila Prabhupada puts it so totally pure and Krishna conscious: "One should think of no pleasure aside from the pleasure of the Supreme Self". And he says it's not difficult: "This state is easily attained by directly practising Krishna consciousness".

* * * * *

"From wherever the mind wanders due to its flickering and unsteady nature, one must certainly withdraw it and bring it back under the control of the self" [6:26]. This is the classic verse I turn to for most basic mental action during japa. In japa the self fixes on Supreme Holy Names. Srila Prabhupada describes controlling senses and mind in transcendental sense happiness in the service of Hrsikesa. "Serving Krishna with purified senses is called Krishna consciousness". When he defines Goswami I blush to think I haven't attained it - constant control of mind.

* * * * *

Verse 6:27 says prasanty-manasam and brahma bhuta etc. Srila Prabhupada translates it as "whose mind is fixed on Me". This is an example of his Krishna-ising the verse. You can explain this to those who doubt why he defines peaceful as "fixed on the lotus feet of Krishna" and brahma bhuta as "free from material contamination and situated in the transcendental service of the Lord". He refers to 18:54 where brahma bhuta is directly described as leading to service in bhakti and to Lord Krishna. Peace, we learned in 5:29 is attained by one who worships Lord Krishna. Only the envious who tried to avoid service to Krishna object to this devotional scholarship which establishes the actual purport sanskrit of the Bhagavad Gita. [A more elaborate defence can be made]

* * * * *

I've said that I particularly like 6:29 and 6:30 yet this morning as I came to 6:29 I had trouble recognising it. My cancala mind was distracted by a voice shouting in the street and car motors. What is this verse saying? I was like one licking the outside of the bottle of honey. I had to read it several times and then I at least recognised it. Now try to enter it. "A true yogi observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me".

A Krishna conscious yogi sees Krishna as paramatma in everyone's heart. Individual soul and Supersoul.

"Outwardly also, every living being is situated in the energy of the Lord".

The yogi sees equally - all are servants of the Lord.

Why do I like this and 6:30? They encourage seeing Krishna in nature and in little things, flowers, sky, birds. God is everywhere, not only in scriptures.

* * * * *

"For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me". [6:30 verse]

Srila Prabhupada: "Such a person may appear to see all separate manifestations of the material nature, but in each and every instance he is conscious of Krishna, knowing that everything is a manifestation of Krishna's energy". When he sees a tree, a car, a microphone, he sees Krishna. Srila Prabhupada in conversations gave examples of the mother seeing

her baby child's shoe, or a lover seeing the comb of his beloved. The object creates reference to the context. In the case of the Supreme Lord everything is His and reminds the devotee of the Lord.

"Krishna consciousness is the development of love of Krishna" - no risk of spiritual annihilation.

"...cannot bear to live for a moment without serving the Lord within oneself".

[Surely no Buddhist monk-poet can give us this vision, nor can a nature lover. Only the devotee. Premanjana.

6:31 purport [Srila Prabhupada said purports were more important than verses] states that yogi sees Visnu in four-armed form in himself and this is a plenary portion of Krishna. He refers to "innumerable Supersouls in innumerable hearts of living entities" - no difference between Them.

Perfect yogi and Krishna conscious person are the same.

Purport repeats that the Lord is one yet all pervading as Supersoul. I take this as acintya beda beda tattva.

* * * * *

June 23rd ..

Visnu is one yet present in innumerable hearts as many.

"By His inconceivable potency, in spite of His one form, He is present everywhere, as the sun appears in many places at once".

It's not a simplistic thing; not as simple as the example of the sun. You could say it's an illusion that each person thinks the Lord is in his own heart [as each gopi thought Krishna was only with her in the rasa dance]. Yet he is in my heart just for me and He is in your heart just for you. He is able to do this. He expands. Yet He is one. It is acintya beda beda.

* * * * *

Purport 6:33 - "The perfect yogi knows that the living being who is conditioned by the modes of nature is subjected to the threefold miseries due to his forgetfulness of his relationship with Krishna". The yogi is happy in Krishna consciousness and

"he tries to distribute the knowledge of Krishna everywhere".

"This makes him the best philanthropist and dearest servitor of the Lord". [18:69]

A yogi who has withdrawn to a secluded place "may not be as perfect as a devotee who is trying his best to turn every man towards Krishna consciousness". [6:32]

[I have always liked the point made here that the Krishna conscious yogi actually knows "by comparison to his own self" the cause of others distress. It is a profound claim - to know why each person is suffering and not only in an abstract or generalised way. "He is aware of everyone's happiness and distress by dint of his own experience". It all boils down to one cause of suffering and one cause of happiness - forgetfulness or bliss in Krishna consciousness. Someone may claim to be happy for another reason but that is partial Krishna consciousness or superficial temporary happiness. Not the real thing. A Krishna conscious person gets to the real issue and he wants to help others and he does. This is a profound advocacy of the preaching life as more perfect than that of the recluse. But it's a fact in my case that I can preach better when I take time alone, to make writings and to study, as I am studying this verse and purport today].

* * * * *

In text 6:33 Arjuna says that the yoga which Krishna is teaching is "impractical and unendurable for me". So not only is actual dhyana yoga less perfect because of its not directly helping others to attain Krishna conscious happiness, but it's too difficult to perform for anyone in Kali Yuga.

Controlling the mind, especially for a worldly person, is like trying to control the wind. Mind overruns intelligence [6:34]. the easiest way, as suggested by Lord Caitanya is chanting Hare Krishna mantra in all humility. And, sa vai manah Krishna padaravindayah: Engage mind fully in Krishna. "Only then there will remain no other engagements to agitate the mind".

That means agitation by Krishna conscious duties can also be Krishna conscious, like the agitation of the gopis and Mother Yasoda.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna admits it's difficult to control the mind but says "it's possible by suitable practice and by detachment" [6:35]. In purport Srila Prabhupada asks "what is that practice?" It's not as astanga yoga which no-one can actually observe in its strict rules and regulations. But Krishna consciousness, devotional service, starting with hearing about Krishna is the suitable practice. Krishna conscious actions are vairagya, detachment from material acts by higher satisfaction. Paresanubhava.

* * * * *

If you try to practice yoga but you can't control the mind, that's useless. So you have to find the appropriate means. In purport to 6:36 Srila Prabhupada again demonstrates the impracticality of astanga yoga. It seems that Lord Krishna taught the details of this yoga earlier in the chapter just to show it's impossible, by Arjuna's refusal and His own subsequent remarks. The importance of controlling the mind in self realization is stressed here. The practical and appropriate and possible means is Krishna consciousness.

* * * * *

In 6:37 Arjuna asks about the destiny of the unsuccessful transcendentalist. In the purport Srila Prabhupada outlines that spiritual life is, finding self beyond matter, relation with God and activities to re-establish the lost link. Lord Krishna already spoke on success by gradual method and in the second chapter said, nehabhikrama-naso sti - even a little advancement is never lost. So Arjuna is asking here for a reconfirmation of this.

One may fail... "Not be sufficiently serious". Spiritual path is "to declare war on the illusionary energy". She tries to defeat him with allurements. Arjuna asks if the yoga aspirant who fails loses in both material and spiritual careers.

* * * * *

Reading tip: Calm down the mind. Notice you are thinking of something else while reading. Put it aside for now. In this case, try to enter with concern, that moment in the past [has eternally to be lived] of Arjuna asking Krishna this question. Feel Arjuna's concern. Appreciate that [in verse 6:39] he says there is no-one but Krishna who can relieve his doubt.

"The verdict of Krishna is the final and complete answer to all doubts, because He knows past, present and future perfectly. ... Krishna and Krishna conscious devotees alone can know what is what".

* * * * *

In answering this question, Srila Prabhupada gives a parallel verse from Srimad Bhagavatam 1:5:17. There is no loss if one takes to spiritual life, even if later he falls away from it. It's so auspicious. [This counters the resentment ex-devotees feel: "I had a twenty year hole in my job resume" etc etc. They overlook the great gain they made by attempting wholeheartedly to surrender to God. They can't seem to face that they did fail and so they blame ISKCON]. Material life can never be ultimately auspicious; no matter what you gain you lose out.

Lord Krishna then spells out what happens to the yoga-bhrastah: He goes to higher material planets and then is reborn into family advantageous for further spiritual progress on earth. This is the fate for one who fails in yoga after a little practice. [6:41]

One who fails after a long practice takes birth in the family of transcendentalists. In his purport to verse 6:42 Srila Prabhupada gives rare praise to the seminal line of goswami families. He then cites his own and his spiritual master's families; rare birth where they got trained in devotional service at the beginning of lives. "Later on we met by the order of the transcendental system" - a mystical and potent phrase.

Spiritual efforts never go in vain. But that doesn't mean we should be complacent about failure and fall down. Nevertheless one should take great solace from these verses. When I have bad dreams I fear that I'll get lost in my next life. But verse 6:44 assures me I'll get back onto the path. "He automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles - even without seeking them". Srila Haridas Thakur must have practised all the rituals in previous lives.

But it takes a long time, many lives to be washed of all contamination and attain the supreme goal. According to this purport and also verse 7:28, I may conclude that I've already attained to life of supreme perfection, Krishna consciousness. But I'm not perfectly Krishna conscious. So no complacency. You're in the most auspicious position you've ever been so work it for all its worth with tapasya, non offence, endeavour... Don't let Maya catch you with last snares after reaching this

rare attainment. And don't be smug that it was your own doing. Appreciate all the suffering. Don't go back to it. Kali Yuga is perilous. Take to Lord Caitanya's mercy, Srila Prabhupada's mercy. Preach to help others even while you're trying to help yourself.

* * * * *

June 25th ..

One of the biggest 'problems' in reading Srila Prabhupada's books for outsiders is that he seems to have such a strong sectarian view. That is, he claims Lord Krishna is God and he seems to interpret the sanskrit verses so that they all come out in a Krishna conscious way. Devotees are writing treatises to prove that this treatment is not sectarian but it is the actual meaning of Bhagavad Gita. I don't have a problem with this except in a superficial sense.

In text 6:46 Lord Krishna says the yogi is better than the ascetic [tapasvi] and better than the jnani or the karmi. But Srila Prabhupada says in the purport, Lord Krishna doesn't say yoga [a general term for all of yoga] is better than bhakti yoga. This verse therefore leads to the conclusion in verse 6:47. [Seems if I were assigned to speak on 6:46 I'd want to join it to 6:47 to complete the Lord's thought, His final opinion on the topmost yoga].

In verse 6:47 the use of the word bhajante is discussed. It means more than the English word worship. It means He who we must serve, or else we are fallen. It applies only to the Supreme Lord.

Rungs on a yoga ladder: "From the beginning of karma yogi to the end of bhakti yoga is a long way to self realization". [karma-jnana-astanga-bhakti].

Devotees sometimes ask why anything but bhakti is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita or Srimad Bhagavatam. Here is an answer: "Bhakti yoga is the ultimate goal but to analyse bhakti yoga minutely one has to understand the other yogas". Srila Prabhupada gives a nice purport directly describing Lord Krishna's form, face, names, etc - so there is no doubt who we are speaking of when we say bhajanti.

Perfection in yoga is attained only through bhakti yoga: Yasya deve para bhaktir. [This suggests revelation by the Lord]. Non devotees object to this also. It sounds like 'circular logic' to them. They object when we say only a devotee knows bhakti because God has revealed it to him. But this is

transcendental logic; science. Yoga cannot be attained by one's own work or scholarship or brainpower or expertise in asanas and meditation. Only when the Absolute Truth is pleased to reveal Himself by one who serves Him with love.

... CHAPTER SEVEN ...

Knowledge of The Absolute:

Verse 7:1 is the one Srila Prabhupada lectured on more than any other verse: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Now hear O son of Prtha, how by practising yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt".

[These outstanding verses, 6:47 is also one, clear up any doubts as to the goal of the Bhagavad Gita. We should adjust our understanding of other verses in terms of the final conclusions, summaries etc of the maha-vakya verses. When so called scholars of Bhagavad Gita refuse to do this, they reveal their atheistic prejudice and they misinterpret Bhagavad Gita].

Bhagavan realization is higher than Brahman or Paramatma. In 7:1 Krishna says tat srnu, hear from Me. The purport glorifies the hearing process as the first of nine principles in bhakti: "Nine different forms, of which sravanam is the first and most important".

"One has to learn from Krishna directly or from a pure devotee of Krishna - and not from a non devotee upstart, puffed up with academic education". Srila Prabhupada then quotes, "Srimad Bhagavatam 1:2:17-21 beginning with srnvatam sva katah Krishna: "To hear about Krishna from Vedic literatures or to hear from Him directly through the Bhagavad Gita is itself righteous activity". These verses describe the potent effects of regular hearing about Lord Krishna. It clears the heart, fixes one in devotional service, frees one from material modes. Srila Prabhupada quoted these verses in the poem he wrote on the Jaladuta in Boston. He felt some hesitancy or smallness in his ability to convince the Westerners of Krishna consciousness but then he recalled these verses as the way he would do it, as Krishna desired. So preaching means giving people a chance to hear. Srila Prabhupada said, whatever change you see in these boys and girls it is due to hearing.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna said He will now declare in full this knowledge, jnana and vijñana. He'll tell Arjuna because he's a devotee and friend. When one knows Krishna, the cause of all causes, nothing remains unknown. Vijñatam sarvam idam vijñatam bhavati. Jagadisa Goswami outlined: "Knowing Krishna gives meaning to everything".

* * * * *

June 29th ..

"Out of many thousands among men..." [7:3]. It's heavy to hear that the great majority of humans are "simply engaged in animal propensities". This knowledge puts you apart from them, makes you different from ordinary life in the world. You can't enjoy the easy way of illusion. You restrain yourself from doing what most people are doing. Sometimes even a neophyte devotee begins to think that his sadhana is too renounced, sectarian, or too pessimistic ["Life-negating"] and so he tries to join again with human kind's eating, mating, sleeping and defending. He thinks "how could they all be wrong?"

The transcendentalists are more aware. Human kind is not happy despite their attempts to enjoy. Are you willing to be part of a more enlightened humanity, even if it sets you apart?

"If the path of bhakti is so easy, ...then why do they take up the difficult path?"

Why don't they take up Krishna consciousness. It's not easy if you actually follow the rules.

* * * * *

July 1st ..

[I am inattentive as I start reading today. I have indigestion. I resolve not to eat so much desert hereafter. That will also make me more fit for reading. I pick up a pencil and use it to guide me as I read across the line of print in Bhagavad Gita. Then I start to read as-if-aloud, pronouncing each word in my mind.

Gross and subtle material energies. At first while reading it I think, this isn't nectar and it's therefore not important to me. But then I realize I am also hampered by lingering agnosticism, so it is important to hear that scientists generally accept only gross creation and material elements of the body. Philosophers and psychologists deal with the mind and intelligence but don't know the ultimate source is Krishna. So verse 7:4 and then followed by 7:5 and 7:6 etc are crucial to me. There is no solid conviction of Krishna lila in the internal energy unless you can be convinced of the existence of soul and Supreme person beyond matter.

Matter is one of His 'inferior' energies. The jivas are His superior energy. How do I know it?, The Bhagavad Gita says so.

It's my authority and not material science. I pray for revelation of the Bhagavad Gita truths.

Nayam atma pravaca nena labyha.

* * * * *

"The Supreme Lord, Krishna, is the only controller, and all living entities are controlled by Him. These living entities are His superior energy because the quality of their existence is one and the same with the Supreme, but they are never equal to the Lord in quantity of power". [7:5 purport]

The jiva is able to exploit matter and while doing so he gets puffed up and forgets "his real spiritual mind and intelligence". Thus matter [Maya] is acting on him. False ego thinks "I am matter and material acquisitions are mine".

"...the Gita confirms the living entity to be only one of the multi-energies of Krishna; and when this energy is freed from material contamination, it becomes fully Krishna conscious or liberated".

* * * * *

"The cause of the big universe is the big soul, or the Supersoul. And Krishna, the Supreme, is the cause of both the big and small souls". Read non-critically, with aural submission. But read alertly. Worship, use intelligence. Read as a preacher, yet as a mystic wanting the reality of Krishna confirmed in my heart. Aware of scientists challenges and ready to answer back to them.

* * * * *

"Mattah parataram nanyat..." [7:6] was often quoted by Srila Prabhupada. "There is no truth superior to Me". If you stick to the vedic authorities, there is no doubt that the absolute truth is the Supreme person. The absolute truth is the Supreme person so I must make my life sastra-orientated, sastra caksus. That may sometimes include entering arguments as to why we accept sastra or other evidence. But mostly you read without argument. Revere the authority. Do it with whole self, not only a little part of yourself. [7:7]

Regarding 7:7 purport, Jagadisa Goswami's outline states: "Discuss the confirmation... of the svetasvatara upanisad". [Regarding the word arupam, no material form].

* * * * *

"I am the taste in water..." This is perceiving the Supreme Lord in a preliminary way through His energies, "and in this way He is realized impersonally".

"I am the original seed of all existences..." Krishna is the source of everything.

Lord Krishna describes Himself in these verses in a selective way, not generalised. He says He's the strength of the strong "devoid of passion and desire". He says He is sex life "which is not contrary to religious principle". In another sense, Lord Krishna is all strength and all sex life, whether with or without material desire. But the favourable meditation on Lord Krishna is in the way given us in these verses. One needs to be guided in this. Jagadisa Maharaja: "Krishna creates everything for some purpose. Trouble follows when one ignores that purpose.

"Know that all states of being - be they of goodness, passion or ignorance - are manifested by My energy. I am, in one sense, everything, but I am independent. I am not under the modes of material nature, for they, on the contrary, are within Me". [7:12]

So Krishna's energy is not only present in the selected views but in all modes. He however is transcendental to the modes.

* * * * *

Deluded by the three modes "the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible".

* * * * *

July 3rd ..

This 'same old' philosophy [7:13 purport]. But no matter how many times we hear it, it is a challenge to ourselves and to others: Life is temporary and we don't know where we are going in the next life. By the spell of Maya we think of ourselves

in terms of the bodily concept, American, brahman etc. Thus we forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So here is Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada reminding us. If we hear properly we can awaken. From this beginning, preliminary knowledge, you flow to love of Krishna.

* * * * *

The divine energy of Krishna, His Maya, binds the jivas in the modes of nature and it's very difficult to overcome. But the ropes [or gunas] can be untied by Lord Krishna or His representative. [7:14]

* * * * *

Four kinds of miscreants [duskrtinas] who don't surrender to Krishna. [This is Lord Krishna's severe criticism of them. Srila Prabhupada would repeat their teachings and say, don't blame me for speaking harshly; I'm only repeating what Lord Krishna says].

Because the world's leaders don't surrender to Lord Krishna, to God, we can't accept them as actually intelligent. Thus their plans get baffled as they remain under illusion in the gunas.

1) Mudhas work hard to enjoy fruits of labour for themselves. They say they have no time to hear of the immortality of the jiva.

2) Naradhamas are perhaps socially and politically developed but follow no religious principles. They lose the actual gift of human life, to revive the lost consciousness of one's relationship with the Supreme Lord.

3) Mayayapahrta-jnana are persons whose erudite knowledge has been nullified by Maya. Even Bhagavad Gita commentators are in this category. They speculate uselessly.

4) The asuram bhavam asrtah are those of demoniac principles, openly atheistic.

* * * * *

Four kinds of pious persons begin to render service unto Lord Krishna. They are not pure devotees but when they come to the Supreme Lord and surrender they become pure. [7:15]

Of the four pious persons the one who is in full knowledge and in devotional service is best.

"He who is situated in pure knowledge of the transcendence of the Supreme Personality of God is so protected in devotional service that material contamination cannot touch him". [7:18 purport]

"Such a devotee cannot live a second without contacting or serving the Supreme Lord". And the Lord feels the same about His devotee, sadhavo hrdayam mahyam...

* * * * *

That jnani after many births surrenders to Krishna [7:19]. Srila Prabhupada: "At such a time one can understand that Lord Krishna's mercy is everything..."

* * * * *

But people who want material desires go to demigods. It's Lord Krishna in their hearts that makes their faith steady in the demigods... and it's He actually who gives the demigods permission to bestow boons.

[So why worship demigods? It's better not to. Sometimes devotees say they want to approach demigods for spiritual help in removing material obstacles such as anarthas in their heart, so that they can serve Krishna better. But that's not recommended either. Better to do only sankirtana yajna directed by Lord Caitanya and his followers and avoid costly yajnas to demigods outside of Lord Caitanya's pure devotional cult].

* * * * *

Worshippers of demigods get their limited and temporary fruits and go to the planets of the demigods, "but My devotees ultimately reach My supreme planet". [7:23]

* * * * *

Not only the demigod worshippers are less intelligent but also the impersonalists. [7:24]

One cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna by speculation or mere Vedic study. It takes the mercy of Krishna which comes by devotional service.

Where do impersonalists get their idea that the ultimate truth is impersonal? It's not stated in Bhagavad Gita. Lord Krishna is sat-cit-ananda-vigraha. Verse 7:24 denies the impersonal, formless conception of Sri Krishna the Absolute Truth.

* * * * *

When Lord Krishna was on the earth five thousand years ago "He was not revealed to the non devotees and the common man". He was covered by the curtain of yoga-maya.

* * * * *

July 5th ..

Verse 7:26 describes God's unreachability. So it should be. He is not a man you can know. He knows everything and all beings, "but Me no one knows".

* * * * *

Verse 7:27 is the one Srila Prabhupada referred me to in 1966 when I asked where does it state in the scriptures that we fell because of envy of God. Verse 7:27 mentions desire and hate of God and the purport mentions envy. Those who are deluded by dualities in this material world cannot understand the Supreme Lord. They "think the Supreme Personality of Godhead is created by material energies". [Duality is mentioned here in two different ways - as two ways of rebelling from God and as the subsequent state of living in dualities of heat and cold, honour and dishonour in the material world].

* * * * *

Unlike the deluded who cannot know Krishna, those who are free of sin and delusion "engage themselves in My service with determination". [7:28]

By this logic one may conclude that impersonalists are sinful. Srila Prabhupada: "The impersonalists do not know that forgetting their constitutional position as insubordinate to the Supreme Lord is the greatest violation of God's law".

* * * * *

Intelligent persons seeking liberation take refuge in Lord Krishna in devotional service. [mam asvitya]. They are actually in Brahman [whereas the "less intelligent Brahman-realized persons cannot reach the supreme planet of Krishna known as Goloka Vrndavan"]. [7:29]

* * * * *

Those in full consciousness of Krishna can know Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even at the time of death. [7:30]. This is a favourite subject for reading and study, a substantial topic for lecturing - the pay off to a determined life of practise - to be able to think of Krishna at the time of death.

* * * * *

"This seventh chapter particularly explains how one can become a fully Krishna conscious person". Srila Prabhupada says many things have been taught in the seventh chapter for gradual development of Krishna consciousness by different processes. But the devotee engages himself directly in Krishna consciousness.

... CHAPTER EIGHT ...

Attaining the Supreme:

Lord Krishna mentioned difficult terms at the end of chapter seven. Arjuna asks for explanations of them in 8:1. He address the Lord as Purusottama.

* * * * *

"How can those engaged in devotional service know You at the time of death, O Madhusudana?" Srila Prabhupada quotes Maharaja Kulasekhara's prayer. It is so important to remember Krishna at the time of death because [as we will read later] it determines the next life. But death is a difficult time for meditation. So King Kulasekhara prays "better let me die immediately". As we shall see, chanting Hare Krishna mantra is recommended by Srila Prabhupada as the means to think of Lord Krishna at the difficult and crucial last stage of life. Take to it now in earnest.

* * * * *

In verse 8:3 Krishna answers three of Arjuna's questions. Brahman is the jiva. He is never called Parabrahman which refers to the Supreme Lord. The jiva's eternal nature is adhyatma. Due to karma he revolves up and down in transmigration.

* * * * *

In verse 8:4 Krishna answers three more questions. We can see how quickly He is answering them and saving His attention to answer the more important inquiry regarding how to think of Him at the time of death.

The constantly changing physical nature is adhibhuta. The universal form is called adhidhiavata. The Supersoul is adhiyajna.

* * * * *

"And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body remembering Me alone at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt". [8:5]

[I remember reciting this to myself out loud on a morning walk during one retreat. Again and again I'd savour it, pronounce it, memorise it, try to feel it from different points of view].

If you want to remember [smaran] Krishna at the end of life you have to practise that remembrance throughout life. "Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the maha mantra - Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. "Tolerate impediments to chanting and go on chanting "so that at the end of one's life one can have the full benefit of Krishna consciousness". What if you considered this proposal to be a gamble, whether you should actually chant so much, whether that's the best way to become Krishna conscious? Even if you consider it thus, take the chance - chant while you can. There is no loss.

* * * * *

Yam yam vapi smaran bhavam. Whatever he remembers at death, that state he will attain next life. [8:6] In the purport Srila Prabhupada again recommends chanting Hare Krishna mantra and writes out the whole mantra. These verses are a great inspiration and impetus for attentive and increased japa and kirtan.

* * * * *

Krishna says to Arjuna think of Me while you carry out your prescribed duty. This is also recommended in the Introduction to Gitopanisad, see page 28: "If he doesn't practise remembering Krishna while he is struggling for existence, then it will not be possible to remember Krishna at the time of death".

In that Introduction, Prabhupada says that Lord Krishna's instruction to remember Him [mam anusmara] and Lord Caitanya's advice to chant Hare Krishna - are the same.

"By chanting Krishna's names, one will be transferred to the supreme planet, Krsnaloka, without a doubt". [8:7 purport] Asamsayah means 'beyond a doubt'.

* * * * *

In verse 8:8 Lord Krishna recommends constantly remembering Him, meditating, remembering by the mind, being undeviated in that and then "he is sure to reach Me". Srila Prabhupada recommends the "mystic meditation" that is very easy to practise, chanting and hearing the maha mantra. "The mind is fickle and... it is necessary to engage the mind by force to think of Krishna".

* * * * *

Verse 8:9 tells us how to meditate on the Supreme person. Ten points are mentioned and Srila Prabhupada says "the foremost point is that He is not impersonal or void".

I think of Srila Prabhupada's daily preaching in conversation and how he is always meditating by speaking of Krishna in these ways and many others, as the greatest, inconceivable, the maintainer etc.

We cannot know Krishna by speculation. He is acintya, inconceivable, and transcendental to the material nature. But we can understand Him [to some degree] by hearing from the scriptures.

* * * * *

Yoga balena. "One cannot suddenly remember the Supreme Lord at the time of death: One must have practised some yoga system, especially the system of bhakti yoga".

* * * * *

Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna sat-cakra yoga, including pratyahara, raising life air to top of head, uttering omkara etc. Srila Prabhupada says this is not practical in this age and he recommends Lord Caitanya's method of chanting Hare Krishna mantra and practising devotional service.

"If one is always able to fix his mind on Krishna in devotional service, it is very easy for him to remain in an undisturbed transcendental trance, or in samadhi".

* * * * *

"The sound Hare Krishna contains Om".

* * * * *

"For one who always remembers Me without deviation, I am easy to obtain, O son of Prtha, because of his constant engagement in devotional service" [8:14]. The pure devotee serves Krishna without impediment, for the pleasure of Krishna. Here bhakti is mentioned above the other yogas. A pure devotee cannot forget the Supreme Lord for a moment and the Lord cannot forget His devotee. "This is the great blessing of the Krishna consciousness process of chanting the maha mantra, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

* * * * *

Verse 8:15 describes achieving the highest perfection and attaining the supreme planet, Krsnaloka, never returning to this material world which is dhukalayam asasvatam. In the purport Srila Prabhupada states that the pure devotees are so absorbed in devotional service, they don't desire any higher material planet "nor do they even want to be transferred to any spiritual planet. They only want Krishna and Krishna's association".

* * * * *

8:19 : Brahma's life duration is described, which, compared to humans "seems fantastic and interminable, but from the viewpoint of eternity it is as brief as a lightning flash". Those who aspire for material planets have to die and be reborn with Lord Brahma, but pure devotees of Lord Krishna, chanting Hare Krishna, transfer themselves "even in this lifetime" back to Godhead.

* * * * *

8:20 : Yet there is another unmanifest nature which is eternal and transcendental. This is Krishna's supreme abode. Srila Prabhupada describes Krishna in Krsnaloka from Brahmasamhita. "In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna gives only a small hint of His personal abode, Goloka Vrndavan". The replica of Goloka Vrndavan is in Vrndavan on earth". [8:21]

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all pervading and everything is situated within Him". [8:22]

The supreme abode of Krishna is ananda-cinmaya-rasa. It's all made of one spiritual nature but "the variagatedness is expanded as the spiritual expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself". Krishna is also all pervading in the material worlds, but that is His separated material energy. He is generally absent here in His personal form and the ananda is also absent here, except in His pure devotees 'Goloka eve nivasaty, akhilatma-bhutah'.

* * * * *

"Pure devotees don't care where or by what method they leave their bodies. They leave everything in Krishna's hands and so easily and happily return back to Godhead". [8:23 purport]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna then describes the auspicious times for a yogi to leave his body. Mostly they do not attain ultimate salvation even if they attain the brahmajoti or the moon etc by their leaving the body at the right time, "in the light", not in darkness. [8:26]

* * * * *

Devotees should be firmly fixed in Krishna consciousness and chanting. Then there is no need to worry whether you die by arrangement or accident.

* * * * *

Verse 8:22 - is an assertion with the promise that Lord Krishna gives to the bhakta. Now the question may be raised, am I going to receive this, accept it and not doubt it? If I say with my mind and words "yes I accept", then am I going to act on this? And falling short, will I pray to be able to accept it more deeply, with more certainty?

This verse describes the standard progress of a civilized human life, from brahmacari to householder to varnaprasta to sannyasi which includes many duties in an attempt to reach a favourable goal in this life and the next. This includes study of the Vedas, sacrifice, charity etc. "The beauty of Krishna consciousness however is that by one stroke, by engaging in devotional service, one can surpass all the rituals of the different orders of life".

In the purport Srila Prabhupada especially recommends knowing in the association of devotees, viditva, the middle six chapters of Bhagavad Gita, 7-12.

"Then his life becomes glorified beyond all penances, sacrifices etc".

Srila Prabhupada outlines the steps in bhakti as given by Rupa Goswami, adau sraddha etc. "...this service dispels all one's misgivings about Krishna or God... In the advanced stage one falls completely in love with Krishna". This enables one to transfer to Krishna's abode.

... CHAPTER NINE ...

The Most Confidential Knowledge:

In the purport to 9:1 Srila Prabhupada recommends hearing about Lord Krishna from the pure devotees. The ninth chapter, more than any previous, deals with pure unalloyed devotion.

* * * * *

9:2 purport : Raja vidya culminates in devotional service. No university in the world teaches this knowledge, the science of the spirit soul. This knowledge of the soul must include activities of the soul - that is the king of all knowledge. The soul's activities in the spiritual world are the most confidential part of spiritual knowledge.

Devotional service is the purest activity. In a statement similar to Nectar of Devotion, Srila Prabhupada says, devotional service gradually vanquishes all one's sinful reactions at all their stages of fructification.

The results of devotional service are perceivable by chanting and by "trying to broadcast the message or ...helping the missionary activities of Krishna consciousness, he gradually feels spiritual progress".

The boyhood of Narada is given as an example of enlightenment through bhakti [direct perception] and of bhakti being the perfection of dharma. He served the devotees.

Devotional service is happily executed by hearing lectures, chanting, offering nice food to the Lord.

Devotional service is eternally existing, not the temporary 'time-serving' devotional service as conceived by mayavadis until they 'become one' with the Supreme.

"Therefore one should adopt it".

* * * * *

9:3 : "The faithless cannot accomplish this process of devotional service".

"In Caitanya Caritamrta it is said that faith is the complete conviction that simply by serving the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna, one can achieve all perfection". [Compare this with Rupa Goswami's "adau sraddah"].

Faith occurs when, after hearing Bhagavad Gita, one gives up all other engagements and takes to Krishna consciousness .

Three classes of faith: Those in the third class will slip and fall, "but when one is in the second class he does not fall down, and for the first class person in Krishna consciousness there is no chance of falling down".

"Faith is very important in the discharge of devotional service". [Later Srila Prabhupada describes it as trust in something sublime].

* * * * *

9:4 : "By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them".

Everything in the universe rests in Krishna's energies yet we cannot see Him personally. Krishna here refutes the argument that He has no personal existence. He says "I am everywhere... but still I am aloof". A crude example: Everything in a country is the king's power and energy but one cannot expect to see the king personally in each department.

* * * * *

9:5 : The Supreme Lord is not directly concerned with the maintenance and sustenance of this universe. Not like Atlas [Hercules] holding up the globe "...he seems to be very tired". It's just by His willing. That's His yoga aisvaram, inconceivable energy, mystic power.

[This is confidential knowledge in that ^{clear} Lord Krishna is explaining mysteries of Godhead in such a ~~clear~~ explicit way. The Lord Himself declares He is a person and how His yoga aisvaram works. By listening submissively to these few verses we get an education in the science of God that's rarely attainable elsewhere. Bhagavad Gita is clear theism. Mysticism doesn't have to mean 'misty'].

* * * * *

All cosmic manifestations are in existence by the will of God and under His order, as the wind [vayuh] rests within space [akash] 9:6. Still He's aloof. Govindam adi purusam tam aham bhajam.

After annihilation the material manifestations enter within Visnu in an unmanifested [conserved] form. At creation time He creates them again. Bahu syama. "Although I am one I shall become many". All is done by His will.

* * * * *

9:8 : Creation takes place when the Supreme Lord lets loose the material energy as mahat tattva. He then enters it as the first Purusa incarnation, Maha Visnu who breathes out the universes while He lies on the Causal Ocean. The Lord enters each universe as Garbhodakasayi Visnu and then again He expands as Ksirodakasayi Visnu and enters every atom. All species of life are created at once at the start of creation, not evolved.

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord is "seated as though neutral" in regard to the material activities. He is active in the spiritual world. The Lord's neutrality may be compared to that of a judge; He awards results in the material world, new creations, species of life etc, according to the past deeds of the jivas. [9:9]

* * * * *

Mayadhyaksena prakrtih... "This material nature... is working under My direction". [9:10]

Under the rule of the material nature the manifestation [jagat] is working. The Lord creates by His glance, is detached from it. When a person smells a flower, his smelling power is connected and yet detached from the flower.

* * * * *

"Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature as the Supreme Lord of all that be". [9:11]

The verses previous to this one make it clear the Supreme Lord is not a common person - all is within Him as air in space. He creates all by His glance yet is detached, by His will the maya sakti rules etc. So those who consider Krishna to be only a man are foolish [mudha].

Lord Krishna acts like a man in many ways yet He is Isvara Parama Krishna. Fools don't know the confidential activities and transcendental qualifications of Krishna.

[Pause and think and feel how this is so. Repeat in your mind what you've been reading. The phrases themselves will do you good. The Lord is yoga aisvaram. The need for faith, His personal form, His personal being - He is the Supreme Being. Don't just write or read notes without thinking or feeling and praying. And then, the pure devotee acts on behalf of the Supreme Lord].

* * * * *

"There are many devotees who assume themselves to be in Krishna consciousness and devotional service but at heart do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the Absolute Truth" [9:12]. This sentence strikes me because it refers not to open mayavadis, Buddhists, empiricists, etc but to those who appear [by dress etc] to be devotees of Krishna. We have to be a devotee therefore not by external show only but by heart's conviction in the personal nature of the Supremacy of Krishna.

Don't mock Krishna. His body is not material.

* * * * *

In previous verses [9:11-12] Lord Krishna has been discussing those who don't accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are mudhas and doomed for failure. Now in verse 9:13 he discusses those who are not deluded, the mahatmas. They're under the protection of Krishna's internal energy. "They're fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead".

The purport describes how the pure devotee doesn't want to divert his attention to anything outside of Krishna. "They are simply attracted by the two-armed form of Krishna". Some devotees nowadays are seeking to 'broaden' their interests and not be confined to strict Krishna consciousness. But Krishna will be more pleased with us if we love Him in an exclusive way, the way a boy is always thinking of his girlfriend and she is always thinking of him - let my mind be drawn to the Supreme Lord in that way. A devotee's only concern is his relationship with Krishna.

* * * * *

Satatam kintakyanto mam... the purport states that a mahatma has "no other business" but always glorifying the Lord. So why shouldn't I follow their example, follow their path? It is sufficient for me. I don't need other entertainment or relief.

An impersonalist is not a mahatma. A mahatma's "firm determination" is to reach eternal association with Krishna in one of the five rasas. The drdha vrata mentioned here includes following the rules and regulations which help us to attain the desired result. This is performed in a happy mood [as mentioned in Bhagavad Gita 9:2] and can be done in any asrama.

The mahatma is always glorifying the Supreme Lord.

* * * * *

Verse 9:15 describes 'others', lesser than the personalists, who are not mahatmas.

Those who perform Vedic sacrifices, such as jyotistoma, should know that Lord Krishna is the actual goal of those yajnas. He is the reason for the offering, the chant etc of all yajnas. Those who are now practising bhakti must have formerly completed all other sacrifices. [9:16]

Lord Krishna declares that He is the father of the universe, the mother, om, the original Vedas etc. Any person is part of Krishna but "that subject matter which helps us purify our constitutional position is especially Krishna". [9:17]

* * * * *

Krishna is everything through His energies. In many verses [especially in the tenth chapter and some in the seventh] He gives specific examples. In 9:18 he says He is the goal [gati], the sustainer, the master [prabhu], the witness [sakshi], the abode, the refuge [saranam]. And more, creator, annihilator, the basis of all [the ground] and the eternal seed. One could write or meditate on each of these. It is not that He is impersonal or that my atma is equal to His. Krishna is a historical person who appeared on earth and acted as a human being, yet He is everything.

This is very difficult to understand because it appears sectarian. Our Western conditioned minds want to put Krishna into some diminished status, that there is Krishna but then there are many other things that are not Krishna. And we even think that we like the things that are not Krishna. The cure

for this is prayer, chanting, service, association of pure devotees.

One shouldn't approach Lord Krishna indirectly through the energies but directly. Take the elevator instead of walking up step by step.

* * * * *

9:19 : Lord Krishna says He is heat. He is rain or the withholding of rain. He is immortality [amrtam] and death [mrtyum]. "Both spirit and matter are in Me". Srila Prabhupada: "In the advanced stage of Krishna consciousness, one therefore... sees Krishna in everything". He is the universal form and "His pastimes in Vrndavan as Syamasundra... are those of the Personality of Godhead".

* * * * *

In the next six verses Lord Krishna tells how worship of the demigods brings temporary results, whereas worship of Him is permanent. [As I read I want to stay close to Him and His Gita and exclude all else. I think of some external means for such study, index cards, a smaller volume of the Gita etc. But the main thing is to have desire for it and somehow or other do it].

"Devotional service begins with the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra and side by side try to understand Krishna in truth". Srila Prabhupada recommends this and not the tri-vedis who study and perform sacrifices to demigods.

* * * * *

Those who worship demigods in the three Vedas for sense enjoyment go up and down like children on a ferris wheel, sometimes born in higher planets like Svargaloka and then [when pious karma runs out] they come down to Martyalokam again.

Srila Prabhupada : "One should better take to the spiritual world to enjoy an eternal life full of bliss and knowledge and never return to this miserable material existence". [9:21]

* * * * *

Anyas cintayanto mam.

We sometimes think of this verse in terms of Krishna supplying material goods to His devotee. The story of Yamunacarya may underline this for us, because Krishna appeared to bring food to the acaryas wife. But in his purport to 9:22 Srila Prabhupada hardly even mentions this. He speaks of the devotees thinking of Krishna twenty-four hours a day and going back to Godhead without difficulty. The protection of the Lord is to help the devotee achieve Krishna consciousness [yoga-ksemam] "and when he becomes fully Krishna conscious the Lord protects him from falling down to a miserable conditioned life".

* * * * *

It's Krishna who actually awards the result of demigod worship. So they actually worship Him "but they do so in a wrong way" - like bribing a representative of government. [9:23]

[Bhagavad Gita clearly teaches exclusive devotion to Lord Krishna as Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is so important for us to be purified by hearing Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada speak in this way. Otherwise our spirit of exclusive devotion gets diluted].

* * * * *

Yanti deva vrata devan.

Whatever God you worship, pitas, ghosts etc, you attain to their planet. Similarly, those who worship the Supreme Lord go to live with Him in Vaikuntha or Krsnaloka [9:25]. "...By simply chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one can become perfect in this life and go back home, back to Godhead".

* * * * *

Verses 9:26-34 are full potency bhakti where Lord Krishna describes the protection He gives to those who practise bhakti [which anyone can follow].

9:26 : Patram puspam phalam toyam. The process of offering Krishna these easily obtained items is universal. "Krishna wants only loving service and nothing more... He accepts the offering of His devotee in an exchange of love and affection".

If you want to please Krishna by offerings "then one should find out what the Lord desires of him".

"The important element, in preparation, in serving and in offering is to act with love for Krishna". Krishna tastes and eats the offered food just by hearing the devotees words of love.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna says [9:27] whatever you do - "do it as an offering to Me". "One should mould his life in such a way that he will not forget Krishna in any circumstance".

One who offers all he does to Krishna, his mind fixed on Krishna in yukta-vairagya, will go to Krishna, back to Godhead. [9:28]

Lord Krishna is impartial but develops a special affectionate relationship with those who render service to Him in devotion. The combination of the Lord and His devotees is like a diamond in a gold setting.

* * * * *

9:30 : The practising [conditioned] devotee has two kinds of activities, conditioned, including bodily protection and abiding by rules of society - and constitutional or transcendental activities, devotional service. These two activities may run parallel [in harmony and balance] and that is good. But if a devotee falls down in his conditioned behaviour, he is still a devotee and the Lord will excuse him. This verse is a warning that a devotee should not be derided.

On the other hand it doesn't mean a devotee can regularly do all nonsense. It only refers to accidental fall downs due to the power of material energy.

* * * * *

By the chanting of Hare Krishna mantra "continued without

stoppage" the devotee will be protected from fall downs and get free from all material contaminations. No separate atonement needed.

* * * * *

In material life there is a conception of higher and lower classes of people, but not in devotional service. "Everyone is eligible for the supreme destination". [9:32]

* * * * *

"How much more this is so of the righteous brahmans, bhaktas and rajarsis. Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me" [9:33]. [Anityam asukham lokam]. One should get out of this temporary, miserable world quickly by taking to devotional service.

* * * * *

Repeat: Main thing is faith - and devotion - in reading Bhagavad Gita. Ask Krishna to allow you to hear His Bhagavad Gita.

When I say I want unmotivated reading, I mean my motive is cleared of lesser motives and I want to hear Krishna and become His pure devotee, want to hear Srila Prabhupada with no distractions, not even the distraction of merely studying or superficially reading with no heart of rapt inner attention.

* * * * *

In 9:34 purport Srila Prabhupada criticises commentators who say don't surrender to Krishna and who try to separate Him from His transcendental body.

... CHAPTER TEN ...

The Opulence of the Absolute:

In Verse 1. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna you are my friend [priyamanaya] and for your benefit I will speak even better things than I have spoken so far.

Srila Prabhupada : "The more one hears about the Supreme God, the more one becomes fixed in devotional service... Discourses in the society of devotees can take place only among those who are really anxious to be in Krishna consciousness".

* * * * *

Great sages and demigods don't know the origin or opulences of Lord Krishna because He is the source of the demigods and sages. [10:2]

Srila Prabhupada : "Scholarship is not the qualification necessary to understand Krishna". The devotees by their devotion and faith and surrender unto the Supreme Lord "and out of the causeless mercy of Krishna, can understand Krishna".

"He who knows Me as the unborn, as the beginningless, as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds - he only, undeluded among men, is free from all sins". [10:3]

Srila Prabhupada : "Nothing is auspicious or inauspicious in the material world. Only working under Krishna's direction, through guru, sastra and sadhu, is auspicious".

* * * * *

"The different qualities of living entities, be they good or bad, are all created by Krishna". [10:4-5]

* * * * *

The population of the universe, beginning from Brahma to the Kumaras, seven sages, manus, etc all descend from Lord Krishna[10:6] the Supreme Father.

* * * * *

One who is actually convinced of this opulence and mystic power of Mine engages in unalloyed devotional service; of this there is no doubt. [10:7]

Don't neglect studying the greatness of Lord Krishna and becoming convinced of His opulences; it is necessary in order to be fixed in devotional service. [For example, if one goes at once to Tenth Canto's rasa dance he may become a prakṛta sahaḥjīya and say he is not interested in hearing of Krishna's aiśvarya features].

* * * * *

Verses 10:8-11 are sometimes said to be a "catur sloka" or kernel presentation of the whole Bhagavad Gita message.

In his purport to 10:8 Srila Prabhupada gives various sastric proofs that Lord Krishna is the source of all material and spiritual worlds. A learned devotee is convinced of this and not deviated by "nonsensical commentaries or by fools".

When we study Bhagavad Gita with authorised commentary, we cannot remain in a vague concept of God. "Krishna" is not merely a generic name for the Supreme Godhead. Sometimes we may use the name "Krishna" in that way, in preliminary discussion with religionists and others. We say God has many names, Allah, Jehovah etc. Yet on further investigation we hear and conclude that Krishna, the son of Devaki, is the Supreme person. Narayana, the expansion of Krishna, is the source of all gods and worlds.

Regarding inter-religious dialogue, we should honour the sincere God consciousness as taught and practised by acceptable world religions. But it would be deception on our parts [or confusion or lack of faith] to tell them we think "Krishna" is completely interchangeable with their own concepts of God or that we regard the specificity of Krishna as unimportant or as open to interpretation in an impersonal way.

* * * * *

Verse 10:9 describes the bliss and enlightenment tasted by pure devotees of Krishna in their devotional service to Krishna and in their relationship with fellow devotees.

Devotees are constantly engaged in devotional service glorifying Krishna. We may note throughout, that Srila Prabhupada's description of the pure devotee is that he is

always and completely Krishna conscious. This is the ideal onemight say, but it is also the expectation of Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna that we should aspire for this and actually practise it in vaidhi bhakti - full time service, and not a hobby or partial interest. This is one of the main distinguishing factors of Krishna consciousness and what it has to teach all world religions.

But we Krishnaites have to exemplify this.

"In the preliminary stage of devotional service, they relish the transcendental pleasure from the service itself, in the mature stage they are actually situated in love of God".

Realized souls in Krishna consciousness take great pleasure in hearing Srimad Bhagavatam "just a s young boy and girl take pleasure in association".

* * * * *

"To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me". [10:10]

[Krishna consciousness is the complete and perfect yoga, buddhi yoga. If a devotee can't make progress, despite being in a spiritual organisation and having a bona fide spiritual master, then Krishna within his heart, gives him instruction "so that he may ultimately come to Him". If we work in devotional service with love, the Lord will help us].

"One should know that the goal is Krishna, and when the goal is assigned, then the path is slowly but progressively traversed and the ultimate goal is achieved".

[This purport is assuring that Lord Krishna directly helps even a sincere devotee who "is not intelligent enough". Also Srila Prabhupada says progress in Krishna consciousness is slow but sure. We should be patient, work at what ever service we can take up with love and be assured we will eventually attain pure Krishna consciousness, back to Godhead, by Krishna's direct help].

* * * * *

Verse and purport to 10:11 further emphasises the point of 10:10 - that even if a sincere devotee is without knowledge, Krishna in His heart will enlighten him. "The only qualification is that one carry out devotional service in full

Krishna consciousness".

"The ultimate goal, Visnu, can be attained only by this chant [Hare Krishna mantra] and by devotional service and not by mental speculation or argument".

Pray that the purport of these verses may take place for you. Bhagavad Gita reading is so important so that we can keep faith that Krishna is helping us in devotional service. Let us regularly hear these statements such as 10:9 10:10 10:11 and hear them with care. Pray to Krishna, please enlighten me in the truth of Your statements in my own life". Srila Prabhupada assured me in the first letter he wrote to me in January 1967 that Krishna would find me sincere and enlighten me. [I had written Srila Prabhupada asking how I could attain the spiritual intelligence to understand Bhagavad Gita].

* * * * *

In purport to 10:12-13 Srila Prabhupada refers to verses 10:8-11 as "the essential four verses of Bhagavad Gita".

Arjuna's ecstatic prayer of acceptance of Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not merely his own sentiment "but each and every word - param brahma param bhavam pavitram paramam bhavam prusam sasvatam divyam etc - is confirmed by Vedic injunction".

The purport recommends Krishna smaranam. "The Supreme Lord can be realized only by those who engage constantly in thinking of him".

If we want to understand Bhagavad Gita we must accept these two verses in parampara.

Reading Note - Most reading sessions start out cold but warm up. It's well worth the effort. Even twenty minutes or less. You gain. Try for it throughout the day, and if you like, help yourself with notes. Even this one book, Bhagavad Gita can be read repeatedly.

Sarvam etad rtam manye, yan mam vadasi kesava.

"O Krishna, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me". [10:14]

Srila Prabhupada is emphasising that Krishna can't be known by academic knowledge. Arjuna's statements here, of accepting Sri Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are upheld by all Vedic literature. We, the reader of Bhagavad Gita, we,

all jivas, should accept Bhagavad Gita as Arjuna does, in parampara. This is the preaching of Srila Prabhupada who asserts that it is the absolute truth. This I accept. [I want to accept it once and for all and everyday by hearing Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam. Keep these books near you and use them].

* * * * *

"Mental speculation that leads one away from the Supreme Lord is a serious sin..." [10:15 purport]

People sometimes accept the Bhagavad Gita or the authority of Krishna but they fail to accept Him as Purusottama, the Supreme person [as He's addressed in 10:15]. The purprt explains how each word in the verse further defines Lord Krishna as bhuta bhavana [origin of all] bhuta isa, deva deva, jagat pate - "and we should follow in the footsteps of Arjuna to understand Krishna as He is".

We have to break intimate connection with those who don't accept Krishna in this way and break connection with the notions that this preaching by Arjuna and the Vedic vaisnava literature is just a sectarian claim. Go with the truth; go with Krishna.

* * * * *

"Please tell me in detail of Your divine opulences by wich you pervade all the worlds". Arjuna asks this on behalf of the common people who are usually concerned with the all pervading principle of God.

* * * * *

"O Krishna, O Supreme mystic, how shall I constantly think of You, and how shall I know you?" [10:17]

[Make these words my own and then hear Krishna's answers]. "In what various forms are You to be remembered O Supreme Personality of Godhead?

"The superior devotee is concerned not only for his own understanding but for the understanding of all mankind".

10:18 "I am never satiated in hearing about You, for the more I hear the more I want to taste the nectar of Your words". Srila Prabhupada asserts that transcendental reading matter remains fresh despite repeated readings.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna can't be known in full because His opulence is limitless and the individual souls are limited [10:19]. So He will tell of His prominent manifestations. The devotee doesn't read as an impossible attempt to know everything but he wants to hear of Krishna because Krishna topics are nectar. Now in verses 10:20-42 Krishna will state some of His particular, splendid manifestations. These are manifestations of "what can be directly perceived by the common man". [Important ones have already been given in the seventh chapter, light of sun, water, sound in air, om, sex desire in religious purposes etc].

The first manifestation Lord Krishna mentions is "I am the Supersoul". Srila Prabhupada explains how the Supreme Lord as Maha Visnu is the soul of the universe, enters the mahat tattva at time of creation. As our bodies need the soul to exist, so does the physical universe need the Supreme Soul.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna notes only a few opulences and I will note here only a few of them.

He is "the living force" [consciousness]. Srila Prabhupada says "this consciousness is supreme and eternal". Therefore it shouldn't be polluted. We should try to bring it to Krishna consciousness.

"Of all the Rudras I am Lord Siva".

"Of water I am the ocean".

Srila Prabhupada : "These representations of Krishna only give hints of His greatness".

"Of sacrifices I am the chanting of the holy names". Japa yajna is "the simplest and the purest" of sacrifices.

He is Narada among sages [devarsis], the banyan tree, Lord Kapila among perfected beings.

He is the surabhi among cows. By saying "I am Kandarpa, the God of love" Lord Krishna makes another reference that sex for procreation is His representation. He is yama among law enforcers.

He is Prahlada among the daityas, among subduers He is time. He is Rama among warriors, of rivers the Gangees, the shark among fishes [one of the biggest and most dangerous to man].

He is the spiritual science of the self, He is death [all devouring], the generating principle of all that is yet to be and the feminine qualities such as intelligence, patience etc.

The purport to 10:35 describes the gayatri mantra as Krishna in poetry.

Krishna's greatness is all-sided. If He wants to cheat or deceive a person, no-one can surpass Him.

He is Vasudeva. Purport says Vasudeva expansions of Krishna are also Krishna. He is Arjuna and Vyasa. Krishna surpasses all in all qualities, victory, splendour, adventure, strength.

The punishment of miscreants represents Krishna. He is silence of secret things. He is the seed or cause of everything. Delusion that something is not caused by Krishna's energy is maya, that which is not.

* * * * *

In verse 10:40 Lord Krishna starts to sum up this discussion of a selection of His opulences. He says there is no end to His divine opulences; He has given only a few examples.

"Know that all opulent, beautiful and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendour". [10:41]

All wonderful creations that one may see are "but a spark of My splendour".

He enters everything as Supersoul. There is no need to know how things exist in their separate grandeur. Know that they all exist due to Krishna's entering them as Supersoul.

So Krishna is not one of many demigods. By studying Krishna's opulences in the world we can be fixed in Krishna consciousness.

Summarising this chapter, Srila Prabhupada says verses 10:8-12 teach devotional service, worship of Lord Krishna.

... CHAPTER ELEVEN ...

The Universal Form:

Arjuna is convinced that Lord Krishna, his great friend, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For the benefit of others who may not accept Lord Krishna as such, Arjuna asks the Lord to show His universal form.

Arjuna has understood that Lord Krishna is the source of all material manifestations and yet the Supreme Lord is aloof from His creation and its energies.

If, as Arjuna requests, Krishna will show how He enters into the creation, then this will set a criterion and future imposters cannot claim they are God unless they can display their universal form.

In 11:4 Arjuna asks Krishna His permission, asks Him to reveal "Your cosmic form". The infinite can be known by the finite jiva only if the infinite desires to reveal Himself.

* * * * *

[Reading can be a simple, non thrilling chore sometimes. At those times it should not be whimsically avoided. Keep it up regularly and you will build in strength].

The universal form of Lord Krishna "is not eternally situated in the spiritual sky like Krishna's other forms" and therefore the devotee is not eager to see it.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna describes what Arjuna will be able to see in the universal form - "whatever you desire to see ...everything ...in one place".

"I give you divine eyes".

The cowherd boys of Vrndavan never asked Krishna to show His opulences of universal form; itham satam brahma sukhanubhutya.

* * * * *

Next, Sanjaya starts to relate the universal form as he sees it in his 'television' in the heart.

The wondrous form had unlimited hands, mouths etc.

"If hundred of thousands of suns were to rise at once in the sky, their radiance might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form". [11:12]

Arjuna alone could see the form. Jagadisa Goswami's notes: "One's vision of the world depends on two things - one's consciousness and the will of Krishna".

Seeing this form Arjuna became bewildered and astonished, offered obeisances and began to pray to the Supreme Lord. Thus Arjuna's relationship with Krishna changed from friendship to wonder. This is adbhuta, one of the twelve rasas [one of the seven that come and go].

* * * * *

Arjuna speaks what he sees in the universal form. He says he sees all demigods starting at the top with Lord Brahma. And he sees all the way down to the serpent Vasuki, at the bottom of the universe. He sees unlimited numbers of forms expanded. The universal form is difficult to see because of its effulgence.

Others in other planetary systems also saw the universal form. Demigods were offering prayers in fear to the universal form. Arjuna is also disturbed.

Arjuna sees the leading soldiers on both sides "rushing into Your fearful mouths". This indicates that almost all persons on the battlefield of Kuruksetra will be killed but Arjuna will be victorious.

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna to tell him His mission. "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: "Kalo smi, Time I am... come... to destroy all people". [11:32] So even if Arjuna didn't fight, all the warriors would be destroyed. "Time is destruction".

Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to become an instrument in the fight. Everything is being arranged by the Supreme Lord and "anyone who can understand the plan of the Supreme Lord and cultivate Krishna consciousness is most intelligent".

* * * * *

Arjuna now offers prayers in the mood of wonder. He says "the world becomes joyful upon hearing Your name" but the demons

are afraid by the appearance of Krishna. "All this is rightly done". [11:36]

Arjuna describes Krishna by various names, Mahatma, Ananta, Devesa, Aksaram [the material world is destroyed but the Lord is above it]. He also addresses the Lord as the ultimate rest, the knower of everything.

Arjuna offers thousands of obeisances to the unlimited, all-pervading universal form.

Arjuna asks Krishna to forgive him for acts of familiarity arising from their friendship. [But actually their friendship is fixed eternally. This is yogamaya's arrangement].

No-one is equal to Krishna the Supreme.

* * * * *

Fearful Arjuna asks Krishna to revert to His four armed form as the Personality of Godhead, Narayana. This will indicate that all expansions of Godhead emanate from the Narayana form which is itself an expansion of Krishna in His original two armed form.

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord states that no-one before Arjuna has seen this universal form. Srila Prabhupada explains the divine vision required to see Krishna. "It is not possible to decry Krishna [as the atheists do] and at the same time have the divine vision". Only the pure devotee of Krishna can see His universal form and he is not bewildered by false incarnations.

* * * * *

In purport to verse 11:49 Srila Prabhupada explains that Lord Krishna showed the horrible feature of the universal form to show that Drona and Bhishma [as well as others] would be killed for their allowing these sons of Dhrtarastra to attempt disrobing Draupadi. Now He would cease displaying that form. The devotee wants to offer his respects to the Lord in Vaikuntha or reciprocate in loving service with Krishna in His two armed form in Vrndavan.

Arjuna was then encouraged to see the four armed form and at last the two armed form.

The fact that Krishna has shown the universal form and again returned to His two armed form refutes the atheists who think that He is an ordinary man [as Krishna described the mudhas in 9:11].

* * * * *

It is more difficult to see the two handed form of Lord Krishna than to see the universal form. More Bhakti is required. One must hear about Krishna from devotees in parampara. He is seen only by those to whom He reveals Himself.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna says that the two armed form cannot be understood by various means, academic study, tapasya, ordinary worship etc. Those who officially go to the temple "make their visit, but they cannot understand Krishna as He is". [11:53]

* * * * *

"My dear Arjuna , only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am". [11:54]

Yasya deve para bhaktir...

Lord Krishna in His original form is the source of the Visnus and all forms of incarnations. This is confirmed in Vedic literature such as the Gopal Tapani Upanisad, Brahmasamhita, Srimad Bhagavatam and throughout Bhagavad Gita, as in mattah parataram nanyat.

Therefore the devotees are not captivated by the universal form but to them the two handed form of Lord Krishna is most dear.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna promises [11:55] that those who engage in devotional service free of karma and jnana, those who work for Him and make Him the ultimate goal and who are friendly to all

- they certainly come to Lord Krishna. "This verse is considered to be the essence of Bhagavad Gita".

Key words in 11:55:-

Mat karmakrt - doing My work.

Mat paramah - considering association with Lord Krishna in His abode to be the Supreme perfection.

Mad bhakta - My devotee [engages in ninefold bhakti].

Sanga varjitah - avoids karmis and jnanis; persons who are against Krishna. Anyabhilasita sunyam.

Nirvairah - the bhakta of Lord Krishna is without enemies.
Thus he spreads Krishna consciousness even at the risk of his life.

... CHAPTER TWELVE ...

Devotional Service:

Verse 12:1 is a very direct question to settle the controversy as to whether personalism, devotional service to Krishna, or impersonalism, worship of Brahman is most perfect. Fortunately Lord Krishna's reply is direct and settles the question. The supremacy of devotional service is also described at the end of the sixth chapter and in the seventh and eighth and "in practically every chapter".

* * * * *

For a person in Krishna consciousness there are no material activities "because everything is done for Krishna".

* * * * *

The method of impersonal realization is very difficult. Krishna consciousness is relatively easy [see also 9:2, *susukham*, it is joyfully performed].

Features of impersonal Brahman mentioned in 12:3-4: Unmanifest, beyond senses, all pervading, inconceivable etc. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada mentions what one has to do to attain this and says the final goal is still the personal form of Krishna even by this impersonal method.

* * * * *

Jnana yoga [impersonalism] and bhakti yoga are compared in 12:5. Deity worship in bhakti is saguna worship but is not material. The Lord's acceptance of service to the arca vigraha is an example of the ease of bhakti compared to impersonal [unembodied] meditation.

"There is no doubt that the impersonalists are unnecessarily taking a troublesome path with the risk of not realizing the absolute truth at the ultimate end". There is also the danger of becoming an atheist.

* * * * *

For the devotees, Krishna says "I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death". [12:6-7]

The devotee desires only to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is willing to sacrifice everything for Krishna's satisfaction. Yet Srila Prabhupada says it's easy: Devote your work to Krishna and chant Hare Krishna mantra.

The Supreme Lord states that He will personally deliver the devotee from the ocean of samsara. The non devotee yogi tries with great difficulty to transfer himself to the spiritual world [see the latter part of Chapter 8.] but the Lord takes this task on behalf of His devotee.

* * * * *

"Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt". [12:8]

By engaging in devotional service [under the direction of the spiritual master] one is in a direct relationship with Lord Krishna and his position is transcendental "from the very beginning".

* * * * *

In verses 12:9-12 Krishna says if you can't do this [unalloyed constant devotional service] then do this [other acceptable practices for gradual elevation to pure Krishna consciousness].

In 12:9 He recommends following the rules and regulations of devotional service [vaidhi bhakti]. In vaidhi one lacks love but "that stage of love can be achieved by practise of devotional service, performed with the present senses". The natural, dormant love in our hearts will be revived.

"And one should constantly hear Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam from pure devotees".

* * * * *

If you can't follow the rules of bhakti you can please Krishna by giving money to the devotees who are propagating Krishna consciousness.

If one can't give to help Krishna conscious activities he should at least sacrifice for "some good cause" and this will help him come one day to devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

The indirect method of spiritual progress is to cultivate knowledge, then meditation, then understanding the Supersoul and finally the Personality of Godhead. But "everyone is advised to take to the direct method of surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead".

* * * * *

In verses 12:13-20 Lord Krishna describes a devotee who is very dear to Him.

* * * * *

A pure devotee is not disturbed in the face of enemies or bodily troubles. He takes inimical behaviour from others as a reaction to his own misdeeds.

All these qualifications help him to fix himself on the Supreme Lord.

The devotee who is transcendental to disturbances is dear to Krishna. He doesn't disturb others and he's not disturbed by them.

* * * * *

Srila Prabhupada says these qualities are a rare standard but one can come to it by following the regulative principles of devotional service. We may admit these qualities are beyond us but we should admire them and aspire for them.

* * * * *

I notice these qualities are not those of an aggressive businessman. They are internal qualities. Even in ISKCON these qualities are not always presented as more desirable. But they are, according to Lord Krishna, the qualities that please Him. I want to recall them and act on them - be satisfied with whatever food you are served, don't be attracted

to any residential facility etc etc. "Without good qualities one cannot become a pure devotee".

Devotional service automatically helps him to attain all these.

* * * * *

- * This ends the middle six chapters of Bhagavad Gita where direct devotional service is recommended as most congenial for improvement in spiritual life. Impersonalism is rejected and all good things come to a person engaged in devotional service.

... CHAPTER THIRTEEN ...

Nature, the Enjoyer and Consciousness:

Now I have begun the last third of Bhagavad Gita. The first six chapters describe the jiva himself as spirit soul in the body and how he can understand the Supreme Lord. The middle six chapters tell us the eternally subordinate [and blissful, protected] position of the jiva in relationship to the Supreme Lord and devotional service. Now starting with chapter thirteen we learn how jiva comes into matter and is delivered by the Supreme Lord by different methods, karma, jnana and bhakti.

We are spirit souls but have somehow come into contact with matter.

* * * * *

What is the field of activity? It's the body. And who is the knower of this field? The individual knower [spirit soul] has been described in the second chapter as in the verse 'dehino asmin'. And Lord Krishna is the Supreme Knower of all fields and souls.

* * * * *

There will be three topics in this study : "The Lord, the living entity and matter".

Krishna is present as the knower in all bodies, along with the individual soul.

[I am reading and liking, glad I have come to study. It's new and important - not old stuff].

* * * * *

Atheists doubt there is such a God or knower. They may claim there is no self at all. All is illusion for them, just blind matter. Do Buddhists say this also? One devotee said that "Buddhism is mysticism for atheists".

Krishna gives us personalism. The Supreme God of all knows all. We need to know Him and accept Him and appeal to Him for release from our entanglement in matter [release from our arrogance and rejection of His teachings]. Pray for it.

This chapter is teaching jnana. That is an accessible and important way to become fixed in Krishna consciousness, especially against the onslaught of atheistic speculations. Wield the weapon of jnana given by Lord Krishna and practise pure bhakti.

Jnana is knowledge of:

1. prakrti [nature]
2. purusa [enjoyer of nature]
3. Iswara [the knower who dominates or controls nature and the individual soul]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna is the infallible knower, we are fallible knowers. Don't confuse the individual knower in the body as identical with the Supreme Person in each one's heart. "This is something like equating the potent and the impotent". [13:4]

* * * * *

In verse 13:5 Lord Krishna states that the knowledge of the field and the knower of the field is told in the Vedanta Sutra.

The Taittiriya Upanisad describes five stages of Brahman realization:

1. anna maya - realization of Brahman in food.
2. prana maya - realization of Brahman in life symptoms.
3. jnana maya - realization of Brahman in thinking, feeling and willing.

These three stages involve the field and the individual knower. Above this is:

4. vijnana maya - to distinguish the jivas mind and life symptoms from jiva himself.
5. ananda maya - bliss of the Supreme Lord, or the bliss of the living entity when he is in the perfect stage of God consciousness.

* * * * *

The body is the representation of the twenty four material elements and its interactions with the world; "the field is a non-permanent thing".

* * * * *

Verses 13:8-12 list twenty items of knowledge. The most important of them is "devotion unto Me" and it enables one to develop all other items of knowledge. The item "approaching a bona fide spiritual master" is also essential.

Some of the items of knowledge defined:

"Humility means that one should not be anxious to have the satisfaction of being honoured by others".

To know how you are progressing in spiritual science, you can test yourself according to these items.

Non-violence is to distribute spiritual knowledge so that people can get out of the pains of the material concept of life.

in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge one will have to bear insult and dishonour. To do this with tolerance is an item of knowledge.

* * * * *

[As I read these valuable definitions of knowledge applied to spiritual life I feel how real reading is a direct connection, when it is submissively received. Read with faith. The peaceful reading situation enables this].

* * * * *

Accept the spiritual master and with his blessings follow the rules and regulations of devotional life; be clean; control the senses; be determined...

Srila Prabhupada points out that sense control and the other items described are all part of devotional service; "There is no other subject in Bhagavad Gita than devotional service".

A pessimistic view of material life, by considering the distress of birth, death, disease and old-age, gives one impetus for making spiritual advancement.

Krishna conscious family life is good but if family life opposes one's Krishna consciousness, "then family life should be abandoned".

* * * * *

Item: "Even mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events". Unbreakable devotional service will enable one to attain this.

Items: "Aspiring to live in a solitary place; detachment from the general mass of people".

"One may test himself by seeing how far he is inclined to live in a solitary place without unwanted association".

The last item is philosophical search for the Absolute Truth. Srila Prabhupada sums up the items by referring again to the first one, humility and saying one should be humble and know that he is subordinate to the Supreme Lord.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna next says He will teach "the knowable" by which one may "taste the eternal". This refers to knowledge of the individual soul and Supersoul. [13.13 verse]

* * * * *

[Verses 13:14-18] Lord Krishna describes the transcendental position of the Supersoul as all pervading: The forms of all the individual jivas rest in Him. He has no material senses, He is the controller. The living entities are not equal with the Supersoul. With our material senses we cannot know Him.

The Supreme Lord is unmanifest to us now, as He resides far away, "beyond the darkness of matter", in His own effulgence.

The Supreme Lord is knowledge and He awards knowledge of Him. He is in everyone's heart.

* * * * *

"Knowledge is nothing but the preliminary stage of understanding devotional service perfectly".

* * * * *

Lord Krishna says [13:19] that He has summarily described three things, the field of activities [the constituents of matter which combine to form the body], the process of knowledge [8:12] for knowing both the soul and Supersoul; and the knowable, the soul and the Supersoul.

* * * * *

Material nature and the living entities [prakrti and purusa] are eternal; they existed before the material creation.

* * * * *

The material nature awards a living entity his body in which he struggles to be happy and in which he suffers. It's according to his desires and activities [karma] that he gets a certain body. [13:20]

* * * * *

Purusa prakrti stho hi... He transmigrates as long as he associates with the modes of nature. Bhagavad Gita is teaching us to rise above this; "if he submits to this hearing process" [as Arjuna is doing from Krishna] then he will "lose his long cherished desire to dominate material nature" and he'll come to enjoy spiritual happiness. [13:22]

* * * * *

In each body is the soul and the Supersoul who is the Supreme proprietor, overseer and permitter. The jiva is bhukta, sustained and the Lord is bhokta, the maintainer. the Lord is eager to get us back into the spiritual energy. [13:23]

* * * * *

[One might say this not a 'nectarian' section of Bhagavad Gita, not in its main middle bhakti section. But the call to bhakti is everywhere in the Gita. Here the sober reality of transmigration is described. It's up to each of us to respond].

"One who understands this philosophy of prakrti, purusa and the interaction of the gunas, is sure to attain liberation. He will not take his birth here again, regardless of his present position". He'll go back to the spiritual world.

* * * * *

Verse 13:25 describes persons who perceive the Supersoul in various ways. Srila Prabhupada discusses them. This raises the interesting question of when we should encourage people who are making partial, gradual progress toward bhakti and when we should condemn or heavily criticise them. Srila Prabhupada mostly seems to be seeing them in a positive way, but then he states "there are others who cultivate the hatha yoga system and try to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead by childish activities". Also, dedicated monists are "counted among the atheists and agnostics". The persons faithful in spiritual life here mentioned are "introspective devotees, philosophers and workers who have renounced fruitive results".

* * * * *

Verse 13:27 tells the importance of hearing. Srila Prabhupada says people may claim to be atheists, philosophers etc, but nowadays almost no-one has education in spiritual matters. So a common man who is faithful to hearing Hare Krishna Mantra and hearing from realized souls will make actual advancement even though he's not as capable as the so-called philosophers. The implication is that devotees should preach Krishna consciousness and give people a chance to hear in parampara.

* * * * *

Everything we see is a combination of ksetra and ksetra jnana, "and this combination is effected by the Supreme Lord; therefore He is the controller of both the superior and inferior natures".

* * * * *

Only those who associate with real knowers of spiritual subjects can know the three subjects combined together [the body, the knower and the Supreme]. They know that although the body is destroyed, the soul and Supersoul continue and transfer to another body.

* * * * *

If one can see the Supersoul present equally, in every living being, then he gives up his destructive mentality and advances to the spiritual world. [13:29]

* * * * *

The actual seer is aware that his body is acting but that the self is separate.

* * * * *

One who's in the brahman conception doesn't see separate bodies only, as a dog, a man etc. He knows the soul is qualitatively one and that souls have attained these temporary bodies.

* * * * *

Those with transcendental vision can see the soul is eternal and beyond the modes of nature. Even when in contact with the material body, the soul is never entangled.

* * * * *

The soul is so subtle that science cannot ascertain how the soul is in contact with the body "and how he is out of it after the destruction of the body".

* * * * *

As the sun illuminates the universe, the soul gives consciousness to the body.

Srila Prabhupada sums up the chapter saying that one should hear these topics from a spiritual master as Arjuna is hearing from Lord Krishna. One who actually contemplates and realises the soul and the body and sees how they work, knows the constituents of the body and the distinction between body and soul as well as between soul and Supersoul - he "becomes eligible for transfer to the spiritual world".

[That's why reading Bhagavad Gita is so essential throughout one's life. No other readings can bring you such a great reward. Mundane or pseudo spiritual books can only deal with this life and have no knowledge of the soul's journey life through life].

... CHAPTER FOURTEEN ...

The Three Modes of Material Nature:

In the first verse Lord Krishna says He will now give knowledge superior to what He has already taught. He taught in Chapter Thirteen that the soul gets entangled in the modes of nature although it is actually different than the body. Now He will teach what those modes are and how they bind and how to become liberated from them.

* * * * *

[Reading Note: A simple practise is to go back and re-read a paragraph or purport when you notice that you read it without attention. The act of reading Bhagavad Gita should always be tended to carefully. I am reading it through now, but hoping to make a date to return as a regular practise]

Why continue to read Bhagavad Gita throughout life? For answer, here is Verse Two; "By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature like my own. Thus established, one is not born at the time of creation or disturbed at the time of disollusion".

* * * * *

In his purport to Verse Two, Srila Prabhupada explains that "the transcendental nature like My own" doesn't refer to an impersonal merging but devotional service in the spiritual form. Thus we need the purports.

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord impregnates the total material substance known as Brahman from which all living beings are born. [14:3]

* * * * *

All species of life are given birth by the material nature and Lord Krishna says "aham bijah pradah pita, - I am the seed giving father".

* * * * *

When the jiva is born into the material nature and gets his body, he becomes conditioned by the three modes of nature, sattva, rajas and tamas. [14:5]

The mode of goodness conditions or binds the jiva by a sense of happiness and knowledge [sukha and jnana]. The brahmana is more or less free from sinful reactions. Satisfied with material sukha they don't attain liberation of going back to Godhead. "Repeatedly one may become a philosopher or scientist or a poet and repeatedly become entangled in the same disadvantages of birth and death". [14:6]

* * * * *

"The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings" and binds one to karma. It is characterised by sex attraction and its by-products. For this he works hard. In human society the mode of goodness used to be considered foremost but now it's the mode of passion.

* * * * *

Souls bound in tama guna are characterised by madness [they ignore their mortality and don't act for spiritual advancement - or even for material advancement], lazy, intoxicated, prone to sleep.

* * * * *

The modes compete for supremacy in a jiva. We should transcend even goodness and attain the state of Vasudeva "in which one can understand the science of God".

* * * * *

14:11 - In goodness the nine gates of the body are "illuminated by the symptoms of goodness" [this implies good health, happiness at each gate]. You see things the right way.

In the mode of passion he wants to stay in the very best house with his family and go on enjoying there as though he could live eternally in sense gratification.

The symptoms of ignorance are inertia [laziness], madness, illusion

One who dies in goodness goes to "planets where great sages and great devotees live".

One who dies in passion is born among karmis; One who dies in ignorance takes birth as an animal.

* * * * *

The result of pious activities is pure and happy. Passionate activities bring misery [although it may appear at first like illusory happiness, to build a house, make money]. In discussing the mode of ignorance, Srila Prabhupada dwells on cow killing as "the most vicious" of animal slaughter and the "grossest type of ignorance". A society which prepares people to become animals next life is not really human civilisation. So it is a very dangerous age and Krishna consciousness is required. [14:16]

* * * * *

People should elevate themselves to the mode of goodness for peace and prosperity. Krishna conscious practise will bring goodness to society, but passion brings only unhappiness through greedy endeavours and ignorance brings madness, intoxication etc.

By learning of the modes we may transcend them. In material life, the living entity doesn't perform activities but is forced to do them by the body and the modes. "for one who is able to see things as they are [in Krishna consciousness], the influence of material nature gradually ceases".

* * * * *

Free of the modes one can transcend birth, death, disease and old age "and can enjoy nectar even in this life". He finds spiritual happiness in this life and goes back to Godhead. [14:20]

* * * * *

Arjuna asks the symptoms and behaviour of one who has transcended the modes and how one may do this. [This reminds us of a similar question in Bhagavad Gita 2:54 "How does he speak? etc"].

* * * * *

As long as one lives in the material body he should be neutral and engage in devotional service "so that his identity with the material world will be automatically forgotten" - and so he won't be influenced by the modes.

The self is aloof from dictates of material body, doesn't comply to the dictates of body and sense gratification.

Behaviour: "He performs his duty in Krishna consciousness and does not mind whether a man honours or dishonours him... does not hate his so-called enemy... Social and political issues don't affect him".

* * * * *

14:26 - Mam ca yo vyabhicarena... This verse replies to the third question, how does one attain to the transcendental position?

Answer: Don't put your consciousness into activities in the modes but transfer your consciousness to Krishna activities. "One who engages in full devotional service, unflinching in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature..."

This is also stated in Bhagavad Gita 7:14.

* * * * *

14:27 - Brahman realization is the first step in spiritual life. If one cannot go further he runs the risk of falling back down.

When he is in the material modes, the jiva wants to dominate. Devotional service gradually slackens this desire to dominate and one is situated in loving transcendental service.

... CHAPTER FIFTEEN ...

The Yoga of the Supreme Person:

One may ask "what about the Vedas?" In Chapter 15 it will be answered that if one is engaged in devotional service he already knows the Vedas.

The entanglement of the material world is compared to an upside down tree. One must know how he is attached to this material tree and its branches and then cut off his relation with it by devotional service. The real tree is in the spiritual world; the upside down tree is its reflection in the material world. Knowing the Vedas means cutting down the reflected tree and attaining the spiritual world.

* * * * *

On the material tree, species are manifested according to the particular influence of the modes of nature.

With determination one must cut down the tree with the weapon of detachment. "Thereafter, one must seek that place from which, having gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead". [15:3-4]

By hearing sastra in the association of devotees one comes to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One surrenders to Him by devotional service "by hearing, chanting etc".

* * * * *

Because the jiva is puffed up it is difficult for him to surrender. "For one who is always expecting some honour in this material world, it is not possible to surrender to the Supreme Person". [15:5 purport] This pride is due to illusion: False proprietorship.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna describes His supreme abode as self luminous; going there, one never has to return to the material world. "One should be captivated by this information. He should desire to transfer himself to that eternal world..." This may be done only by devotional service.

Mamaivamso jiva loke... The jiva is the eternal fragmental part of the Supreme Lord [See also BG 2:12]. We are eternally His servitors.

We have fragmental qualities of the Supreme Lord, including independence. By misuse of free will we become conditioned. Then we have to struggle, covered by the mind and senses. In liberation "His spiritual body manifests itself in its individual capacity". He goes to the spiritual world.

* * * * *

15:7 states that the fragmental part of the Lord undergoes "karsati", struggle. That struggle is described in 15:8 as transmigrating from one body to another, which he does by his minute independence.

* * * * *

Originally the soul is pure but consciousness gets polluted according to one's association in the modes. So he gets a body, with ear, tongue etc out of eight million, four hundred thousand species. Real and pure consciousness is Krishna consciousness. [15:9]

* * * * *

[Persons who claim to be spiritual teachers and therapists say that spiritual knowledge comes from within each person and does not come down to us in any literature or from wise persons, religious beliefs etc. But without recourse to the revealed literature one cannot on his own, devise knowledge to equal it, although one remains proud that he has cast off religion and divine knowledge. Thus "the fools cannot understand how a living entity can quit his body..." and be under the modes.

Jnana caksusah means seeing with knowledge from Bhagavad Gita heard from a spiritual master. One confirms this by his own intelligence and experience - can see his spirit as different from body, yet changing bodies. People should be given this knowledge by those highly developed in Krishna consciousness.

* * * * *

Persons dabbling in so called yoga and other methods cannot understand [transmigration, influence of the modes, the soul etc] even if they try. One needs to practise bhakti. [15:11]

* * * * *

The Purport to 15:12: "If one can understand that the light and splendour of the sun, moon and fire are emanating from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, then one's Krishna Consciousness will begin".

* * * * *

It's by Krishna's energy that each planet stays in orbit. And He becomes the sun and moon to give taste to vegetables. [15:13]

* * * * *

The Supreme Lord declares that He not only creates food but even bodily digestion is due to Him in the form of digestive fire in the stomach, and He joins with the airs of life.

* * * * *

15:15: Sarvasya caham hr̥di sannivistō. This verse continues this section where Lord Krishna is describing Himself as the maintainer and deliver of the jivas. He digests their food, supplies light etc and here He declares He is the witness, inner director [giving memory and knowledge] and "as the form of the incarnation of the Vedas as well". He gives Vedic knowledge because we need to understand Krishna.

* * * * *

15:16: The jivas are fallible in the material world where they undergo six changes from birth to death. But in the spiritual world in his spiritual body he undergoes no such changes. This is a summary of the content of Vedānta Sūtra.

* * * * *

Beyond the fallible and infallible is the Supreme Lord who maintains them both: Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam. [15:17]

* * * * *

The jivas can never surpass the Supreme Person [Purusottama] who is the greatest. [15:18]

* * * * *

"Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me, O son of Bharata". [15:19]

The perfect knower engages in His devotional service. One should submissively hear of the Supreme Lord in Vedic knowledge from Krishna and His representative [sruti]; Don't speculate.

* * * * *

"This is the most confidential part of the Vedic scriptures". This refers to the philosophy of the Supreme Lord and engaging in His service; this is wisdom and perfection of endeavour. Devotional service brings one to sinlessness.

In devotional service one has to surmount two weaknesses of the heart: Desire to lord it and attachment to matter. "In this chapter, the first five verses describe the process of freeing oneself from these weaknesses of heart and verses six until the end discuss purusottama yoga".

[I like this chapter and wish to return to it and the entire Bhagavad Gita. there are different ways to read it. This time through, I have taken little summary notes and read consecutively. One can also read, selectively, tasting, lectio divina etc. Never say "I finished reading the Bhagavad Gita".

... CHAPTER SIXTEEN ...

The Divine and Demoniac Natures:

Verse one to three describes transcendental qualities which "belong to godly men endowed with divine nature". These qualities lead to liberation. The verse describes in order, qualities of the sannyasi, grhastha and brahmacari and some qualities that apply to all.

"For a sannyasi, the first qualification is fearlessness". He has to depend on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He should be convinced that Krishna is always within, sees and knows all that one intends to do and "will take care of a soul surrendered to Him".

A sannyasi also has to purify his existence and the most important rule is that he not associate with women for illicit sex.

A sannyasi must also cultivate knowledge and preach it door to door "to see the householders and awaken them to Krishna consciousness".

Qualities of a grhastha are charity, control of senses and yajna. Other divine qualities are, studies of the Vedas, tapasya, ahimsa, simplicity, satyam, sruti etc.

* * * * *

Next Lord Krishna turns to the demoniac qualities, pride, arrogance, anger etc. The main criteria to divide the divine from demoniac is whether one obeys the regulative principles of scriptures. [16:6]

* * * * *

Demons are being described in detail. They are unclean. They don't follow Vedic injunctions such as for protection of women. Asuras don't know or don't like to follow scriptural rules.

* * * * *

They say the world is unreal, no God or cause other than lust. "Although the demons say that life is a dream, they are very expert in enjoying this dream" - and they become

implicated in their dreamland [by ignorance and sense gratification].

* * * * *

Srila Prabhupada states that verse 16:9 "anticipates the invention of nuclear weapons". Krishna describes the demons as making "horrible works meant to destroy the world".

* * * * *

"Taking shelter of unsatiated lust" [sex and money], and proud "attracted by the impermanent". The world honours them and they consider themselves advanced although gliding to hell. [16:10]

* * * * *

They are full of anxieties and driven by sense gratification to get money by illegal means. [16:11-12] They don't believe in next life according to karma; he has no knowledge or faith in Supersoul or sastra, "feels free to do anything for sense gratification".

* * * * *

Demon thinks "Isvaro 'ham aham bhogi".

* * * * *

The asura doesn't know karma, thinks his wealth is by his own endeavour. Attached to sense gratification, he goes to hell. They compete and fight. [allusions in purport to Vivekananda's Chicago speech and astronauts trying to go to higher planets.

* * * * *

"...they sometimes proudly perform sacrifices in name only, without following any rules". Demons take up the role of

preacher, incarnations of God, Dress in renounced order of life. [16:17]

Bewildered by ahankara and his strength etc, he blasphemes real religion and is envious of the Personality of Godhead. [Lord Krishna is giving a thorough description of the psychological attitudes of an asura. We can fit them to any person today. We may even find some of these traits in ourselves].

* * * * *

Tan aham dvisatah kruran

Though he defies the Personality of Godhead and is allowed to act whimsically, the next life of the asura is determined by higher power and so he is "perpetually cast ...into ...demoniac species of life" - animals etc. [16:19]

* * * * *

They go down to lowest species and "have practically no chance of receiving the mercy of God at any later stage of life". It's His mercy if God personally kills an asura.

* * * * *

Lust, anger and greed are the three gates to hell. Give them up!

One who escapes the three gates of hell, performs acts for self realization and gradually reaches the param gati [in devotional service].

* * * * *

If one doesn't attain to devotional service, all his efforts are spoiled; He attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.

* * * * *

One should know duty by following rules and regulations of devotional service and be gradually elevated [not a demon]. [16:24]

We can't make up our own rules; we have four defects. Follow sastra. The demons are averse to these principles for understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead. [Let's not be a cheater or cheated; a demon or a demonised victim. Stay at Prabhupada's lotus feet by following the rules and regulations and praying for devotional inspiration to give our all in devotional service].

... CHAPTER SEVENTEEN ...

The Divisions of Faith:

Arjuna asks about those who follow a form of worship not recommended in the scripture. If they have faith in some worshipping object, do they reach perfection? Is their faith in goodness, passion or ignorance?

Lord Krishna replies that according to the modes of nature one is in, so he worships. But those who worship in lower modes can not reach perfection that way [so it's not just faith per se, blind faith, that brings me to spiritual perfection. With guidance and use of discrimination, one has to ascend, transcend the modes].

* * * * *

"Everyone has a particular type of faith, regardless of what he is". [17:3] [Atheists too].

Faith is originally nirguna, transcendental. But we become contaminated by mixing in modes. Then our faith becomes contaminated. That false faith has to be replaced by faith in pure goodness [17:3 purport]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna condemns concocted austerities, political fasting.

Eating in the three modes of nature. "The purpose of food is to increase the duration of life, purify the mind and aid bodily strength. This is its only purpose". [17:10 purport]

Sacrifice in goodness means to worship God in temple not for material reward but as duty.

Austerity of body [in the mode of goodness]: Worship of Supreme Lord and worthy superiors, keep body clean and celibate. Austerity of speech: Speak according to scriptures and "very pleasurable to the ear". Austerity of the mind: Simplicity, gravity, satisfaction, control - fix mind in reading Vedic literature.

* * * * *

Penances done to gain respect are in the mode of passion. Penance in self-torture, or to hurt others or to attain the impossible [material immortality] is in ignorance.

* * * * *

Charity in goodness: Giving to the right persons with the right attitude. Charity in passion: Expecting some return or grudgingly given. Charity in ignorance: To wrong persons, places and times, given without respect.

* * * * *

All these acts [penance, charity etc], even those in material goodness are conditioned. "When aimed at the Supreme - om tat sat, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal - they become means for spiritual elevation".

Om - indicates one wants to attain the Supreme. [17:24]

Tat - indicates getting free from karma.

Sat - indicates pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

* * * * *

'Asat' activities, not done to please the Supreme are useless.

Better than the gradual process of elevation through material gunas, is to take directly to Krishna consciousness. [17:28] This is done under guidance of the spiritual master who revives one's faith in the Supreme which matures into love of Godhead.

... CHAPTER EIGHTEEN ...

Conclusion - The Perfection of Renunciation:

Srila Prabhupada: "Actually the Bhagavad Gita is finished in seventeen chapters". Eighteenth is supplementary summary. Devotional service has been the objective of the Bhagavad Gita, which can be divided into three parts.

* * * * *

Arjuna enquires into renunciation and sannyasa. Lord Krishna replies in Verse 2, as Srila Prabhupada puts it: "The performance of activities for results has to be given up... but activities leading to advanced spiritual knowledge are not to be given up".

* * * * *

There are different opinions as to what should be given up or never abandoned.

Lord Krishna gives His judgement which should be taken as final. He says renunciation should be considered in terms of the modes of nature. [18:4]

* * * * *

Yajna-dana-tapah, sacrifice, charity and penance purify even great souls and should be performed. [18:5]

They should be done as duty without attachment to result. Srila Prabhupada says material activities should be given up but not those that lead to Krishna Consciousness. [18:6]

* * * * *

Giving up prescribed duties because of illusion is in the mode of ignorance. Examples: Cooking and performing the marriage ceremony. Do them not for oneself or for material purposes but in Krishna consciousness.

* * * * *

Renouncing prescribed duties "as troublesome or out of fear of bodily discomfort" is in the mode of passion. [18:8] Srila Prabhupada: "One who is in Krishna consciousness should not give up earning money out of fear that he is performing fruitive activities". Also, getting up early in the morning is prescribed and shouldn't be avoided.

* * * * *

Work for Krishna and offer results to Him. That's renunciation in the mode of goodness. Don't avoid it just because it's troublesome.

* * * * *

Srila Prabhupada describes the devotees in ISKCON who work in offices and factories and give earnings to the Society. They are actually sannyasis. [18:11 purport]

A Krishna conscious worker doesn't have to suffer fruits of action after death. His work is liberated. [18:12]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna will now teach the five causes of action according to Vedanta. This will explain how a devotee can act without reactions. Krishna conscious acts, sanctioned by the Supersoul within, yield no reaction. [18:13]

* * * * *

Five factors of action: 1. place of action [body],
2. the performer [soul]
3. senses
4. endeavour
5. Supersoul

[18:14]

* * * * *

All actions, right or wrong, are governed by these five factors.

One who doesn't see the Supreme cause thinks himself to be the doer and is unintelligent. [18:16]

* * * * *

One who acts under Krishna's direction suffers no reaction, even if he kills. One shouldn't act in false ego without the supersanction of the Supreme Lord. [18:17]

* * * * *

"Knowledge, the object of knowledge, the knower are the three factors that motivate action; the senses, the work and the doer are three constituents of work". [18:18]

One who works under sastra and guru is free of reaction; he gets his impetus or inspiration from them.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna will speak on types of knowledge, workers and work according to three modes of nature.

* * * * *

Knowledge in satva guna sees one undivided spiritual nature in all living entities [18:20]. Srila Prabhupada refers to this as impersonal knowledge, an aspect of self-realization.

* * * * *

Knowledge in passion sees only different bodies and no soul manifesting consciousness. Such persons speculate on concepts of consciousness and body. [18:21]

* * * * *

Srila Prabhupada: "Knowledge concerned only with keeping the body comfortable is said to be in the mode of ignorance". [18:22]

Action in the mode of goodness is regulated, without attachment or desire for result [18:23]. Srila Prabhupada says it is performed for the satisfaction of the Supreme.

* * * * *

Action in raja guna is with great effort to satisfy one's own desires and false ego. [18:24]

* * * * *

Action in ignorance is illusory, disregards scripture and causes distress for others. [18:25]

* * * * *

A worker in the mode of goodness is enthusiastic in success or failure and despite distress. [18:26]

The worker in passion "is too much attached to a particular kind of work" and anxious for the results, for sense gratification. He doesn't care if his work is pure or impure. [18:27]

Workers in ignorance procrastinate, insult others, do work against scriptural injunctions etc. [18:28]

* * * * *

[These verses, and all Bhagavad Gita verses, are guides for us. Read and it will seep into you and give you boundaries to live by and will spearhead you to the goal of living for Lord Krishna in Krishna consciousness. : You may not qualify at present for the ideal devotee; you may find undesirable qualities to be yours - but you pray to improve and reading Bhagavad Gita is itself an improvement].

* * * * *

Lord Krishna will discuss understanding [buddhi] and determination [dhr̥ti] according to the modes.

The understanding that is according to sastra and with discrimination is in the mode of goodness. If one doesn't know scriptural direction he gets reactions. [18:30]

Understanding in passion can't discriminate between religion and irreligion, right and wrong. [18:31]

In ignorance - "in all activities they simply take the wrong path". They accept irreligion as religion, and accept the common man as a great soul. [18:32]

* * * * *

Determination in goodness is fixed in Krishna consciousness [yoga], never deviated. [18:33]

* * * * *

In mode of passion one is determined to attain sense gratification results in dharma-arth-karma. [18:34]

* * * * *

In ignorance one's determination can't go beyond dreaming [of lording it over], fear, lamentation and illusion. [18:35]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna will now speak of happiness in three modes. In the modes happiness is a futile chewing of the chewed [sense gratification] but if one meets a great soul and can be awakened to Krishna consciousness, he can be relieved from inferior happiness. [18:36]

* * * * *

Happiness in sattva guna is like poison in the beginning [the difficulty of following rules and regulations for self realization] but if successful it becomes nectar in transcendental life. [18:37]

Happiness in passion [epitomized in man-woman sexual relations] starts off with appearance of nectar in sense gratification but becomes poison in the end. Happiness derived from senses and sense objects is always a cause for distress and should be avoided. [18:38]

* * * * *

In ignorance one is always in unhappiness marked by illusion and laziness. [18:39]

* * * * *

Everyone, even demigods, is under the influence of the modes.

* * * * *

Lord Krishna now tells of the four varnas.

[I note the differences between the brahmans and ksatriyas and think how we should appreciate them both in the Krishna consciousness movement and how they should cooperate].

"By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect". [18:45]

* * * * *

"By worship of the Lord, who is the source of all beings and who is all-pervading, a man can attain perfection through performing his own work. [18:46]

Srila Prabhupada: "Everyone should think that he is engaged in a particular type of occupation by hrsikesa, the master of the senses".

* * * * *

Work in your own occupation even though you do it imperfectly. Don't imitate another's and you won't get sinful reactions. [18:47]

Srila Prabhupada: Do the work that attracts you, that is your nature. Despite the inherent flaws in each work [lies of vaisya, killing of ksatriyas etc]. You will be purified by your work.

[These 18th Chapter sections are each summaries of what has been discussed previously. Work is described in 3rd Chapter].

* * * * *

Every endeavour is covered by some fault as fire is covered by smoke. But don't give up the work of your nature. [18:48]

Srila Prabhupada: Be determined to serve the Supreme Lord by your occupational duty in Krishna consciousness. When done in that motive the defects are purified.

[This is reassuring to me in my work as a writer which has flaws of self absorption, playing a literary game, avoiding more active pursuits, delving in research in non devotee writers, delving in one's memories and dreams for evocative writing etc].

* * * * *

By renunciation of results of work, one attains perfection.

* * * * *

In Verses 50-54 Lord Krishna will summarise how to attain the Supreme perfection.

Verses 51-54 state qualities of one who is elevated to self-realisation, including living in a secluded place, not over-eating, no bodily concept, not proud, "always in trance". [We note that we may not have all these qualities but aspire for them and work for them].

* * * * *

Brahma-bhutah-prasanatma...

One who is thus transcendently situated realises the Supreme brahman and becomes joyful. He does not lament or desire.

Equal to all. "In that state he attains to pure devotional service unto Me". [18:54]

Srila Prabhupada: One has to go beyond brahma bhuta impersonal realisation. Srila Prabhupada describes each of the qualities in Verse 54 in Krishna conscious terms - joyful thinking of Krishna, no misery or greed because one is in devotional service. Prabhupada refers to Pabodhananda Saraswati's verse how a devotee attains all good qualities and sees the universe as joyful. This stage can be achieved by the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

* * * * *

Bhaktya mam abhijanati...

"One can understand Me as I am, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God". [18:55]

He can't be known by speculation; He doesn't reveal Himself to others; He remains hidden as stated in 7:25 naham prakasah.

Visate - "enters into Me", doesn't refer to impersonal merging. Even after liberation, devotional service is never stopped.

* * * * *

Verse 18:56 states, as already stated in 18:55, that the pure devotee reaches the eternal abode of Krishna. He reaches there despite all difficulties of his worldly engagements.

* * * * *

"In all activities just depend on Me... be fully conscious of Me". [18:57]

We may work under Krishna as Arjuna did by following His Bhagavad Gita under the spiritual master.

One has no goal but Krishna. While working one should think "I have been appointed to discharge this particular duty by Krishna."

Srila Prabhupada: "The spiritual master's order should be taken as the prime duty of life".

* * * * *

Lord Krishna promises the devotee He will pass over all obstacles of life, "by My grace". One who is not in Krishna consciousness will be lost. [18:58]

* * * * *

If Arjuna [or anyone] acts under the order of Lord Krishna or the spiritual master, then he will be safe under all circumstances. If not, he'll be forced to act by the material nature. [18:59]

* * * * *

The Supersoul direct the wanderings of the jivas from one body to another. We are not independent of His control.

Therefore we should surrender unto the Supreme Lord and attain "transcendental peace and the Supreme abode".

Lord Krishna has explained most confidential knowledge to Arjuna and so the instruction of Bhagavad Gita is complete. He now asks Arjuna to use his free will and decide what to do. [18:63]

"Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you... it is for your benefit". [18:64]

That most confidential knowledge is to surrender to Krishna. Verse 18:65 is similar to 9:34. It should be carried out by all living entities. One should become a pure devotee of Krishna in His original form.

* * * * *

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not Fear"[18:66. The Lord Himself has described various kinds of knowledge and dharma. Now, confidentially, Krishna says Arjuna

should give up all the processes and just surrender to Krishna. You don't have to be first free of all sinful reaction [as stated in 7th Chapter yesam tv anta-gatam papam]. By surrender you will be free; Krishna will protect you.

"Anything that doesn't lead to the perfectional stage of Krishna consciousness should be avoided".

"One should be attracted by the beautiful vision of Krishna" - beyond impersonal or Supersoul forms, or visnu tattva other than Krishna Himself.

"One may be worried as to how he can give up all kinds of religious forms and simply surrender to Krishna, but such worry is useless".

[This surrender is not to a vague God. Do not fear it is sectarian].

* * * * *

This confidential knowledge may not be explained to envious or to non-devotees. [18:67]

"For one who explains this... to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed. There is no-one more dear". [18:68-69]

[Srila Prabhupada has no purport to 18:69 but he often quotes this verse as support for the importance of preaching work, and not only preaching to devotees but to non-devotees. His frequent lecturing on this point and his comments in other purports of Srimad Bhagavatam etc, must be taken also as commentary on this verse of Bhagavad Gita.

* * * * *

Devotees hold open class in Bhagavad Gita so the non envious, even though not trying to become pure devotees, may hear and be benefited and go to higher planets. [18:71]

* * * * *

Lord Krishna as spiritual master asks Arjuna if he has understood Bhagavad Gita and if his illusions are dispelled. "Bhagavad Gita is not an ordinary book written by a poet or a fiction writer" - it grants liberation. [18:72]

Arjuna said my illusion is gone; I am free from doubt and ready to act on your order. [18:73]

We are in illusion thinking we are the master; we are actually servants of either maya or Krishna.

* * * * *

Sanjaya said - Thus I heard the talk of Krishna and Arjuna, so wonderful that my hair is standing on end. [18:74]

We too can hear it and follow like Arjuna.

* * * * *

By the mercy of Vyasa, Sanjaya says, I've heard these talks by Yogesvara Krishna to Arjuna. [18:75]

We can hear directly from Krishna through the medium of the spiritual master who is a representative of Vyasa.

* * * * *

Sanjaya says - As I recall this wondrous and holy dialogue I am thrilled at every moment. [18:76]

Srila Prabhupada: One who hears the Gita from the right source attains full Krishna consciousness "and he enjoys life with a thrill, not only for some time but at every moment".

* * * * *

Sanjaya remembered the universal form of Lord Krishna which he'd seen by the grace of Vyasa.

* * * * *

"Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. that is my opinion". [18:78]

Now it is clear, as asked by Dhrtarastra at the beginning of the Gita, who would be victorious in the battle. Sanjaya is hear saying that Krishna and Arjuna will be victorious.

[We may take this verse as a victory cry for our individual or collective cause of serving Krishna. If by our sincere service Lord Krishna becomes present in our hearts or temples etc, then the qualities mentioned here will be present].

Bhagavad Gita is the supreme instruction in morality which is man mana bhava mad-bhakto, to become a devotee of Lord Krishna. The perfection of religion means to surrender to Him.

Lord Krishna is the Absolute Truth.

There are five subjects in the Gita and all are dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna. All conceptions of Absolute Truth exist in Krishna.

This is acintya beda beda tattva.

The living entity is also part and parcel of Lord Krishna, like the sunshine from the sun. In his normal condition, the spirit soul is in the internal energy under the order of Krishna "in a pleasure-giving [hladini] potency".

* * * * *

So thus ends the Bhaktivedanta Purports of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. I hope to read the verses and purports again and again and attain great faith and happiness to share this knowledge of Bhagavad Gita. I pray to take to Bhagavad Gita as a hungry man takes to delicious food. I want to "know" Bhagavad Gita [not as a master of it but perpetually a student who loves the Gita and always learns afresh from it] and not merely study it as academic exercise. I pray to keep it with me always and hear the words of Krishna and the questions of Arjuna and the comments of Srila Prabhupada who speaks with reference to Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Visvanatha Cakravarti and the whole disciplic succession. In this way I can thrill to life at every moment and as stated in the Eighth Chapter, I may successfully think of Krishna at the time of death and go to Him. As is stated in Bhagavad Gita 4:9 - " One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains my eternal abode O Arjuna".